UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

TRUANCY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS IN ASIKUMA-ODOBEN-BRAKWA DISTRICT

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SEPTEMBER, 2017

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Daniel Tinagyei, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE …………………………………………….

DATE **…………………………….............**

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.
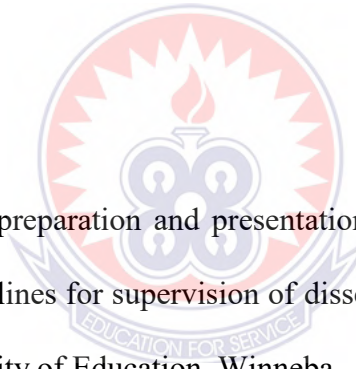
NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. LAWRENCE ODUMAH

SIGNATURE: …………………………………………..

DATE: …………………………………...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my lovely wife, Pat and my children: Sammy, Pat, Dan and Bismark.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents   **Page**

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

The resarch was conducted in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District of the Central Region of Ghana. It investigated how truancy relates to academic performance of truant junior high school pupils. A descriptive survey design using mixed-methods sequential explanatory approach was employed for this study. Simple random and purposive sampling methods were used to select 114 study participants comprising 108 truant pupils and 6 teachers for the study. Questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.73) and semi-structured interview guide were the main research instruments used to collect data. The quantitative data were analysed and presented in tables as frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, while the qualitative data were analysed thematically. Inferential statistics was computed using chi-square ($\chi2$) and independent samples t-test via Statistical Product for Services Solution (SPSS) software at a significance level of p $\leq$ 0.05 using a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%. The study revealed that truancy is prevalent among public junior high school pupils in the district Truancy has significantly contributed to poor academic performance, poor retention, repetition and dropout among the pupils. There is significant age and gender difference in the prevalence of truancy among the pupils. It was recommended that parents should satisfactorily provide for the basic needs of their wards. Parents/guardians and teachers should use corrective rather than punitive measures to curb truancy. Also, school counsellors should frequently counsel truant pupils.
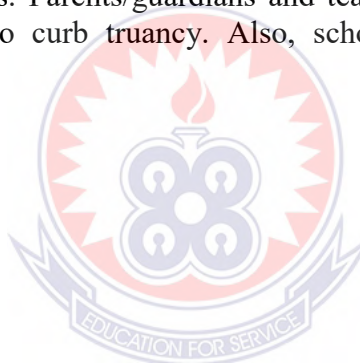
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Truancy is one of the major antisocial discipline problems among basic school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa (AOB) District of the Central Region of Ghana. This phenomenon has attracted a wider interest in public discussion as well as in educational research, and the concept and acts of indiscipline have received a lot of attention by researchers. According to Huzinga and Thornberry (2000), truancy is defined as having an unexcused absence from school for one or more part of the day for at least three school days during a five-day school week. Truancy is an international unauthorised absence from school activities, and from compulsory schooling. It is absence from school that might be caused by pupils of their own free will, and not caused by poor medical conditions. It also refers to pupils who attend school, but do not go for classes. Although some studies have been done on the matter, many have been focusing on the causes, without putting into consideration the impacts on academic performance. Echebiwe (2009) also explained truancy as a situation where a child under sixteen years of age who is registered at school, fails to attend classes without prior formal permission from the parent or school authority. Therefore, truancy is the practice of staying away from school without permission. A child who engages in this act is therefore referred to as a truant. This implies that every child is expected to be in school and must be present in school and attend classes regularly, unless when the child is duly permitted to be absent in respect to health reasons or otherwise stated.

1

The Alford City Counsel Report (2008) defined truancy as the act whereby a child, who is believed to have been at school, fails to attend school classes without the permission or awareness of the parents or the school authority concerned. This means that truancy is a student's unlawful absence from school without a parent or guardian knowledge or permission, and it is a very serious problem in basic schools within the district. In the district, children who engage in truancy often find life in classrooms dull, boring and uninteresting. Also, they find greater pleasure and interest in activities outside the school and the classroom environment. The situation is that such children usually leave their homes giving everybody the impression that they have gone to school, but stopped on the way side to participate in what they like to enjoy most. This they do until it is time for school dismissal and they return home. Some others are caught playing round the street with other truants, engaging in gambling and loitering round the school premises.

Quite a number of pupils in basic schools in the district are truant for various reasons, including either good or without good reasons. Some of these truants get scared of some unfriendly treatment from teachers, unpleasant encounters during classroom work, unnecessary harassment and embarrassment by senior pupils. This often leads to loss of interest in academics in the classroom by the pupils. Besides, some truants engage in truancy because of the feeling of inferiority among their classmates, laziness to class work, challenges of classroom test and assignments, verbal abuses and threats of classroom instructors, school phobia, anxiety, bullying, lack of skills needed to perform well at school, lack of priority to education and academics. Ma'aruf (2005) discovered a high correlation between home circumstances and persistent truancy without the knowledge of the parents.

Ma'aruf (2005) identified four major home factors as being responsible for truancy, namely: poor relationship between children and parents; poor physical conditions at home; use of corporal punishment in the house; and lack of parental interest in the child's welfare. Many factors are responsible for truancy. The breakdown of communication, student over population, shortage of teachers, incessant strike and work-to-rule, undue application of corporal punishment as well as peer influence are probable factors which are associated with truancy. Kirk, Malcilm, Wilson and Davidson (2003) identified causes of truancy as bullied by school staff, boredom, dislike of teachers and avoidance of tests. Ubogu (2004) identified causes of truancy as illness, financial hardship, age, social class, geographical area, and institutional influence schools related factors such as teachers' attitude, poor administration, and high cost of education. Distance to school, school discipline, family background and school location are among causes of truancy among school pupils as stated by Emore (2005).

Truant school children often stay away from school or they are irregular at school in order to engage in activities which are not under the control of either the home or the school. The researcher observes that some of these pupils instead of attending classes during school hours go to bush to hunt for snails, to kill or hunt for animals and collect fruits, going to hidden places to play, and wondering about in the streets without any purpose. Some find their ways to the river to swim while others engage in petty jobs to get money for buying snacks, minerals, and ice cream. Some even engage in secret love affairs that always make them to drop out of school. The impact of truancy is very obvious and usually a negative one on truants' present and future life in education.

It is believed that regular school attendance can help ensure student academic success (Rothman, 2001). Notwithstanding, many school headteachers and teachers in the district have at one time or another punished several of their pupils because of the latter's poor attitude toward school and learning. This is evident in the time they arrive at school and or attend to their learning assignments as well as other school activities. According to Nawaz (2005), such negative attitudes could be a serious obstacle to success in school. According to Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2005), pupils' attitudes such as school attendance (punctuality and/or lateness), absenteeism, regularity in school, language use, interest in teachers' lessons, time with books and studies at home influence academic performance. Etsey et al. (2005) find a significant relationship between regularity in school and pupils' academic performance. Hence, there are reasons to examine truancy in schools.

Firstly, children who frequently play truant are more likely to drop out of school, and fail to achieve success in school. Therefore, they are likely to be socially and economically disadvantaged for life. Secondly, truancy often marks the beginning of a criminal career. In this sense truancy is a ―risk factor" for present and further delinquent acts as observed by Loeber and Farrington (2001). Thirdly, dealing with pupils playing truant takes a lot of time for teachers. Fourthly, truants may deteriorate the atmosphere within the classroom as well as within the school (Baumert, Jürgen & Gundel Schümer,2002). More so, psychological strain or mental illness such as school phobia or separation anxiety, are possible causes for truancy that need medical treatment.

Also, enduring truancy indicates structural school problems, as the school does not ensure the integration of pupils sufficiently. It is because of such failure that is why specific school measures are required.

Student non-attendance at school is a problem that affects the student, their families, and the community (U. S. Department of Education, 2001). Pupils must be present in school in order to benefit from the academic programmein its entirety (Rothman, 2001). However, truancy is a threat to academic performances of pupils in the district, and it reduces the quality of education that children receive. When pupils' miss school, it hinders their learning (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). It leads to poor academic performance at the end of the school periods, school terms and school year. Studies have shown that attendance of pupils have positive relationship with their academic performance (Ohuvu, 2006). Truancy results in loss of intellectual development and lack of improvement of an individual. Also, it leads to poor academic performance at the end of the school periods, school terms and school year. Truancy as a threat to academic performances of the student is believed to reduce the quality of education the child receives. It reduces the standard of academic achievement of a child. It leads to the fall of educational standard in schools. It increases the rate of examination malpractices and poor examination results of both internal and external examinations. Truancy is also a factor that contributes to idealness, joblessness, unemployment and underemployment of most adults today, just because they engaged in the act of truancy during their school days. Peck (2002) opined that the various behavioural disorders like stealing, violence, drug abuse, examination malpractice, sexual abuse and truancy have so undermined

effective teaching-learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of impacting knowledge to the learners.

One crucial element of a child's success in school is school attendance. It is an integral part of a child's success in school. Student non-attendance might contribute to a corresponding decrease in student achievement. Therefore, educators, parents, and politicians are continuously searching for that magic solution that will reform our public education system and establish a flawless system of education for our youth, by providing them with a quality education (Edwards, 2002). For instance, Chappel (2004) examined an after school programme as a connection to regular school attendance and academic achievement. It is for this reasons that this study seeks to investigate the actual acts, causes, and the effects of truancy in basic schools in the AOB District vis à-vis its effect on the academic performances of these truants.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Truancy of pupils in primary and junior high schools has been a cankerworm to education, and specifically an affront to high academic performance in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa (AOB) District. For some time now, the school system in the district has been bedeviled with truancy of school pupils. This problem affects instruction, administration and overall performance of pupils. It also affects academic performance in both internal and external examinations. For instance, failure rate of junior high school (JHS) pupils within the district in the basic education certificate examination (BECE) has resulted into little number of pupils continuing their secondary education. Despite the efforts made by the AOB District Directorate of Education, the District Assembly,

NGOs, and communities in expanding access to basic school education by lowering education expenses to improve the education systems, the academic performance of pupils is still poor. This situation has raised several questions to the quality of education and educational administration in the district. Few or no studies have investigated the impact of truancy on the poor academic performance of pupils. It is the concern of this study, therefore, to look into how truancy has affected pupils' academic performances in the district.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how truancy relates to academic performance of junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District.

2. Investigate the causes of truancy among the pupils.

3. Determine the effects of truancy on academic performance of truant pupils in the district.

4. Identify interventions to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What is the nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District?

2. What factors are responsible for the act of truancy among JHS pupils in the district?

3. How does truancy affect the academic performance of JHS pupils in the district?

4. What interventions can be put in place to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district?

1.6 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses underlie this study:

1. **Ho:** There will be no significant relationship between truancy and poor academic performance of JHS pupils in the AOB District.

   Ha: There will be significant relationship between truancy and poor academic performance of JHS pupils in the AOB District.

2. **Ho:** There is no significant age differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district.

   Ha: There is a significant age differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district.

3. **Ho:** There is no significant gender differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district.

Ha: There is a significant gender differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district.

1.7 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the result of the study would be useful to school administrators as well as teachers, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders of education in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District, and Ghana in general. The study would equally give teachers, parents/guardians and other stakeholders of education an insight on how and why their wards engage in truancy.

The study would also help in the discovery of the fundamental aspect of the nature and prevalence of truancy that is mostly found among pupils, and with this proper guidance and counselling would be given to them to enable them make the best out of education. It would also be significant to the community because if pupils are corrected from truant behaviour, the street would be decongested.

The findings of this study would inform policy makers, parents/guardians, teachers and all educational stakeholders to appreciate the dangers of truancy among school pupils to the educational system, and to take appropriate steps to minimize the menace. It would again serve as a reference material for those who would conduct similar research in future.

1.8 Scope and Delimitations of the Study

Creswell (2009) defines delimitation as ―how the study will be narrowed in scope" (p. 106). This study covered only truant JHS pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District; the investigation is delimited to the phenomenon of truancy among JHS pupils. Owing to time factor and financial constraints the study did not cover all schools in the district. Therefore, findings could not be generalised to other schools.

1.9. Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations that should be addressed in considering the results of the present study.These include:

1. The researcher conducted this study in only one district in the Central Region of Ghana. Failure to study the entire region or country reduces the generalisability of the findings.

2. The researcher conducted this study with only truant pupils inpublic junior high schools in the district. As such, the acts of truancy and the factors that predicts its occurrence might differ from those that affect private schools, and other public basic and high schools elsewhere. Hence, the results of this study are limited to the views of truant pupils in public JHS in the district.

3. The researcher wanted the study to cover truant pupils in all public junior high schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa, however, the immense size of the population and geographical distribution of schools, time for the study, the financial constraint and non-availability of other resources did not permit him to do so. Therefore, coverage was limited to the schools under study.

10

1.10 Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One, which is the introduction, deals with background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, and organisation of the study. Chapter Two captures literature review. Chapter Three, which is the methodology, contains the research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability of instruments, procedures for data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Results of the study are presented and discussed under Chapter Four. Chapter Five is the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. In this chapter, suggestions are made on relevant areas for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature is reviewed under the following topics: theoretical framework, definition of concepts, nature and prevalence of truancy in schools, the predictors or causes of truancy among pupils, effects of truancy on pupils, school, family and society, intervention measures to mitigate truancy in schools, and summary of literature review.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theory is defined as a set of interrelated concepts, assumptions and generalizations that systematically describes and explains behaviour (Ndurumo, 2007). Therefore, a theory attempts to fit relevant facts into a logical explanation and also serves as a framework for collecting more information. Philosophers of science have argued that one of the most important functions played by theoretical frameworks is that they guide observation.

In other words, observation statements cannot be made without using the language of some theory, and in turn, these theories determine what is investigated. Thus, frameworks play an important role by guiding the kinds of questions that researchers can ask, the nature of evidence that is to be collected, the methodologies that are appropriate for collecting this evidence, the strategies available for analyzing the data, and finally, interpretations that we make from this analysis. A plethora of theories underpin this study. These theories include: social control theory by Hirschi (1969), anomie or strain theory by Durkheim (1983) and the urban subculture theory.

Social control theory

Hirschi (1969) stated that ―social control theory does not attempt to explain why individuals are engaged in deviant acts, but rather why individuals choose to obey conventional norms" (p. 10). The attachment an individual holds to persons, groups or institutions which support conventional values and norms is of central interest. If this attachment is fragile, the risk of deviant behaviour is greater. According to Hirschi's social bond theory (1969), the strength of this attachment depends on four factors. These are:
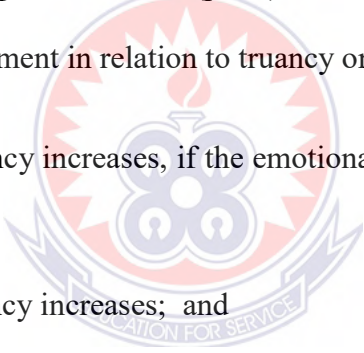
    a. The emotional attachment to meaningful persons such as family members, teachers and peers;

    b. The commitment to conventional goals;

    c. The involvement in conventional activities; and

    d. The extent of belief in social rules.

The emotional attachment to meaningful persons directs individual'sbehaviour to the wishes and expectations of significant others.Thus, close relationships to conventionally acting persons should decrease the risk of truancy. Social control theory emphasizes the family as the main reference group for adolescents.

Therefore, with respect to the family as an institution of socialisation, it is prudent not only to concentrate on the ―emotional attachment, but also consider an extension by Sampson and Laub (1993) that has been formulated within the scope of a reanalysis of the longitudinal study of Glueck and Glueck (1950). In contrast to Hirschi, when analysing the family, Sampson and Laub do not only acquire the degree of emotional

attachment, but also add two more elements that are extracted from the coercion theory and the reintegrative shaming theory. From this perspective, the emotional bond only represents one part of the control function of families, which needs to be completed by two further elements: one is the way of bringing up and disciplining the children, the other is parents' supervision of their children. While the degree of emotional attachment represents a form of indirect parental control, the two other elements focus on a direct form of parental control. Consequently, three types of parental control are finally identifiable (Sampson & Laub, 1993). They further indicated that they are ―the degree of emotional attachment to the parents, the way of bringing up and disciplining children, and the form of supervising the children" (p. 68). The following assumptions underlie the degree of emotional attachment in relation to truancy or deviant behaviour:

a. The degree of truancy increases, if the emotional attachment to the parents is very low;

b. The degree of truancy increases; and

c. The more that the way of bringing up and disciplining children is inconsistent and violent. The degree of truancy increases, the less parents supervise their children.

Looking at the attachment to teachers, the following can be stated:

a. The lower the emotional attachment to teachers, the higher the degree of truancy.

Peers are another relevant reference group, primarily in adolescence. This is because teachers function as an agent of socialisation.

b. The more investments in conventional goals in life and careers a student has, the stronger a rational consideration of advantages and disadvantages of deviant behaviour results in an orientation towards conventional goals.

With a high investment in the educational career, the costs of truancy (for example, to repeat a school year, poor school grades) are higher than the gains (leisure time, less homework). However, if a student has nothing to lose – good school grades, a higher reputation within the class and the family – a permanent school absenteeism may seem rational. As opportunities a student has in life are closely related to a successful educational career, it helps to explain why pupils skip school less when attending a school with a higher educational demand (Sturzbecher, 2001; Wagner, 2002; Wilmers & Greve, 2002).

a. The more pupils have invested in their previous educational career, the less likely it is that they will become truants.

b. The participation in conventional activities reduces the available time and the opportunity to become delinquent (Hirschi, 1969, p. 21).

Additionally, the aspect of time is related to a higher identification with conventional norms and values include:

a. The longer an adolescent performs conventional activities, the more he will identify himself with them.

b. The more pupils participate in conventional activities outside school, the less likely it is that they will become truants.

c. Strong orientation towards conventional values and norms that have been

15

internalised in the process of socialisation reduces the acceptance of deviant behaviour.

d. The stronger the internelisation of conventional values and norms, the lower the degree of truancy.

The examined interrelation between truancy and other forms of deviant behaviour (Ball & Conolly, 2000; Burgess, Gardiner & Popper, 2002) as well as the relevance of truancy as a risk factor for a permanent criminal career (Furgusson etal., 1995) refer to the effectiveness of a general orientation towards conventional values and norms.

According to social control theory adolescents engage in delinquent behaviours such as abuse drugs because there are insufficient social controls to restrict them from using drugs. This is because these adolescents have more freedom.

 Researchers observe that lack of parental monitoring leads to increased association with deviant peers (Davison et al., 2004; Pressley & McCormick, 2007; Rice & Dolgin, 2008). In addition, adolescents who are not well nurtured and have poor relationship with their parents are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours (Liddle & Rowe, 2006; Rice & Dolgin, 2008). The lack of emotional support by parents is linked to an increase in deviant or truant behaviours (Davison et al., 2004; Rice & Dolgin, 2008).

Parenting skills or parental behaviour is also associated with deviant behaviours (Carson et al., 2000). Parental control patterns that involve setting clear requirements for mature and responsible behaviour, in contrast to power-assertive or authoritarian techniques of discipline monitoring, has been found to be effective in reducing delinquency (Liddle & Rowe, 2006). Studies of family structure around the world have found that young people

16

who live with both biological parents are significantly less likely to use to report truant problems than those who do not live with both parents (Rice & Dolgin, 2008). However, family structure alone does not appear to explain delinquent behaviour. Disruptions in the family life cycle seem to characterize these single-parent households. An unstable family environment that is father absence, one or both parents who have immigrated, or death of parents are associated with delinquency (Rice & Dolgin, 2008). Thus, family structure along with characteristics of these families seems to account for truancy.

Anomie Theory or Strain Theory

One of the oldest and most influential theories explaining deviant behaviour is the theory of anomie (strain theory), originally formulated by Durkheim in 1897 (1983). In 1968, Merton adopted essential assumptions of Durkheim's theory and extended them in his social structure and social theory which appeared in 1957. Merton distinguishes between a cultural and a social structure of society. Social structure is a pattern of social relationships.

Cultural structure determines the goals of action for example, social recognition, economic wealth – which are basically shaped by the middle class – and allocates the institutionalized legitimate means (for example, occupational career), such as norms, rules and values that determine how to achieve the cultural goals. Merton generally hypothesizes the status of anomie within a society to emerge from a discrepancy between cultural and social structure as stated by Merton (1968, p. 216). The social position of individuals within the social structure particularly influences the chances to have access to the legitimate means. In contrast to members of the middle and upper classes, members

of the lower classes dispose of less resources to achieve culturally defined goals. Therefore, they undergo a stronger social pressure to find non-institutionalized and, as the case may be, deviant ways to achieve those goals. There are five possible individual reactions to compensate for the strain between cultural goals and institutionalized means: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. Conformity is the normal case within a stable society which means the aspiration of legitimate goals through legitimate means. However, Merton is interested in the other types of adaptation.

He wants to know to what extent conditions of the social structure influence the prevalence of a particular type of deviant behaviour. Merton calls the second type of adaptation innovation. This type appears if cultural goals are aspired although the access to legitimate means is limited. Members of lower social classes are disadvantaged, notably concerning the goal _œconomic wealth'. Often, they do not have the legitimate means to achieve economic wealth which in turn makes it more likely to apply illegitimate means as explained by Albrecht (1997, p. 510). Ritualism can be understood as deviant behaviour only in a restricted sense because the goals are adapted to the means. The ritualist accepts the legitimate means, but does not have distinct ambitions to achieve the culturally defined goals, especially concerning economic wealth and social recognition as mentioned by Merton (1968, p. 203). The goals are lowered or turned down as far as they correspond to the means available.

As another type of adaptation, a person retreatingeither refuses or abstains from the pursuit of legitimate goals and means. In this context, Merton especially refers to social outcasts as indicated by Merton (1968, p. 207). Rebellionmarks an exceptional case, as this type does not adapt the given goals and means, but actively tries to reassess them.

18

But how exactly can the theory of anomie explain truancy? It is not always possible to specify the goals and means when analyzing a concrete research issue (Lamnek, 1985) and because it is impossible to theoretically deduce all relevant goals, we will concentrate on two types of individual goals (Holtappels, 1997): educational success on the one hand and social recognition or economical wealth on the other. By doing so, educational success is hierarchically subordinated to social recognition and economic wealth as cultural goals and functions as a means to these goals. However, legitimate means to achieve educational success might be measured by good school grades and type of school. Summarising the paragraph, the following hierarchy of goals and means becomes obvious: school grades – educational success – economic wealth.

The theory of anomie does not claim a connection between factors of social structure and legitimate means for achieving educational success – namely school grades. However, there are quite some research findings proving this relationship in the field of class-specific socialisation (Rolff, 1976). Concerning truancy, the individual types of adaptation might be interpreted as followed:

Conformity (the "proper" student): The student has internalised the cultural goal ‗suœess in school‘ and in addition possesses the legitimate means necessary to achieve that goal.

Innovation ("active truancy"): The student accepts ‒educational success" as an immediate goal in order to attain a professional position that offers financial security, social recognition and economic wealth, but he does not have the legitimate means to reach the accepted goal. According to Merton (1968), the lack of legitimate means results

from a socioeconomic disadvantage of the family of origin. The innovator tries to find ways other than regular school attendance (part-time work, criminal activities, acceptance by the peers) in order to achieve the goals accepted by society.

Ritualism ("passive truancy"): The student does not accept the purpose of going to school. A regular school attendance takes place just because it is a matter of routine: One attends school because everybody attends school. The characteristics of the passive truant (physically present, but not showing any interest) are compatible with the Merton type of ritualism and often function as a precursor of active truancy (Schreiber-Kittl &Haike, 2002)

Social retreatism ("complete truancy"): Social retreatism can be characterized by lethargic behaviour. Neither the cultural goals nor the institutionalized means are accepted. In contrast to the rebel, this type does not strive to find alternatives to the missing goals and means. According to Merton, social retreatism often results from frustrating experiences if both, goals and means, had been accepted but did not turn out to be effective (Lamnek, 1993). For instance, because of bad experiences, pupils refuse to go to school, as it no longer makes sense to them.

Rebellion ("truancy as protest"): Pupils refuse to go to school because they want to protest against the goals and means of the institutionalized school.

In contrast to the type of social reatreatism or the ritualist, the rebel tries to find alternative goals andmeans. Intense absence from school is no passive truancy, but rather expresses dissatisfaction about the existing conditions.

Truancy that is approved by the parents can be interpreted as a type of rebellious adaptation which is passed on from generation to generation. That is the case, if parents believe school attendance to be wrong for either educational, religious or ideological reasons and make their children stay at home or be taught in educational institutions other than school. If school efforts are defined as means and educational success is defined as the goal, the following can be stated about pupils of the innovator type:

a. The lower the socioeconomic status of the family of origin, the worse the school achievement.

b. The worse the school achievement, the more likely pupils try to achieve goals like social recognition or economic wealth outside of school.

c. The more intensely pupils follow up their goals outside of school, the stronger the truancy.

Merton's (1968) ritualist type of adaptation characterizes pupils whose academic achievement is satisfactory, but who do not strive for educational goals and who internally isolate themselves from being taught in school. Those pupils are physically present within the lessons, therefore they cannot be called active truants. Rebellion will not be considered here, as those pupils barely have the means to develop alternatives for the legally stipulated school attendance.

The theory of anomie focuses on the social, not on the individual conditions for deviant behaviour. In order to make precise assumptions about individual decisions, we will combine the anomie theory with the expectancy value theory, focusing the innovative type of adaptation (Friedrichs, 1997). Truancy then needs to be understood as a result of

21

cost-benefit-analysis (Burgess et al., 2002). If school attendance does not offer the student a good chance of economic gain or a professional career, the innovator is behaving rationally if he aims for alternative activities such as gainful employment. Following the urban subculture theory, the acceptance by peers might also compensate for a lack of acceptance by the educational system. If pupils find alternatives to school attendance that are of high gain and if truancy does not involve too many costs, the student is more likely to refuse school. Pupils with a low educational level and/or poor school performance prefer those alternatives because their future prospects of a secure and financially lucrative employment are very low. Thus, the benefit of a regular school attendance will be rated as very low. For instance, it is assumed that the lower the perceived benefit of school attendance, the more likely the student is to do part-time work or to aim for acceptance through peers.

Urban Subculture Theory

An important field within socioecological research analysis is the question to what extent aspects of the urban environment (for example, high unemployment or high rates of criminality within the community) lead to juvenile delinquency (Oberwittler, 1999). In this context, the urban community (_breeding area') functions as the main unit of analysis. The socio-ecological approach regarding the explanation of delinquency is based on the following assumptions:

   a. Delinquency does not result from individual disorientation, but from disorientation concerning the urban community. It is defined as ―breakdown". Two further hypotheses might be deduced from the value expectancy theory: the

less likely it is that a pupils' truanting behaviour is to be detected and the less he/she has to fear negative sanctions, the higher the risk of truancy.

b. The process of disorganization is mainly to be found within communities which are affected by industrialization, urbanization and immigration.

c. Socially disorganized urban communities are dominated by nonconventional norms and values. Their rates of criminality are higher and there is a tradition of deviant behaviour that cannot be related to anomie. With this in mind, ‗delinquency areas' might also be defined as local ―subcultures".

In the views of Shoemaker (2000), ―In conventional institutional controls as well as informal social control forces prevail within a community or neighborhood" (p. 78). Adolescents might learn from their peers that economic wealth and social recognition are not only to be achieved by means of conventional school education and vocational training. Deviant behaviour might also be a realistic and feasible alternative to achieve those goals. The peer group as an agent of socialisation plays an important role within the theories of subculture. Frequent contact with older delinquent adolescents in an urban community increases the inclination towards delinquency for younger adolescents.

In their theory of differential opportunity, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) combined elements of the anomie theory, the theory of urban subculture and the theory of differential association formulated by Sutherland (1939). It is claimed that not only the access to legitimate means but also to illegitimate means helps to explain deviant behaviour. Two elements are needed in order to utilize illegitimate means successfully: a learning structure as well as a structure of opportunities as indicated by Cloward (1968, p. 321).

23

The learning structure describes a context which permits the actor to acquire non-conventional values and criminal abilities that are necessary to carry out a _deviant role'.

The term _opportunities' means that individuals must have the chance to fulfill these roles actively. Both learning structure and opportunities are primarily located in disorganized communities. The influence of the urban context on truancy has been researched in a rudimentary fashion. Farrington (1980) showed that truants come from slum areas. Considering the assumptions concerning the extent of local disorganization and the degree of deviant behaviour, one can deduce that the more disorganized an urban community is, the more likely an adolescent comes into contact with peers that skip school, and the higher the risk of individual truancy. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework for the study.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

School factors
- Strict school rules and discipline
- Corporal punishment
- Bullying
- Verbal abuse and threats of teachers
- Dislike of teachers
- Avoidance of test/examination
- Poor school administration and leadership
- Teacher absenteeism and strike

Confounding variables
- Gender
- Age
- Distance to/from school

TRUANCY

Impact/Outcome
- Non-school attendance
- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- School refusal
- Repetition
- Dropout
- Poor/ineffective teaching
- Poor academic performance
- Examination malpractice
- Behavioural disorders (stealing, violence, drug abuse, sexual abuse,etc)

Home factors
- Poor relationship between child and parents
- Poor communication between child and parents
- Poor parenting style
- Lack of parental interest in ward's education
- Financial hardship
- Single parenthood due to separation or divorce

Pupil factors
- Laziness
- Feeling of inferiority among peers
- Illness

Source: Author's own construction (2016)

Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework: Truancy and its Effects on Academic Performance.

The figure shows the factors that can cause truancy among JHS pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben District as well as the impact of truancy on pupils, parents/guardians, school and community or society. The term _truancy' have been used in this study to refer to intentional or unauthorised absence from school or class by a school pupil for one or

25

more part of the school day and for at least three days during five-day school work without formal permission from parents/guardians or school authorities.

Truancy is directly influenced by predisposing, enabling and precipitating factors which are linked to the learner or pupil, home or family, school and community or societal variables. The learner factors which contribute to truancy include but not limited to gender, age, ethnic or racial dissonance, laziness, poor medical or health conditions, school phobia, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, feeling of inferiority among peers or classmates, location and distance from or to school. Similarly, the home factors which contribute to truancy comprise poor child-parent relationship, poor parenting style, poor communication between child and parent, lack of parental interest in child welfare, financial hardship, and single parenthood due to marital separation or divorce.

A plethora of school factors contribute to truancy among school pupils. These include but not limited to poor administration and leadership, rigid school rules and discipline, poor pupil-teacher relationship and communication, corporal punishment, verbal abuse and threat of teachers, sexual harassment and abuse of pupils by teachers, dislike of teacher, teacher absenteeism, lateness and strike, large class size and high pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), suspension and expulsion from school, avoidance of tests or examinations, and school boredom. Other miscellaneous factors which are linked to truancy include weak or no enforcement of educational policies or legislative framework of the ‑compulsory" component of the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE), child labour, excessive attendance of children at social programmes such as funeral, negative peer influence as well as negative media influence, including excessive use of social media and internet.

Truancy has numerous implications on the child, parents, guardians and family, the school, community and society at large. The effects of truancy among school children include but not limited to non-school attendance, school refusal, school phobia, absenteeism, lateness, school repetition, school dropout, poor or ineffective teaching, poor academic performance, examination malpractice, behavioural disorders such as stealing, violence, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and other delinquent acts, idealness, joblessness, unemployment or underemployment, land low productivity in general.

2.4 Understanding the Concepts of Truancy and Academic Performance

Research does not give a standardised definition of either _skipping school' or _truancy'. Oehme and Franzke (2002) described this as a _confusion of concepts'. The two terms are partly used synonymously with the notions of school tiredness, school absenteeism, school phobia, and school refusal behaviour (Oehme & Franzke, 2002; Ricking 2003). The Auditor General Victoria, Australia (2004) described truancy as the persistent, habitual and unexplained absence from school of a child of compulsory school age, although it could occur with parental knowledge and sometimes consent. Truancy is the absence of a student from school without the knowledge or permission of parents (Cunningham, 2005). The truant leaves home under the pretense of going to school, but turns away and become involved in out-of-school activities. Truancy is unauthorised non-attendance. Bond (2004) included fractional truancy, which occurs when pupils arrive late or leave early, or spend entire days away from school. Truancy could take the form of fractional truancy, where pupils arrive late, leave early or skip individual classes.

27

Truancy is defined as _unjustified intentional absence from school' (Pinquardt &Gowert-Masche, 1999). Truancy is also regarded as the unauthorised absenteeism from school (Ricking & Neukäter, 1997). From a sociological point of view, truancy can be considered as deviant behaviour. For the purpose of this research study, truancy is unexcused chronic absence from school as indicated by U.S. Department of Justice (2001).

The term ―truancy" is based on the number of days a student plays truant. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) discovered that, children find it very easy to play truancy in the towns and cities in Ghana. He pointed out that pupils leave home with the pretext of going to school but would never get there at all while others do go but vanish after a few hours. He therefore concluded that, persistent truancy affects school attendance and the pupils' academic performance. Oberwittler, Blank, Köllisch and Naplava (2001) defined those pupils to be ―frequent truants" who skipped school more than five times in the last year. This researcher considers it a necessity to separate minor cases of truancy from severe ones. _Frequent truancy' takes this differentiation into account by describing persistent absence from school, regardless of its causes. Separating harmless cases of truancy from persistent truancy seems to be difficult though there are different degrees of truancy (Thimm, 2000).

2.4.1 The Nature and Prevalence of Truancy among School Pupils

Truancy is really played by boys more often than girls. Mullen (1950) had some evidence that, among pre-adolescent children, boys outnumbered girls as truants by about eight to one but only by three to one in adolescence. Mitchell and Shepherd (1961) stated that, generally girls adjust more easily than boys to school and do better in their primary school work. The boys most at times play truant since physical aggressiveness, independence roughness and

dominance are regarded as desirable in a boy whilst girls are brought up as gentle and polite. Intelligence leads to the pupils absenting themselves from school. Some pupils are below average in intelligence. When this happens, they play truant that is they refuse to go to school. The pupils would not enjoy school simply because they are below average in intelligence and cannot complete with the other pupils in the class.

2.4.1.1 School Absenteeism as Truancy

Based on Martocchio and Jimeno (2003), absence constitutes a single day of missed work or school. Absenteeism from the work place is considered as a symptom of a deep seated problem, and not as a problem on its own (Brayfield & Muchnisky, 2006). Absenteeism could be defined as persistent, habitual, and unexplained absence from school (Brooks, 1997, as cited in Bond, 2004). Bond (2004) noted that chronic absenteeism occurs when a student is absent without reason 20% or more of school time; ― this nominal figure is consistently identified regardless of the specific circumstances of the absenteeism. He identified three dimensions of absenteeism: truancy, condoned absenteeism, and school refusal, whereas the Auditor General Victoria, Australia (2004) identified four major dimensions of absenteeism: truancy, school refusal, school withdrawal, and early leaving. Early leaving refers to children below 15 years who drop out of school before completing their schooling. It is important to identify the different dimensions of absenteeism in tackling the problem because they might require different interventions.

2.4.1.2 Lateness to School asTruancy

Lauby (2009) explained lateness as a term used to describe people not showing up on time. Breezes et al. (2010) contributed by saying that lateness is synonymous with tardiness, which implies being slow to act or slow to respond, thus not meeting up with

29

proper or usual timing. According to Hazeltine (2001), it is important that pupilsget to school on time each and every day. It is disruptive to be in the middle of a prayer and have a student walk in. It is a waste of time for the rest of the class to have to wait while a teacher repeats and announcement or instruction each time a student walks to the class late. According to him, the student's not being punctual at school disrupts classes and by the end of the week, each student may be marked with three or four lateness to class and this affect their academic work.

Stephanie (2005), on the importance of punctuality said, it does not matter how talented you are, you still have to be on time for every activity. According to Stephanie, a lot of candidates enter the examination hall late and this has led to many failures. According to Muchinsky (2003), perception is how a person fairly has fixed views of the way things should be when he/she enters into interpersonal interactions The basic principles of self-perception theory are that: first, _sdf-perception' is simply a special case of social recognition in which we rather than others are the object of perception (Wochel, 2000).

School or class attendance (punctuality and/or lateness), absenteeism, regularity in school/class, interest in teachers' lessons, time with books and studies at home could be attributed to a multitude of factors.

2.4.1.3 School Refusal or Avoidance asTruancy

Several studies show that school refusal is an important dimension in understanding pupils' absenteeism (Dube & Orpinas, 2009; Kearney, 2007; McShane, Walter & Rey, 2001). School refusal differs from truancy in that children refuse to attend school even in the face of persuasion and punitive measures from parents and school. These pupils stay

30

at home with the knowledge of their parents and school administrators (McShane et al., 2001).

There is considerable disagreement among truancy researchers concerning whether the observed increase in truancy rates is the result of an actual increase in school avoidance behaviour, or is simply the result of the juvenile justice system's expanding boundary into what was traditionally the informal responsibility of public educators (Bazemore et al., 2004).

2.4.1.4   Socio-demographic characteristics in relation to prevalence of truancy

The prevalence of truancy by differences in gender and age distribution, socioeconomic status as well as race is discussed in this section.

Gender

Empirical studies uniformly report higher truancy rates for males than females, but females are twice as likely as males to be absent with parental consent. Female truants are said to demonstrate lower anti-social behaviour than truant males, while truant males tend to perceive the school experience more negatively than truant females, a factor thought to contribute to the higher rates of male truancy observed in virtually every extant study available for review (Bell, Rosen & Dynlacht, 1994).Oghuvu (2006) agreed to this when he opined that lateness is common among females more than males. This could be as a result of the fact that females require more time for their body and facial care and make up.

Age

Empirical studies examining truancy characteristics based on age reveal that as student age increases, there is a concurrent increase in student school avoidance behavior. This suggests that students in upper grades in high school will exhibit the highest rates of truancy for both males and females (Bell et al., 1994).

Socio-economic Status

Examining truancy characteristics based on socio-economic status reveals that truant pupils tend to come from economically disadvantaged home situations. It is well established as well that single-parent households are another important family setting variable of consequence (Tittle & Meier, 1990).

Race

Racial and ethnic minority pupils have higher reported truancy rates than white pupils in virtually every study published. It is undetermined, however, whether this phenomenon is the result of higher levels of surveillance of racial and ethnic minorities by educational and juvenile justice systems, or a consequence of the fact that a higher proportion of racial and ethnic minorities come from economically disadvantaged environments (Bell et al., 1994). In the analysis of the problem of differential truancy rates of African American, Latino, Pacific Islander and Native American as compared to whites in Washington, the authors of studies (authorised and funded by the Washington State Legislature) identify the problem of inadequate cultural competence among school staff as an important contributing factor to the long-observed differential rates of truancy and dropouts in the state (Bailey & Dziko, 2008; Hune & Takeuchi, 2008; Takeuchi &Hune, 2008; Contreras & Stritikus, 2008; The People, 2008).

Based in part upon the evidence of the predictive value of the characteristics noted above, many researchers studying truancy postulate that truancy risk factors for any particular area can be identified through appropriate research, and the empirical findings from such research would allow school administrators and teaching staff to anticipate which pupils are most likely to exhibit truancy-behaviours. Armed with such knowledge, dutiful educators could take appropriate, targeted intervention steps and provide focused prevention services (Bell et al., 1994).

2.4.2 The Concept of Academic Performance

Educational performance is normally attributed to three major factors namely: ability, aspiration and opportunity which are closely interrelated (Addae-Mensah, 2000). According to Otu-Danquah (2002), academic performance is what a student is capable of achieving when he is tested on what he/she has been taught. It is how well a student meets standards set out to be attained in an educational institution. It implies that academic performance is determined after the student has been taught specified courses of academic studies or curriculum. According to Adams and Hayes (2001), academic performance really means three things:

a. The ability to study and remember facts,

b. Being able to study effectively and see how facts fit together to form larger patterns of knowledge and being able to think for oneself in relation to facts and thirdly,

c. Being able to communicate knowledge verbally or writing it down on paper.

Asikhia (2010) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard. That is poor academic performance of the individual or

candidate in a learning situation is one in which a candidate fails to attain a set standard of performance in a given evaluation exercise such as a test, an examination or series of continuous assessments. A candidate who scores below the standard is regarded as showing poor academic performance in school. Some people blame pupils and others blame the government while others blame the teachers on this matter.

Some researchers believe that the student characteristics, their living and learning environments and instructional activities contribute to pupils' performance (House, 2002). Studies by Diaz (2003), Hijaz and Naqvi (2006) indicated an association between performances of pupils and the role of different factors such as family, teacher, school environment and personal profile of the pupils.

Gender and Academic Performance

The influence of sex (gender) on academic performance has also been an issue of concern in most studies. This is because _gender' appears to have some powerful effect on learning. Wallerstein (2005) conducted a ten-year follow-up study of children who were pre-schoolers at the time of separation reviewed that although there were no initial sex differences in the effects of broken home, eighteen months following the separation, many of the girls appeared recovered, but boys were significantly more troubled at school, in the playground and at home. Five years after the separation, these sex differences had again disappeared.

2.5 The Predictors or Causes of Truancy

Truancy problem is most typically multi-dimensionalin nature, with many possible contributing factors coming into play (George, 2011). Correlates of truancy are known to

be numerous and diverse, and truancy is broadly believed to seldom result from the effects of one single factor alone. Truancy exists within a context of inter-action effects, including interactions between the traits of the student, the experienced school setting, the family support structure, and the broader community setting (for example, presence of gangs, access to drugs, availability of sports and recreational programmes, extent of police focus upon youth delinquency and crime) - with each relationship being influenced by the others.

The four familiar categories of truancy correlates are identified as particularly salient; those factors include a range of student, school, family, and community-level factors (Baker, 2001a, 2001b). Each of these factors are reciprocal in nature, with considerable overlap obtaining between and among variables, with a combination of factors (an ―interactive syndrome" in medical parlance) best explaining the occurrence of truancy (McClusky et al., 2004).

Hypothesised correlates of truancy behaviour are typically grouped into four separate categories with respect to student-specific variables, school-specific factors, family-specific setting characteristics, and community-specific influences (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Bimler & Kirkland, 2001; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Oman et al., 2002; MacDonald & Marsh, 2004; Teasley, 2004; Reid, 2005; Henry, 2007; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Kearney, 2008).

The causal factors or predictors of truancy among school pupils are: learner factors, parental/family or home factors, school factors, and community/societal factors. The Auditor General Victoria, Australia (2004) categorised the factors influencing

35

absenteeism under two main headings: family and personal factors, and school factors; and expanded family and personal factors to include low parental valuing of, or interest in, education; low socio-economic status; geographic isolation; and unemployment. Studies suggest that the factors influencing pupils' absenteeism at the primary level could be classified into medical and non-medical or four broad categories: home and family, school, community, and personal characteristics of the pupils (Etsey, 2005; Withers, 2004); or two broad categories: school factors, and family and personal factors (Bond, 2004).

2.5.1 Learner/Pupil-related factors in relation to truancy

The most common reason for absenteeism is illness followed by death occurring in the family. Indeed, illness is a recurring factor which contributes strongly to absenteeism, dropout and non-enrolment (Basic education statistics report 2009/10). For the purpose of this study, student variables, family factors, school factors and economic factors are identified as causes related to student absenteeism (Rothman, 2001; Davidson, 2002; Applegate, 2003). Flanagan and Murray(2002)also interfere with other pupils' opportunity to learn by being late, absent or disruptive. Many pupils do absent themselves from school based on illness. Sometimes some sick pupils are forced to go to school and as a result transmit communicable diseases to their schoolmates. This leads to even greater absenteeism and reduced productivity among other pupils who attend school while ill (Bullington, 2002). According to Nelson and Quick (2008), people who are dissatisfied with their jobs and/or school are absent more frequently.

Truancy is directly linked to negative peer influence. Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996) reported that the main causes of truancy are: the influence of friends and peer

36

group; their relationships, or lack of them, with teachers; the content and delivery of the curriculum, which may seem irrelevant; family circumstances; bullying; and the classroom context in which the teacher is unable to control the class or where problems arise from the child's personality or learning abilities. Truancy among pupils is caused by school-related reasons such as corporal punishment, bullying by school staff, boredom, dislike of teachers and avoidance of tests. These are without parents' knowledge (Kirk, 2003).

Absenteeism is linked to truancy of absentee pupils. Truancy is directly linked to negative peer influence. Kinder et al. (1996) reported that the main causes of truancy are: the influence of friends and peer group; their relationships, or lack of them, with teachers; the content and delivery of the curriculum, which may seem irrelevant; family circumstances; bullying; and the classroom context in which the teacher is unable to control the class or where problems arise from the child's personality or learning abilities.

Ubogu (2004) also identified causes of absenteeism to include: illness, financial hardship, age, social class, geographical area, truancy and institutional influence. Some pupils play truancy because of their physical health, and others are due to intelligence and sex differences. Bendel, Halfon, and Ever-Hadani (1976) indicated that possible medical factors influencing pupils' absenteeism at the primary level included respiratory infections, toothaches, abdominal pains, headache, and pains on legs or arms; while non-medical reasons for absenteeism were truancy, family events, excursions, and helping family at home.

37

Dube and Orpinas (2009) noted reasons for pupils' refusal to attend school: refusal to go to school to avoid fear or anxiety-producing situations, to escape from adverse social or evaluative situations, or to gain positive tangible rewards; pupils miss school to gain parental attention or receive tangible rewards (positive reinforcement); and no specific reason for not attending school.

2.5.2   Family/home factors in relation to truancy

Children are absent from school because their parents or guardians keep them away from school on a frequent basis. This is because of parents' needs and priorities. Some parents and guardians keep their children to engage them in work at the expense of their education. When domestic crisis occur, they feel they must keep the children so that they could see to the work being done. Most families are guilty on this parental withdrawal. Cunningham (2005) referred to this as parental agreed absence. Bond (2004) noted that this does not necessarily equate to approved absence. According to Bond (2004), absence could only be approved by the school if a reasonable excuse is given by parents. Parental withdrawal of their wards from school leads to low academic performance of pupils. For the most part, these children's parents do not enroll them at school. Instead, they engage them in domestic chores and other activities.

Moderate engagement of children in household and other activities are necessary, but excessively doing them and at a wrong timing is what cause lateness to school. In some cases, most parents even oblige their wards to help carry their goods to the market and other such kinds of chores before going to school. Activities like these inevitably cause lateness to school, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Furthermore, Oghuvu (2008) concurred Dafiaghor to this when he opined that ―lateness is common as a result of poor

parental care. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of the student, usually yield to truancy and poor academic performance. Kutuadu and Marfo (2001) expressed their views that negligence of parents to cater for their wards in school is a very bad practice which further leads to a number of adverse effects on the society.

Family factors such as lack of guidance or parental supervision, domestic violence, poverty, drug or alcohol abuse in the home, lack of awareness of attendance laws, and differing attitudes toward education predict truancy (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). In some cases, fractional school attendance and the habit of lateness is being copied from family members. For instance, a child who sees the father always going late to work could also either voluntarily or involuntarily learn the habit, thus go to school late also. This is supported by Peretomode (2001) and Egbule (2004) when they elaborated the concept of nature-nurture as it affects an individual's habits.

As with family structure and origin of birth, socioeconomic status is an important variable to examine when considering the behaviour of truancy (Snyder et al., 2006). Low socioeconomic status is correlated with both poor school performance and with truancy. A number of theories have been offered to explain the relationship between low socioeconomic status and truancy. First, poverty has been implicated in the delayed mental, physical, and psychological development of children (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007). A mother's poor pre-natal health, and a child's poor nutrition and lack of access to quality medical care, both common outcomes of poverty, have been identified as contributing to the incidence of learning difficulties among children (KewalRamani et al., 2007). Children experiencing learning difficulties are known to have a higher probability of engaging in school avoidance behaviour (KewalRamani et

39

al., 2007). Second, poverty has also been implicated in children's lack of access to quality education and out-of-school learning opportunities (KewalRamani et al., 2007).

Schools in low income areas often report low levels of academic achievement on the part of their pupils, and they report high rates of truancy (Bailey & Dziko, 2008). Third, poverty has been implicated in children's difficulty to consistently attend or remain enrolled in school. Whether the result of remaining at home to care for sick, or unsupervised siblings, or dropping out of school to obtain employment; research indicates that children who come from a low socioeconomic background often engage in truancy at least in part because of their poverty status (KewalRamani et al., 2007).

Economic influences linked to employed pupils, single-parent homes, high mobility rates, parents who hold multiple jobs, and a lack of affordable transportation and childcare predict fractional truancy (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). In the case of a broken home, when a family has experienced divorce or death leaving one parent to be primarily responsible for raising the children, they become a broken home or family (Gale Conkline, 2006).

Ballantine and Hammerick (2009) observed that children from divorced households have lower grades, lower test scores and higher drop up rates on average than those from two-parents (intact) households. These results are also influenced by factors such as the education level of parents and the low level involvement by the absence of a parent. Children from broken families give warning signs that they are likely to have problems in school very early especially for children who receive little cognitive stimulation and emotional support. Unless there is significant parental support and supervision, these

40

factors are correlated with children living today and absent from school, not doing homework, not having contact with their parents and sometimes engaging in frequent dating and early sex if they are adolescents (Cavanagh & Houstine, 2006).

Guidubaldi and Perry (2005) also found that boys in divorced households or broken homes exhibited more adverse effects than girls, in terms of inappropriate behaviour, work effort, and happiness. Girls with divorced parents, on the other hand, scored higher in locus of control than their counterparts. Over the years, the investigations of the factors that influence academic performance of pupils have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Ghana. This is because there are public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country. Again, the findings on gender differences in children's responses to marriage separation (broken home) have been contradictory. Some researches point to more adjustment problems for boys in broken families than for girls. For instance, Slater et al. (2003) found that adolescent girls from disrupted homes had lower self-esteem and more behaviour problems than adolescent boys in similar home life situations. While in a longitudinal study, Zill et al. (2003) found no evidence to support the hypothesis that young adult males were more likely than girls to be vulnerable to the effects of marital disruption. A possible reason for the contradictory findings related to gender could be that of the research setting or the culture in which the research was conducted.

In terms of self-esteem, truancy and social network, girls from separated homes are victims. They have lower self-esteem, more behavioural problem than adolescent boys (Farber, 2003). Clinical director's college mental health counselling centres said that female adolescent had more difficulty than males in adapting to divorce. Guidubaldi and

Perry (2005) found that boys in divorce households exhibit more adverse effect than girls in terms of behavioural work effort and happiness.

Other studies have found more detrimental effects for girls than boys. Slater et al.(2003) found that adolescent girls from disrupted homes had lower self-esteem and more behaviour problems than adolescent boys in similar home life situations. Furthermore, while female adolescents from disrupted homes reported higher levels of family conflict than females from intact families, the opposite was true for males.

The family which has been identified as one of the most important social units that provides social and economic security to its members is under threat due to rising cases of divorce and separation (Wegman, 2006). For this reason, schools are likely to have more pupils whose parents have been divorced or separated than ever before (Ankomah, 2002). Fadeiye (1985) and Uwaifo (2008) found that differences in academic performance of children exist in terms of those from single parent and those from two parent families.

Generally, it is the responsibility of the family to train and bring up the child in the norms and values of the society. They are to be responsible for the psychological and emotional welfare of the child. Parents who fail to perform their God given duties as a result of divorce, separation or death put their children in a dilemma (Fallon & Bowles, 2001). Most adolescents emulate certain behaviours from their peers which compel them to deviate from the accepted norm. Since most of them do not even know where they are going, every place becomes their destination. Thus, every behaviour that comes their way whether good or bad become acceptable to them (Munger & Morse, 2002).

42

2.5.3 School Factors in Relation to Truancy

School related factors such as teachers' attitude, poor administration, high cost of education, illness due to weather condition such as cold, temperature grey days causes absenteeism among pupils. Ubogu (2004) identified illness, permitted leave, voluntary absenteeism, as common forms of absenteeism. School factors include boredom with schoolwork, being bullied, threatened, or involved in fights; inadequate school support and welfare, unsatisfactory relations between pupils and their teachers; and an irrelevant or restrictive curriculum. These factors do not necessarily influence absenteeism in discrete ways, but are likely to be interconnected in their impact on absenteeism.

Other school factors include school climate issues such as school size and attitudes of teachers, other pupils, and administrators, and inflexibility in meeting the diverse cultural and learning styles of pupils. Schools often have inconsistent procedures in place for dealing with chronic absenteeism and may not have meaningful consequences available for truant youth, for example, out of school suspension (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). Truancy among pupils is also caused by school-related reasons such as corporal punishment, bullying by school staff, boredom, dislike of teachers and avoidance of tests (Kirk, 2003). These acts create fear or phobia in children, and this prevents them from attending school. This is discussed in the next paragraph.

Absenteeism is associated with school phobia, a fear to attend school. This might be due to threats, unnecessary caning and insults from teachers making the school environment hostile to the child. The illegal canning and unnecessary punishment all forms part of this menace. It creates a whole lot of problems for pupils. When a child goes to school and get caned unnecessarily, insulted and shouted at, he/she gets discouraged and loses

43

interest in attending school regularly. The pupil becomes afraid and does not like to go to school. The caning and threats put some fear in him/her. The pupils then become handicapped. They stay at home a lot making their academic performance to dwindle. To avoid all these, they resort to being truant.

Unnecessary caning, illegal punishment and threatening of pupils, result in the high rate of absenteeism. It disturbs classroom activities thereby wasting energy and efforts. School phobia might be due to a lot of things that go on in the school. Casting all sorts of insults and unnecessary caning kills the pupils' interest in coming to school regularly. The pupils have it in their minds that if they go to school, they would be punished or insulted. This then instills some sort of fear in them making them to absent themselves from school. The pupils therefore prefer to stay at home than to come to school.

Teachers play a role in the pupil's fractional truancy, particularly absenteeism. A teacher is supposed to be sympathetic, patient and tolerant. The teachers in the school have to show love and care towards the children. Teachers have to take their time in dealing with the pupils and see them as their children, or if not, their siblings. Some teachers are too harsh on pupils, easily get angry with them, beat them mercilessly, rain insults and threaten the children. These things deter the pupils from coming to school. They become afraid of their teacher and absent themselves from school. The teachers make the pupils play truant. School principals also play a role in pupils' refusal to attend school. School head's fairness or equal treatment between different subjects, as perceived by individuals, could cause lateness. Individuals are likely to be more punctual if they perceive obvious ―rule of law‖ in terms of punctuality (Clackmannanshire Council Online, 2010).

Many factors come into consideration when one refuses to go to school. School refusal as a form of absenteeism is widely associated with social and medical disorder involving persistent non-attendance at school, excessive anxiety, and physical complaints (Bond, 2004). This type of absenteeism could be separated from the other types, given its psychological and/or medical composition. Dube and Orpinas (2009) noted reasons for pupils' refusal to attend school: refusal to go to school to avoid fear or anxiety-producing situations, to escape from adverse social or evaluative situations, or to gain positive tangible rewards; pupils miss school to gain parental attention or receive tangible rewards (positive reinforcement); and no specific reason for not attending school.

Poor school infrastructure also predicts truancy, including absenteeism from school. According to Schagen, Benton and Rutt (2004), contextual variables such as, school size and location, have a large influence on the extent of absence within schools. School refusal is dissatisfaction from school, a tendency that implies a dislike for school. A school which has insufficient infrastructure and other facilities also deters the child from attending school. The child would not feel comfortable to come to the school and learn. For example, a school which has gotten its roof leaking during rainy season would not make pupils feel comfortable coming to school.

2.5.4   The Electronic Media in Relation to Truancy

The emergence and patronage of electronic media, especially internet facilities such as social media could predict the occurrence truancy among pupils. For instance, excessive use of internet (mail/social network) and other media.Internet has been a good tool for research, projects and one of the quickest means to communicate. However, there is a disadvantage to it as well. People tend to do a lot of unnecessary work. Banquil and Chua

(2009) came up with a conclusion that social networking sites do affect one's academic performance adversely. Paul, Baker and Cochran (2012), in his research on effect of online social networking on student academic performance found that there is statistically significant negative relationship between time spent by pupils on online social networks and their academic performance. The individual involved in watching films and home videos may be so captivated and hypnotised by it that he/she forgets that he/she has to be in school; and at sudden realisation, he/she hurries off and likely may not be punctual (Ukoshi, 2004).

2.5.5 Community/Societal Factors in Relation to Truancy

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) discovered that children find it very easy to play truancy in the towns and cities in Ghana. He pointed out that the pupils leave home with the pretext of going to school but would never get there at all while others do go but vanish after a few hours. He therefore concluded that, persistent truancy affects school attendance and the pupils' academic performance is highly abysmal. Addison (1957) writing on the role of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) under the caption ‗The Home and the child' stated that parents and teachers should come together to think and plan about the welfare of the child. The absence of PTA pre-supposes that absence of formal co-operation between the school and the community. During class hours, some pupils would be found loitering about. The community is a very big factor since it engages the pupils in commercial activities like selling foodstuff, bread and icy-water. When the community does not take education of its pupils very seriously, the pupils would not perform well which would or could affect the community's later development.

In some communities or settlements, absenteeism could be linked with geographical locations, commercial and agricultural as well as other activities In Jamaica, for instance, absenteeism is highest in some geographical locations of the island due to the harvest time in the agricultural sector as indicated by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2006).

Predictors of truancy can be detected through student observation within or outside of the school setting, through observing or having knowledge of a student's family life, or having familiarity of the community within which the student resides or attends school. Being knowledgeable of predictors of truancy behaviour allows school administrators and teaching staff to identify at-risk pupils early for truancy prevention and behavioural intervention. Such early prevention and intervention efforts are essential to prevent poor school attendance from leading to poor school performance, as well as prevent the adoption of more severe poor attendance behaviours that can be difficult to alter, possibly resulting in early school withdrawal.

2.6   The Effects of Truancy onthe Child, Family and
   Community and Society

Truancy predict poor school attendance, poor learning outcomes, school repetition and drop out, behavior problems, and other economic effects or loss. Successful schools cannot survive without physically present pupils. Existing research indicates that truancy poses significant short and long term challenges for the school-avoiding student, and likewise poses difficult problems for the truant student's school, family, and community (Bazemore et al., 2004; George, 2011; Smink & Heilbrunn, 2005; Teasley, 2004). Truant behaviour often serves as an indicator of deeper problems

47

(Baker, 2001a, 2001b). Today, individuals working with truant pupils tend to embrace (either directly or indirectly) the idea that truancy has far-reaching implications with severe consequences for both childhood and adult outcomes, as well as for society as a whole (Bazemore et al., 2004; George, 2011). These impacts are reported to be individual, school, family, and community-specific.

Truancy is often linked to poor school academic achievement.So, school attendance by pupils plays an integral role in the success and educational advancement levels of any academic institution and all pupils enrolled. Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson and Kirk (2003) identified effects of absenteeism on children such as: academic underachievement which increases costs and wastage, difficulty in making friends which could lead to boredom, loss of confidence and engagement in premature sexual activity which could lead to pregnancy resulting in dropout and stress among young careers.

In a study conducted by Rothman (2001), high student absenteeism rates were found to affect the achievement of pupils' that attend regularly by disrupting the existing learning groups (Zamudio, 2004). Pupils who have truancy, particularly absenteeism problems generally suffer academically and socially (Williams, 2000). Studies indicate that pupils who are absent have lower achievement and may be penalised on test scores (Barker & Jansen, 2000). Sustained absences might affect retention as it might degenerate into truancy (Lotz & Lee, 1999; Barker & Jansen, 2000).

Successful schools cannot survive without physically present pupils. Absenteeism contributes to loss of instructional time. Excessive school absenteeism due to truancy is

often linked to poor school academic achievement, so school attendance by both teachers and pupils plays an integral role in the success and educational advancement levels of any academic institution and all pupils enrolled. Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson and Kirk (2003) teachers identified effects of absenteeism on children such as: academic underachievement which increases costs and wastage, difficulty in making friends which could lead to boredom, loss of confidence and engagement in premature sexual activity which could lead to pregnancy resulting in dropout and stress among young careers.

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According to Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2005), pupils' attitudes such as school attendance (punctuality and/or lateness), absenteeism, regularity in school, language use, interest in teachers' lessons, time with books and studies at home influence academic performance. They found that lateness does not significantly contribute to differences in pupils' performance. However, they found a significant relationship between regularity in school and pupils' academic performance. They also, however, did not find any significant association between time with books at home and academic performance. Pupils who missed class on a given date were significantly more likely to respond incorrectly to questions relating to material covered that day than pupils who were present (Enomoto, 1997). Most surprisingly, most studies have found an inverse relationship between absenteeism and course performance (Marburger, 2001).

49

Absenteeism places pupils at risk; they are unable to achieve their educational, social, and psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations. One possible reason for children being held back at home during this period — especially girls — was to care for their younger siblings (IDB, 2006). Burns (1992) stated that absenteeism among pupils is clearly associated with school failure. Burns explained that pupils who miss more contact hours in school have trouble in their academic performance. Butler (1999) also argued that class attendance of pupils, and completion of assignment by pupils directly affects the knowledge base, the skills level and competences of pupils in the educational settings and automatically affects pupils' academic performance.

Truancy could contribute to poor academic performance, according to Aremu and Sokan (2003), is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant that shows as falling below an expected standard. Aremu (2000) stressed that academic failure is not only frustrating to the pupils and the parents, its effect are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics. Truancy can result from difficult situations within the family.

Several empirical studies indicated that, children from low-income families who were also chronically absent in kindergarten had the lowest levels of achievement in fifth grade (Chang & Romero, 2008). Compared to children with average attendance, chronically absent pupils gained 14 percent fewer literacy skills in kindergarten, and 15 percent fewer literacy skills and 12 percent fewer mathematics skills in first grade, based on analysis of a nationally representative data set (Ready, 2010). Children from low-income families with good attendance also gained more literacy skills than peers from higher-income

50

families during kindergarten and first grade (Ready, 2010). In Baltimore, pupils who were chronically absent in kindergarten often continued to be chronically absent in later years, and are more likely to be retained and have lower achievement (Connolly & Olson, 2012). In Oregon, chronic absence in one early grade is linked with lower test scores throughout elementary school; but being chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade is linked to the lowest scores (ECONorthwest, 2011).

Absence from school creates a dead, tiresome, unpleasant classroom environment that makes pupils who come to class uncomfortable and the teacher or lecturer irritable (Marburger, 2001). Absenteeism disturbs the dynamic teaching-learning environment and adversely affects the overall well-being of classes (Segal, 2008). In quality terms, absenteeism is a waste of educational resources, time and human potential. Bruno (2002) stressed that pupils in a classroom eventually lose the desire to learn when the regular teacher is frequently absent and the delivery of the instructional is by an array of substitute teachers.

The implications of absenteeism are felt outside the classroom as well (Williams, 2000). Poor school attendance lowers the literacy and numeracy rates of any country (Thompson, 2008). Continuous loss of instruction and poor academic achievement among pupils with high absenteeism are essential characteristics of pupils who later drop out of school (Mayer & Mitchel, 1996). Lotz and Lee (1999) indicated that acts of delinquency are more frequent among pupils who exhibit low grades, have spotty attendance, and later on drop out of school. The society suffers as the children of school age hang around in the streets, intimidating other people and stealing properties of those who are in school and other place of work.

Absences are wasteful from a purely financial standpoint, because it costs the government or the management the same amount whether 100% or 85% boys are present. This has a very positive effect, in that; it keeps the institution alert in inculcating the habit of regular attendance among the boys (Nawaz, 2005).

Education attainment is a crucial predictor of several health-related lifestyles and premature mortality. However, truant behaviours have potential to curtail possibilities of meaningful academic achievement. Truancy is a predictor of multiple health risk behaviours among adolescents. Truant adolescents have been reported to engage in risky sexual practices, illicit drug use, alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking. Henry suggested that the unsupervised time that adolescents have when they are truant allows them to initiate and maintain unhealthy behaviours (Azizi Yahya et al., 2010). Truancy in childhood may be associated with adverse social and health outcome later in life. Studies have reported that adults who were truant as adolescents were more likely to experience marital or job instability and psychological maladjustment when compared to their counterparts who were not truant as adolescents(Azizi Yahya et al., 2010).

The pupils' notoriousness are not only confined to smoking cigarettes, fighting with each other or behaving obscenely but also involving dumping babies, running away from home, free sex and mingling. Absenteeism is detrimental to student's achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. Clearly, pupils who miss school fall behind their peers in the classroom. This, in turn leads to low self-esteem and increase the likelihood that at-risk pupils will drop out of school (Azizi Yahya et al., 2010).

Failure to graduate, in turn, is associated with diminished earning potential in adulthood and other poor outcome. Most parents do not visit school except in response to problems. Parents' involvement in the school activities is likely to be related to their own educational levels, and hence many illiterate parents may need encouragement to become involved in the running of schools. Parent attitudes towards education particularly not encouraging girls to acquire good education are also critical to pupils' performance. Potentiality exists for academic based parents in all schools possibly at close of the term before the June breaks, Restuta Shirima (2002).

Outcomes of truancy could be individual-specific, school-specific, family-specific, and community-specific.Individual-specific consequences of truancy are both immediate and long-term. The most obvious immediate result of truancy is educational, with chronically truant pupils reported to suffer serious to severe academic deficits (Loeber & Farrington, 2001; Baker et al., 2001a, 2001b,Sheldon & Epstein2004; Teasley, 2004; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Sheldon, 2007;). Such educational failure most often culminates in poor future employment outcomes, with chronically truant pupils experiencing employment-related difficulties such as lower status occupations, less stable career patterns, higher unemployment rates, and low earnings as adults (Baker, 2001, 2001; Famillies, 2002; Elizondo et al., 2003; Hallfors et al., 2002; Sum et al., 2003). Chronically truant pupils also experience future relational difficulties, including those formed in early parenthood; they tend to produce a greater number of dependents, engage in early marriage, and experience more frequent marital breakdown as adults (Baker, 2001, 2001; Sum et al., 2003).

Poor health status is also documented as a negative adult outcome of early chronic truancy. Such individuals are said to be more likely to suffer from poor mental health, from substance abuse issues, as well as pose increased personal injury risk (Baker, 2001, 2001; Bazemore et al., 2004). Finally, engagement in deviant and anti-social activities has been reported as an immediate result of early truancy behaviour, with long term effects believed to include adult criminal activity (Baker, 2001, 2001; Barth, 1984; Bazemore et al., 2004).

As regards school-specific outcomes,truancy has a direct impact on educational institutions, with school-specific consequences of truancy behaviour being largely revenue-based (Bell et al., 1994; Corville-Smith, 1995). The most serious consequence of truancy for schools is lost revenue; school funding or capitation is typically allocated based on enrolment rates. With less revenue, schools have a reduced capacity to meet the educational needs of their pupils through educational services and programmes, a situation that impacts all enrolled pupils regardless of their attendance behaviour (Bell et al., 1994).

In addition to the revenue-based consequences of truancy, school administrators, teachers and staff also report that truancy behaviour often results in major disruptions to the educational process (Corville-Smith, 1995). Whether these disruptions are caused by having to devote considerable amounts of time and effort to locating truant pupils and contacting parents/guardians, or from helping truant pupils to catch up or keep up with their school work, such disruptions are reported to be not only financially costly, but also burdensome in terms of the loss of educational progress toward learning goals and objectives (Corville-Smith, 1995).

There are family-specific outcomes due to truancy.Truancy behaviour generally impacts family life quite negatively. This impact can take the form of family conflict with educational or social services providers, or stress among family members resulting from lost work or a lack of supervision for the truant student when not in school.

Truancy has community-specific outcomes.For communities, the effects of truancy can be economic, political, and social in nature. Long-term outcomes of truancy for communities that are commonly cited include forgone income and tax revenues that can support government services, communities with members who place increased demands on the community's social services programmes, communities with an increase in crime rates, and members of the community who have reduced levels of political participation, reduced intergenerational mobility, and poor levels of health (Bazemore et al., 2004).

2.7   Intervention to Mitigate Truancy Among School Pupils

Measures to mitigate or curb truancy could be punitive or corrective in nature. These include, but not limited to corporal punishment and counselling. Truancy researchers and school, court, law enforcement, social services and community practitioners indicate that truancy approaches that are exclusively punitive and sanction-oriented are not effective at reducing or eliminating truancy behaviour (Byer & Kuhn, 2003). It is commonly understood that truancy cannot be conceptualized exclusively as a disciplinary or student management issue, and that effective truancy programmemes must address both truancy behaviourandits root causes (Dembo & Gulledge, 2009). There is general agreement that in order for truancy programmemes to be effective in reducing and eliminating truancy behaviour, truancy programmemes must be comprehensive, flexible, responsive, and

preserving in nature, much like the dynamic nature of truancy itself" (Ventura & Miller, 2005). As such, multi-modal intervention and prevention services are currently considered to be the best strategy to address truancy behaviour. The next subsection discusses the multi-modal approach to eliminating truancy.

The multi-modal approach

With increased understanding of the nature of the truancy problem has also come the development of a number of intervention and prevention programmes intended to address school avoidance behaviour. Programmes that have been developed have generally employed a combination of student, school, family, and community-based approaches. Multi-modal approaches consist of programmes that employ collaborative efforts among truant pupils, teachers, school administrators, parents, community members, as well as governmental, non-governmental, law enforcement and legal advocate agencies most likely to come into contact with truant pupils. Multi-modal programmes bring together multiple agencies to provide specialized services that address the root cause of the truancy problem, not just treat the symptom of school avoidance. Multi-modal strategies typically assess the needs of pupils and involve educators, administrators, and the community before instituting punitive sanctions (Reid, 2000; Reid, 2002; Beem, 2002; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Jones et al., 2002; Mogulescu & Segal, 2002; Lauchlan, 2003; Reid, 2003; Quinn, 2004; Heilbrunn, 2004,Pellegrini, 2007).

Advocates of the multi-modal approach also suggest that prevention efforts should target pupils identified as high risk for future truant behaviour. Advocates suggest such efforts can prevent truancy behaviour from ever developing, thereby decreasing the need for

mid-term and late intervention efforts (McGiboney, 2001; White et al., 2001; Mogulescu & Segal, 2002).

Even for those truant pupils for whom the juvenile justice system has become their final stopping point, multi-modal advocates suggest that positive outcomes do exist. Juvenile justice programmes that work collaboratively with truant pupils, parents, the community, and additional social service agencies, while also employing firm and consistent sanctions for truants, can provide meaningful incentives to truants and their parents/guardians. Ongoing school-based intervention techniques and the active involvement of youth-oriented law enforcement officers such as school resource officers, welfare officers and counsellors are said to produce the best results for system-involved youth (Berger & Wind, 2000; Mogulescu & Segal, 2002). The U.S. juvenile justice system is engaged in expanding its use of a combination of community-based treatment and criminal justice and juvenile justice system penalties to address the complex issues underlying truancy (Baker, 2001, 2001; Bazemore et al., 2004; McClusky et al., 2004).

Multi-modal advocates suggest thoughtful and well-planned truancy intervention efforts utilizing a multi-modal approach can experience high to moderate levels of success at reducing school avoidance behaviour among truant pupils in a short period of time; however, the most effective programmes for sustained truancy reduction have been those which have utilized an established multi-modal approach of long duration (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

Reviewing ―emerging‖, ―promising‖, and ―model‖ truancy programmemes (Reimer & Dimock, 2005), truancy researchers have identified several components they define as

critical to the programmemes' successful truancy intervention and prevention outcomes. These critical components include: 1) active collaboration between schools and community institutions; 2) student family involvement; 3) use of a comprehensive approach to problem-solving; 4) the use of incentives as well as sanctions; 5) operating in a supportive context of active encouragement as opposed to one focused on punitive reactions; and 6) rigorous and continual evaluation and assessment (Baker et al., 2001; Dembo & Gulledge, 2009; Dukes & Stein, 2001; Fantuzzo et al., 2005; Reimer & Dimock, 2005; USDJP, 2007).

There are also best practices for truancy prevention.Emerging, promising, and model truancy programmes. The first component identified as critical for successful truancy programmeme outcomes is collaboration. Truancy programmemes that include a broad-based collaborative approach between the programmeme, truant youth and their families and a multidisciplinary group including, schools, law enforcement, courts, social services, and the community are found to be the strongest in positive results and most sustainable over time. Truancy researchers also note that most funding and government agencies now expect that truancy programmes will engage in collaborative community-based planning. Truancy researchers have found that the multidisciplinary collaborative approach ensures that truancy programmes derive benefit from the many different perspectives and areas of expertise of those working together to motivate school attendance. Truancy researchers have also found that truancy programmes using the multidisciplinary collaborative approach are successful at building a common goal around the truancy issue, avoiding multiple agencies exerting truancy efforts in isolation. Truancy researchers have identified emerging, promising, and model programmes using

the collaborative approach to truancy behaviour (Reimer & Dimock, 2005), for programmeme examples, descriptions, and contact information). Truancy researchers have also identified strategies for establishing an effective collaboration (Reimer & Dimock, 2005). Additionally, truancy researchers have also stressed the importance of evaluating the collaborative effort to allow for midcourse correction and ultimately improvement where collaborative challenges exist (Reimer & Dimock, 2005).

The second component identified as critical for successful truancy programmeme outcomes is family involvement. Truancy researchers have found that the most successful truancy programmes, ―target family participation in school attachment activities, engage families in all truancy prevention and intervention efforts, and address family-based needs to support attendance*"* (Reimer & Dimock, 2005, p. 4). This engagement is more than simply inviting family‗s attendance at school and court meetings. The most successful truancy programmes seek out families for their advice on the truancy issue and experience within their community. Families are viewed as experts in their children‗s lives. The most successful truancy programmes engage families early and on a continual basis, not just when a pressing concern is present. Truancy researchers have identified emerging, promising, and model programmes that include family involvement in their programmematic efforts (Reimer & Dimock, 2005) for programmme examples, descriptions, and contact information). Truancy researchers have also identified strategies for ensuring family involvement (Reimer & Dimock, 2005).

The third component identified as critical for successful truancy programme outcomes is a comprehensive approach. The most promising truancy programmes are flexible and broad enough to take into consideration the multiple and varied factors that contribute to

59

truancy behaviour and needs that are present among truant youth and their families. They also focus simultaneously on prevention and intervention efforts and are prepared to address truancy issues along the absence continuum including the very first to the very last unexcused absence. These programmes employ a dynamic approach and respond with a comprehensive continuum of services. Truancy researchers have identified emerging, promising, and model programmes that include a comprehensive approach to truancy behaviour (Reimer & Dimock, 2005) for programme examples, descriptions, and contact information). Truancy researchers have also identified strategies for establishing comprehensive programmes (Reimer & Dimock, 2005).

The use of both incentives and sanctions is the fourth component identified as critical for successful truancy programme outcomes. A combination of motivating incentives, typically recognition-based, such as special experiences or monetary rewards, and accountability-based sanctions, typically punitive in nature, such as, detention, suspension, truancy petitions to juvenile court, or the denial of privileges, have been found to work the best with truant youth and their families. Truancy researchers have found that the most successful programmes employ incentives that are motivating in nature, and sanctions that are clearly related to the behaviour, imposed quickly, and sufficiently graduated to respond appropriately to each succeeding absence. Truancy researchers have also stressed the importance of employing incentives and sanctions that are meaningfulto both the truant youth and their family. Truancy researchers have identified emerging, promising, and model programmes that include a combination of motivating incentives and accountability-based sanctions in response to truancy behaviour (Reimer & Dimock, 2005).

Operating in a supportive context is the fifth component identified as critical for successful truancy programme outcomes. In this case, context refers to the programme environment, including its infrastructure and prevailing policies. The most successful truancy programmes recognize the importance of a supportive context on their effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Successful truancy programmes survive and thrive when they operate in a context where they are not fighting against an existing system infrastructure or acting in isolation. Successful truancy programmes spend time nurturing this supportive context and understand it is in their best interest to positively impact and influence this context to effectively address truancy behaviour and be sustainable over time. Truancy researchers have identified emerging, promising, and model programmes that create and maintain a supportive context (Reimer & Dimock, 2005) for programme examples, descriptions, and contact information. Strategies for creating and maintaining a supportive context have also been identified (Reimer & Dimock, 2005) for specific strategies.

The sixth and final component identified as critical for successful truancy programme outcomes is rigorous and continual evaluation and assessment of truancy programme impact, outcome, and effectiveness. Truancy researchers have found that the most successful truancy programmes evaluate their programme's policies and approaches to determine whether they are obtaining their desired outcome, and if not, make midcourse corrections. Successful truancy programmes understand that rigorous evaluation designs that measure the impact and outcome of their programme help sustain funding and generate positive political will. Successful truancy programmes also appreciate the fact that in this current economic climate funding agencies have started to limit their

61

investments to programmes that have demonstrated success. As such, the managers of successful truancy programmes understand that such data collection and systematic analysis is mandatory. Truancy researchers have identified emerging, promising, and model programmes that employ a rigorous and continual evaluation and assessment of their truancy programme's impact, outcome, and effectiveness Reimer & Dimock, (2005).Strategies for developing and implementing a programmeme evaluation and assessment have also been identified (Baker et al., 2001; Dukes & Stein, 2001; Reimer & Dimock, 2005; Fantuzzo et al., 2005; Reimer & Dimock, 2005; USDJP, 2007; Dembo & Gulledge, 2009).

Truancy researchers virtually universally feel that utilizing established best practices is a sound investment strategy because it allows practitioners and policymakers to avoid the task of ―re-creating the wheel,‖ thereby providing more time for thoughtful implementation and more time to spend on adapting their own truancy programmeme to meet the unique needs of their community. In addition, that attraction of resources and grant or foundation support increasingly depends on a showing that one's proposed programme has been demonstrated to produce success (Reimer & Dimock, 2005).

Additional truancy programmes and further recommendations.

In addition to identifying, emerging, promising, and model programmes that incorporate the six critical components noted above, truancy researchers have identified some additional truancy programmes that have experienced some measure of success at truancy intervention and prevention in particular settings which deserve attention. These programmes are typically grouped by type of institutional setting in which they operate.

The settings in question include*school-based programmes* (Baker & Jansen, 2000; Brooks, 2001; DeSecio et al., 2007; Finlay et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2002; Lehr et al., 2004; Reimer & Cash, 2003; USDJP, 2007); *family-based programmes*(Brooks, 2001; USDJP, 2007); *community-based programmes*(Fantuzzo et al., 2005; USDJP, 2007); *law enforcement-based programmes*(Bazemore et al., 2004, Dembo & Gulledge, 2009; Jones et al., 2002; Vance et al., 2008); *court-based programmes*(Byer, 2000; Byer & Kuhn, 2003; Mogulescu et al., 2002; Mueller et al., 2006; Richtman, 2007; Shoenfelt & Huddleston, 2006; Tennell, 2004; Zhang et al., 2007); *combination programmes*(Baker et al., 2001, Elizondo et al., 2003; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; McCluskey et al., 2004; Mueller et al., 2006; Sheldon & Epsten, 2004; Sheldon, 2007; Sheverbush et al., 2000; Sutphen & Ford, 2003; USDJP, 2007; Ventura & Miller, 2005; White et al., 2001).

Truancy researchers recommend that the state expand their truancy intervention efforts to include truant pupilsaged five to eightyears. Early intervention with pupils at this young age is thought to be successful at reducing truancy behaviour because poor attendance patterns have not yet set in and younger pupils are more amenable to adopting good attendance behaviour. Second, the state's principal truancy researchers recommend that the state should target pupilstransitioning from middle school to high schoolwhen truancy behaviour begins to become more prevalent. Third, they recommend the provision of a more stable funding commitment and equitable reimbursement system. They suggest long-term truancy solutions require dedicated and sustained funding solutions and reimbursement systems should be tied to schools' truancy effort outcomes, not to just how many truancy petitions are filed with the pertinent juvenile court. Finally, they conclude by calling for more school training on the truancy issue and the states' response,

more consistent truancy policies among the schools, and more leadership from the states' highest educational administrators (WSCCR, 2004).

Absenteeism and lateness due to truancy could be reduced by providing; free education, counseling, discipline, relevant curriculum and social welfare of pupils, truancy sweeps, contact with parents, support for pupils with poor attendance and effective school administration by principals/headteachers (Malcom et al., 2003) and Ubogu (2004).Clyne (1966) stipulated that the absence from school have a legal aspect. In most civilized countries, school attendance is compulsory by law and absence might involve penalties against the parent and the child. Parents found guilty might be asked to pay a fine while truant children brought before a juvenile court which might put them in special schools for reformation. The school, together with the parents could help to minimize lateness through the following strategies:

1. Schools should operate strict functional attendance and punctuality policy. One of the major responsibilities of the school head is to implement policies and/or even possibly make some rules as whatever happens in the system would be credited or blamed upon him. Thus, the school head needs to carry out the function of maintaining punctuality policy without favoritism.

2. Staff and pupils in the school system should be sensitized and made aware of the effects of lateness to them and the entire school system, and also the benefits of punctuality to them first and then to the entire school system. This should be carried out by school heads, governmental and non-governmental agencies, religious bodies, and other such bodies and individuals.

3. The school administrator must teach punctuality by example, he/she must act as a model for all to copy.

4. School administrators should impose compulsory beginning and closing of the day meeting of staff and pupils. In the meetings, there should be strict attendance register.

5. School administrators should build in staff and pupils, the virtue of ―time-consciousness". For instance, putting wall clocks in conspicuous locations for all to see could instil the time-consciousness attitude in individuals in the school.

6. As an individual, try to be 15 minutes early to school, as this could help you make friends and say hello to already made friends; get one's self prepared for the day's activity; possibly even read a book, and most importantly could help make up for unforeseen causes of lateness, and still be punctual.

7. There should be also activities /acts to motivate and reinforce punctuality. For instance, awarding prizes for punctuality could go a long way in enhancing punctuality.

8. Parents and school administrators should join efforts in enhancing punctuality. UK Government (2010) stipulated that ―on the first day absence, contact should be made with parents of the child to find out why the child is absent".

9. Truancy patrol is a situation where members of the community are sensitised to seize or report pupils found outside the school environment after stipulated times. In this kind of situation, the pupil would likely be punctual since the only convenient environment would be that of the school if he/she comes late, would be punished, he is then forced to come early.

10. Parents involving pupils in domestic activities should be mindful of punctuality.

11. Government, on its part, should improve transportation and other economic activities in the Ghana as some pupils walk/trek to school as a result of fare even those that have the fare, sometimes no transport service or no good roads, causing hold-ups and go-slows.

In addition to the proposal and implementation of some innovative policies and practices, culturally competent programatic strategies have been developed to respond to the problem of truancy taking place among the rapidly growing racial and ethnic minority K-12 student population across the Ghana (Bailey & Dziko, 2008; Contreras & Striktikus, 2008; Hune et al., 2008; The People, 2008; Takeuchi & Hune, 2008).

Other strategies to reduce lateness and absenteeism are outlined as follows:

Consultation with parents and counselling of pupils

Since unpunctuality has become the conduct and habit, it needs counseling and consultation. According to Siaw (2002), this makes use of orientations, pupils' inventory, counseling, consultations and referrals to foster understanding and adaptation of appropriate conduct, including time management behaviour, even at the primary level. The timetable plays an important role in managing the risk of unpunctuality (Riksdagens revisorer, 2002). According to Afful-Broni (2008), time may be defined as a measurement used to express the space or period within which an event occurred. Afful-Broni further points out that ―time is the most important and costly resource in management" (p.12). It is the ability to decide what is important in life both at work, at

66

home and even in one's personal life. It is that quality of nature which keeps all events from happening at once. It is of great importance to development (Yeboah, 2004).

In their study, ―time management: effectiveness, logic and challenges", Claessens, Roe and Rutte (2009) note that the term time management means different things to different people. Time management is a method for managers to increase work performance effectiveness (Claessens et al., 2009). Time management behaviour has to do with how people make determinations of the manner in which they would like to spend their minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. Since different people make different choices given different circumstances, their work output also vary, more or less, based on these choices. Time management behaviour contributes to one's success or lack thereof at work or at home. (Andrews, 2011). A few people seem to fully appreciate and practicalize the full meaning and implications of time management in the work place (Allen, 2001; Burke, 2001).

Classroom discipline and time management

Class discipline is an integral part of class management and therefore time management in the classroom should be looked at seriously. Awoyemi (1990) was of the view that routine techniques are the basic principle of good class management. Awoyeme further explained that the teacher cannot and must not attempt to do everything by himself/herself. If he does, he undermines the chances of partnership and confidence between him/her and the pupils.

Tamakloeet al. (1996) stipulated that every aspect of the instructional programmememe of a school depends on effective management of pupils. For this reason, there is a need

for successful teaching and learning. In my view, class discipline is indispensable in effective class management and therefore time management. Aseidu-Akrofi (1978) viewed classroom management as involving the organization of certain non-academic tasks, which are essential for effective teaching. It consists of checking class attendance, keeping records of class progress, controlling pupils' conduct and activities and manipulating instructional materials. Thus, the improvement in classroom working conditions and the elimination of any destruction which may arise are eliminated.

A teacher who has good class management skills will find it easier to establish and maintain discipline. Aseidu-Akrofi (1978) further asserted that the skill with which the teacher controls and manages the classroom group is an explicit determination of his success in teaching. This implies that, the problem of the class management has long been recognized as complex. The running of a class of thirty is one of the most time consuming and energy drawing activities engaged in by teachers. According to this assertion by Aseidu-Akrofi (1978), one would then agree with the researcher that Ghanaian public teachers do suffer really since they teach class of a much more population than thirty. Again, Aseidu-Akrofi (1978) was of the view that classroom management is the complex set of plans and actions, which the teacher uses to ensure that learning in the classroom is effective and efficient.

Counselling as a strategy for enhancing school attendance

Counselling is a process of helping an individual who becomes fully aware of himself/herself, and the ways in which he/she is responding to the influences of his environment. It further assists him/her to establish some personal meaning for his/her

behaviour, to develop and clarify goals and values for future behaviour. In the context of this study, the attitudes of pupils to school as regards school attendance (punctuality and regularity, is the behaviour in question. According to Taylor and Buku (2006), the counselling service is concerned with helping pupils to solve all types of problems which could hinder their school work. The service provides pupils with opportunities to resolve these problems and at the same time plan their educational and vocational goals. The counselling service helps pupils in self-understanding and decision making and the major focus is personal growth or development. Through counselling service activities, pupils are helped to make changes in their behaviour process. School attendance requires time management behaviour which could be shaped through counselling. Borgen and Hiebert (2006) characterized counseling as going as far as helping clients/users develop new perspectives and design action plans.These action plans might include time plans or budgets.

Post et al.(2002) describe counselling as a mutual relationship that exists between a counsellor, who is professionally trained, and a client, who is a consumer of counselling services. Counselling relationships will vary according to need but may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict or improving relationships with others" (Murphy, 2000 , p.27). Personal and psychological counselling is an aspect of counselling. It is concerned with inter-personal problems of life adjustment by the pupils in the school and the home with fellow pupils, teachers and parents. Pupils are helped to feel emotionally and psychologically secure and better adjusted to the environment one finds himself or

herself. Individuals are helped in planning suitable educational programmes and making **progress** in it through educational counselling processes. To sum up, one can say that the adequacy of counselling services largely depends on how pupils are helped in schools to make decisions and follow with actions. This can be ensured through individual or group counselling.

2.8   Summary of Literature Review

Truancy exists in almost all schools in Ghana, including those in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brawka district. The dimensions of truancy include absenteeism, lateness, condoned absenteeism, school refusal, school withdrawal and early leaving. Truancy is attributable to a multitude of factors that are put into categories: home and family, school, community, and personal characteristics of the pupils. Many empirical studies have been carried out to investigate the effects of truancy on pupils, the school and the nation as a whole.Ttruancy could result into poor academic achievement and school failure, loss of friends and partners, disruption in class, difficulty in keeping accurate records, reduced ability to meet instructional targets and damaged school reputation. It also lowers the literacy and numeracy rates of any country. Truancy could be reduced by providing counseling, ensuring discipline, social welfare to pupils, truancy swoops, contact with parents, guardians, support for pupils with poor attendance and effective school administration by headteachers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the method used to carry out the study.   It includes the research design, population for the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validation of research instruments, reliability of instrument, data collection procedure, ethical considerations, and method of data analysis.

3.2   Research Design

This study which is descriptive in nature employed the mixed-methods sequential explanatory approach. Mixed methods research approach is defined as an approach in which the inquirer or researcher collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods in a single study or a programme of study (Creswell, 2008). The mixed-methods sequential explanatory approach consists of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003).The sequential explanatory approach is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell et al., 2003) in two consecutive phases within one study. In this design, a researcher first collects and analyses the quantitative (numeric) data. The second phase, qualitative builds on the first phase, quantitative, and the two phases are connected in the intermediate stage in the study. The qualitative (text) data are collected and analysed second in the sequence and help explain,

71

or elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. Its characteristics are well described in the literature (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Creswell et al., 2003), and the approach has found application in both social and behavioural sciences research (Klassen & Burnaby, 1993). The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis will provide a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth (Creswell, 2003).

The strengths and weaknesses of this mixed-methods design have been widely discussed in the literature (Creswell, 2003, 2005). Its advantages include straightforwardness and opportunities for the exploration of the quantitative results in more detail. This design can be especially useful when unexpected results arise from a quantitative study (Morse, 1991). The limitations of this design are lengthy time and feasibility of resources to collect and analyse both types of data. It is not easy to implement.

3.3   Population of the Study

The study area is Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana. The total population of JHS pupils in the district is 5,060 pupils comprising 3,060 boys and 2,000 girls.The target population for the study was506 JHS pupils identified as truant children.

3.4   Sample, Sampling Techniques and Procedures

Babbie (2004) defines a sample as ―a small subset of a larger population whose selection is based on the knowledge of the elements of a population and the research purpose" (p.183). According to Fink (2003), a sample is a portion or subset of a larger group called

a population. The sample size for the study was 108 truant public JHS pupils representing 21% of the target population.The choice of 21% of the target population is based on Dornyei's (2007) assertion that between 1% and 10% of a study population gives a magic sampling fraction. According to Dornyei 2007, there are unfortunately no hard and fast rules in setting the optimal sample size; the final answer to the _how large or small?' question should be the discretion of the researcher considering several broad guidelines. He gave *rules of thumb* as examplewhich he saysin the survey research literature a range of between one percent and ten percent of the population is usually mentioned as the magic sampling fraction.

Six public junior high schools were conveniently sampled for the study. The study settings were conveniently sampled because of proximity and ease of access to information on fractional truancy. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample 108 very truant pupils who are below average academic achievers.

Simple random sampling technique using the lottery approach was then used to select a maximum of 18 truant pupils from each of the six schoolsbecause it gives room for equal chances of selection without bias (Seidu, 2007). This implies that the respondents were sampled from each gender, age group and socioeconomic category. Simple random sampling is a method of sampling that relies on a random or chance selection method so that every element of the sampling frame has a known probability of being selected (Schutt, 2009). It is a sampling technique where all elements in a research population have an equal chance of being selected. In other words, each member in the population has a known and equal probability of inclusion in the sample (Bryman, 2012). It is

regarded as the ideal technique for selecting a representative sample and limits the influence of the researcher in ways that could introduce bias (Denscombe, 2010).

In the lottery approach of the simple random sampling technique, pieces of paper which equal to the total number of identified truant pupils who constituted the study units (sampling frame) in each school by gender category were designed by the researcher. In each school, for instance, the researcher designed eighty-four (84) pieces of paper. A maximum of eighteen (18) pieces of paper had the inscription ―Yes", while the remaining 66 pieces of paper were captioned ―No". The pieces of paper were folded, and put in a box. The box was turned over and over again to ensure that the pieces of paper were well mixed to guarantee that each truant pupil had an equal opportunity of being selected. The truant pupils were assembled and required to pick the pieces of paper at random during a briefing session. A truant pupil, who picked a piece of paper which had ‗Yes' response, was enrolled as a participant for this study. This sampling process or procedure was repeated in each of the six (6) conveniently sampled schools. The random selection ensured that each truant pupil had an equal chance of being selected, and this is required for generalisation of the results to the target population as noted by Creswell (2009). This sampling technique ensured representativeness of the sample, and it also eliminated selection bias. The researcher also employed this technique because it is a more refined form of random sampling which introduces stratification or grouping of the population/variable according to its different traits or attributes in order to ensure that the sample takes care of all the different attributes of the population. As affirmed by Seidu (2007), the process avoids skewing the representation disproportionate number of member randomly selected to constitute the sample.

Purposive sampling was also used to select six (6) teachers for interview. They were chosen because they had vast experiences on truancy and they are _information rich' as with regard to non-attendance, absenteeism, lateness, skipping of lesson, repetition of the pupils, drop out and school failure among the pupils.

3.5   Instrumentation

Seidu (2007) describes instrument as a document that the researcher uses for data collection. Research instruments are tools researchers can use to help them find information (Kankam & Weiler, 2010). Data were collected using questionnaire, and semi-structured interview guide. When data are triangulated, that is, more than one data collecting method is used, gaps in collected data are filled and false or misleading information can be detected (Greeff, 2002).

3.5.1   Questionnaire

Questionnaire was employed to elicit information from the truant pupils in line with the research objectives. It included close-ended questions. Sekyere (2012) defines questionnaire as a set of written questions answered by a large number of people that is used to provide information. In the case of the close-ended items, the questionnaire for this survey contained a five-point close-ended Likert-type items: strongly agree (SA = 5), Agree (A = 4), Neutral (N = 3), Disagree (D = 2) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1). The items were built to reflect on the key themes raised in the research questions. The instructions and the questions in the questionnaire were clear and easy to follow. The study subjects were assured of confidentiality, and that the questionnaire was for research purposes only.

3.5.2   Semi-structured interview guide

To elicit detailed information, interview was employed on 6 teachers. Interviews were used to obtained information from the interviewees. The purpose of this instrument was to obtain information by actual face-to-face interaction with the teachers on truancy. The interview guide was designed to capture the major themes of the study. An interview guide allows flexibility in asking follow-up questions. Secondly, the researcher by using the instrument gets the opportunity to seek clarification through probing and expanded the responses of interviewees to ascertain their feelings and experiences (Kusi, 2012). Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) indicated that the use of an interview is for a researcher to interact with a respondents so as to gather information for a particular study. Interview affords the opportunity for feedbacks or further explanation (Babbie, 2007). Though it is time consuming, interviews are able to help both the researcher and the respondents to clarify issues.

3.5.3   Documentary analysis

Documentary data on pupils' continuous assessment, classwork and homework materials were collected for inspection and scrutiny. These documents provided the following information: learning outcomes or feedback system in terms of examination scores, which reflect pupils' performances. This is indicative of Rose and Grosvenor (2001) suggestion that, documents are credible, authentic and have meaning to the issues of interest. It also shows teachers concern about the validity and reliability of pupils' records.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument serves the use for which it is intended (Seidu, 2007). Face validity was done by giving the instruments to colleague M.Phil.pupils at the Department of Basic Education of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) for scrutiny.Indeed, their comments were considered for review of the items. The content validity of the instruments was granted by the research supervisor who scrutinized the items for their suitability before pre-test. All the necessary corrections in the items were made and declared valid by the supervisor. Construct validity was also ensured by employing accepted definitions and constructions of concepts and terms; operationalizing the research and its measures. Internal validity check. was done through ensuring agreements between different parts of the data, matching patterns of results, ensuring that findings and interpretations derive from the data are transparent and that causal explanations are supported by the evidence (alone), and that rival explanations and inferences have been weighed and found to be less acceptable than the explanation of inference made, again based on evidence. Concurrent validity was done through the use of multiple source and kinds of evidence to address research questions and to yield convergent validity.

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. To ensure reliability of the research instruments, they were pre-tested on 30 truant JHS pupils in the Agona-West District. In the following two weeks, the test-retest technique was used. The same 30 pupils who took part in the first pilot trial were asked to answer same questions. The two results were

77

subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis using version 21 of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). This yielded a reliability coefficient (r) of 0.73 which is deemed as an acceptable measure of reliability because this is above the 0.70 the threshold value of acceptability as a measure of reliability as noted by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), reliability co-efficient of 0.70 is seen to be highly reliable for research purpose.This value is also in line with that of Tavakol, Mohagheghi, and Dennick (2008), that the acceptable values of alpha, ranges from 0.70 to 0.95. This result implies that the instrument was reliable; hence it was used for the actual study. The pilot study also offered the researcher an opportunity for identifying some of the problems that could have been encountered in the main study. This informed the necessary corrections to the questions before the main study is done.

3.7   Data Collection Procedure

In conducting a study, Creswell (2005) advises researchers to seek and obtain permission from the authorities in charge of the site of the study because it involves a prolonged and extensive data collection. In line with this, an introductory letter was obtained from the Head of the Department of Basic Education at the University of Education, Winneba. This letter provided the details of the study, including data collection, and issues of confidentiality and anonymity.

This letter was used to obtain permission from the District Director of Education at Asikuma Odoben Brakwa and head teachers of the sampled schools. An approval letter was then given to the researcher before data collection. After permission was granted to conduct the study, attention was drawn to each of the sampled pupils and teachers. The researcher informed the study participants of the impending administration of the

questionnaire, and interview. The questionnaires were administered to the pupils through some selected teachers, and retrieved through same teachers. This was done to ensure high coverage, completion, and return rate. The completion and return rate was 100%. The interviewees were contacted to verify the appointment before engaging them. The face-to-face interview were done personally at the various selected schools, and on scheduled date and time. The interviews were taped recorded and played back to them, transcribed, coded and edited. Notes were taken to complement the taped data. The researcher assured respondents of the confidentiality of whatever information they provide.

3.8   Data Analysis

Yin (2003) stated that before interpretation takes place, data should be analysed statistically and presented. Responses from respondents on the questionnaire were tallied in order to get the number of respondents who answered each set of items. The collected data were keyed or fed into the SPSS version 21 software and they were analysed. Frequency counts, percentage distributions, mean and standard deviations of responses were generated according to each research question raised, and this was presented in tables. The researcher also used the SPSS to run chi-square ($\chi2$)to determine the relationship or association between the independent variable or predictor (truancy) and the dependent or outcome variable (academic performance). Independent samples t-test was also used to find significant gender and age differences in the prevalence of truancy. This was done at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ using a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%. The interpretation of the t-test and chi-square results made it possible to make appropriate inferences.For the qualitative (interview) data, responses by the respondents to each item

79

were categorized into themes according to research questions. Hence, the qualitative data were analysed thematically.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Resnik (2009) defines ethics in research as the discipline that study standards of conduct, such as philosophy, theology, law, psychology or sociology. In other words, it is a method, procedure or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues. Protection of participants and their responses were assured by obtaining their informed consent, protecting privacy and ensuring confidentiality. In doing this, description of the study, the purpose and the possible benefits were mentioned to participants. The researcher permitted participants to freely withdraw or leave at any time if they deemed it fit.

a. No harm to Participants

In Babbie's (2004) opinion, the ethical norms of voluntary participation and no harm to participants have, become formalized in the concept of informed consent. Accordingly, participants base their voluntary participation in research studies on the full understanding of the possible risks involved. Harm can either be physical or emotional (Trochim, 2006). Throughout this study, the researcher made an effort to ensure that participants were not harmed psychologically or emotionally.

b. Anonymity

Research participants' well-being and interests need to be protected. Participants' identities in the study should be masked or blinded as far as possible (Trochim, 2006). The people who read the research and the researcher should not be able to identify a

given response with a given respondent (Babbie, 2004). The names of the respondents who participated in this study were not revealed anywhere instead, code names were used. The recorded responses and the written report were silent on the true identities of the participants. In this study, the interview participants were identified with alphanumeric codes: Teacher # 1, respondent # 2, and respondent # 3, etc.

c. Confidentiality

Confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner (Strydom, 2002). This implies that the researcher must jealously guard all the information disclosed by the participant so that only the researcher has access to it. The interviews took place at the participant's school and/or office to allow privacy, non-interruptions and the creation of an atmosphere in which the participant felt comfortably engaged.

The purpose of the research, the role of the interviewee(s) and the confidentiality of the selected material was explained to the participants before the commencement of the interview(s). To this end, the researcher is the sole custodian of documents used and information collected for this study. A tape recorder was used during the interviews and all information collected had been transcribed and the recordings deleted.

d. Plagiarism

As a way of preventing plagiarism, all ideas, writings, drawings and other documents or intellectual property of other people were referenced indicating the authors name, title of publications, year and publishers. In the case of unpublished document, permission was sought from the owners.

81

3.10   Summary of Methodology

This research, which investigated how truancy relates to academic performance of junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana, used the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. This chapter discusses the method used to carry out the study, including how data was obtainable through mixed-methods sequential explanatory approach. It used simple random sampling method to select 108 JHS pupils as respondents, and purposive sampling to select 6 teachers for interview. Two data collection instruments: questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were subjected to peer and expert reviews to ensure their validity. The questionnaire, which was pilot tested, was subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis via SPSS, and this yielded a reliability coefficient (r) of 0.73. The quantitative data collected were analysed quantitatively using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was computed via chi-square ($\chi2$) to determine the relationship or association between the independent and the dependent or outcome variables. Independent samples t-test was also used to find significant gender and age differences in the prevalence of truancy. This was done at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ using a confidence interval (C.I) of 95. The quantitative data were also subjected to qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. The researcher envisaged that the research methodology for this study yielded useful, valid and reliable data as well as the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study under the following themes in relation to the research and interview questions: bio-data of respondents, the nature and prevalence of truancy, causes of truancy, effects or impact of truancy, and intervention measures to mitigate truancy.

4.2   Socio-Demographic Data of the Respondents

The bio data covers the following: sex, age, distance (km) from house to school, mode of transport, custody of child, occupation of father or mother or guardian, hours of work-absence from home by parents, socio-economic status of father or mother or guardian.
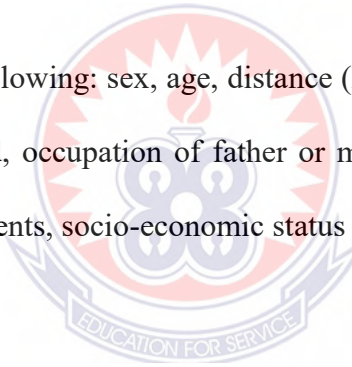
Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Truant Pupils

(n = 108)

Variable	Variable category	Freq	%
Sex	Male	65	60
	Female	43	40
Age (in yrs)	Below 12	2	2
	12	24	22
	13	36	33
	14	40	37
	15& above	6	6
Distance (km) of school from house	1 or below	85	79
	2	11	10
	3	3	3
	4	7	6
	More than 4	2	2
Mode of transport to & from school	On foot	108	100
	Bicycle	0	0
	Motorbike	0	0
	Car	0	0
	Other	0	0
Those who stay with	Father only	7	6
	Mother only	33	31
	Both parents/Dual custody	46	43
	Grandparents	7	6
	Stepparents	12	11
	Other	3	3
Occupation of parent/guardian	Farming	80	69
	Trading	15	14
	Artisan	3	3
	Civil servant	8	7
	Other	2	2

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of truant school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben Brakwa District. Sixty-five (60%) pupils were boys, while 43 (40%) of them were girls. This result suggests that more school boys than girls are truant. The table indicates that 2 (2%) pupils were 12 years old and below. Twenty-four (22%) pupils were 12 years old, 36 (33%) were 13 years old, and 40 (37%) were 14 years of age. Only 6

(6%) pupils were 15 years old and above. It could be concluded from this result that 100 (93%) pupils were within the age range of 12-14 years which is required age group of junior high school pupils in Ghana. It also emerged from the data that the age group of the pupils is skewed towards adolescents.

Table 1 also shows the average distance (km) covered to school by the truant pupils. A total of 85 (79%) pupils often travelled for a distance of 1km or below to school each school day. Also, 11 (10%) pupils covered a distance of 2km to school per school day. Three (3%) pupils commuted for a distance of 3km to school. 7 (6%) pupils covered a distance of 4 km, while 2 (2%) pupils covered a distance of more than 4 km to school each day. It could be concluded from this result that the majority (89%) of pupils covered a distance of 0-2 kilometres to school. It came to light from the result of this study that the pupils travelled to school on foot.

On the custody or living arrangement of the sampled pupils, 7 (6%) pupilshad stayed or lived with their fathers only, whereas33 (31%) pupils had custody with their mothers only. The data also shows that 46 (43%) pupils had dual custody with their fathers and mothers (both parents), 7 (6%) stayed with grandparents and 12 (11%) lived with their stepparents.Only 3 (3%) pupils had custody and guardianship from significant others such as elder siblings, aunts, uncles, other family members, and pastors.

Table 1 also presents data on occupation of parents/guardians of the truant pupils. Eighty (69%) parents/guardians of the pupils engaged in farming, 15 (14%) of them were traders, 3 (3%) were artisans, whereas 8 (7%) parents/guardians were civil servants. 2 (2%) parents were housewives.

The result of the current study indicates that more truant boys (60%) than girls (40%) participated in this study. It is generally believed that boys have the tendency to report late for school because of truant behaviours. This is because truancy is really played by boys more often than girls. It is also against the backdrop that generally girls adjust more easily than boys at school as noted by Mullen (1950), Mitchell and Shepherd (1961).From the results, 86% of parents/guardians of the pupils were engaged in the informal sector. It is likely that pupils whose parents were in the informal sector had low socioeconomic status. Given that family economic status is an important determinant of children's education, differences in economic standing of children is a likely predictor of their school attendance and academic performance. For instance, children whose mothers are unemployed are likely to miss two more days of school than children whose mothers have jobs. Again, some parents often leave for work much earlier than a pupil needs to be up, and the pupil is left to get to school on their own, which often does not happen. Oftentimes, while parents are out of the house trying to acquire an income, older pupils might be left at home to care for their other siblings which could either prevent them from attending school or delay their punctual attendance as stated by Zhang (2003).

It is apparent from the results of this study that 43% of the truant pupils stayed with both parents. Those who stayed with both parents are more likely to benefit from effective parental control, supervision and monitoring which could influence their school attendance and achievement. It also emerged that a small number (37%) of the pupils were in the custody with either their mothers or fathers only. This might be due to single parenthood or broken homes as a result of divorce, separation, and death of a spouse. This suggests that broken home is a likely predictor of truancy among pupils. This could

86

adversely affect school attendance and achievement of truant pupils. This affirms the assertion of McLanahan (1991) who posited that children living with single and step parents during adolescence receive less encouragement and less help with school work than those who reside with biological parents as reiterated by Al-Samary and Peasgood (1998) who pointed out that the composition and structure of the household shapes access and retention of children in school.Despite the fact that some pupils had custody with their grandparents, stepparents and significant others including extended family systems,they might provide a strength that mitigates deficiency levels to enable child support and education without being left into negative extremes attributed to broken homes as observed by Park (2008).

There is the probability that those who stayed with single parents, and other people might play truancy, and other tendencies or attitudes which could negatively influence their school attendance and achievement. For instance, pupils under little or no supervision often spend time watching films and other television programmes in the night when their guardians had slept. This could contribute to late school attendance and absenteeism. Again, some child custodians are likely to be responsible for pupils' absenteeism and non-school attendance if they keep children and engage them in work at the expense of their education.

Table 2. Level of Education of Father or Mother and Guardian

Response	Freq	%
Basic	25	23
Secondary	56	52
Tertiary	17	16
No formal	10	9
Total	**108**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Table 2 shows the educational background of parents/guardians of the truant pupils. Twenty-five (23%) pupils had parents/guardians who had basic education,56 (52%) of them had parents/guardians who had secondary education, while 17 (27%) parents/guardians of the pupils had tertiary education. Also, Table 2 indicates that 10 (9%) of the parents/guardians of the pupils had had no formal education. The majority (75%) of the parents/guardians of the pupils had relatively low levels of education. It is likely that such pupils might not benefit from parental support services such as helping wards to do homework. Again, it is probable that parents with low level of education might have less value for education. Consequently, they might not encourage their wards to cultivate good attitudes to school, including regular school attendance and punctuality. On the other hand, pupils who have parents that attended universities have lower absenteeism rates and are less likely to intend to leave school early. This confirms the views of Chang and Romero (2008), who elaborated that choosing not to attend school on

regular bases begins early in a child's formal education when some parents do not yet see the importance of their child being in school every day. Hallman (2006) agreed with the above assertion and stated that higher level of education of parents or household heads turns to be associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates, higher intrinsically motivated children and lower dropout rates. Parents' perceptions and attitudes about the importance of school can also impact student attendance as observed by Epstein and Sheldon (2002). If parents had negative attitudes and perceptions about their own education, they may find it difficult to be involved in their children's education. Parents who did not have a successful experience in school may hold the same assumptions regarding their children's success in school. In conclusion, if parents had a negative education experience and/or negative attitudes towards school, they are less likely to be fully committed and involved in their child's education.

Table 3. Hours of Absence from Home by Father or Mother and Guardian

Response	Freq	%
Less than 2 hrs	10	9
2-4 hrs.	13	12
5-7 hrs.	47	44
8+ hrs	38	35
Total	**108**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

In terms of hours of work-absence from home by parents/guardians of the truant pupils, the majority (79%) of the parents/guardians of the pupils spent 5 hours or more, whereas 21% spent 4 hours or less at work outside home. Reasonably, these parents/guardians worked for long periods because they need to earn money to pay for food, clothing and a place to live. This suggests that they had less time to help their children and/or supervise their studies at home as well as monitor them. For instance, families or parents who have a low socio-economic status, and are usually working minimal wage jobs require long and/or unusual work hours. When parents are busy working, they are not also able to attend to their children's needs (Gonzales, 2002), and monitoring their school attendance. This affirms the views of Drumond and Stipek (2004) who pointed out that parents who are working unusual hours had less time for their school children. Apparently, this may affect school attendance and the academic performance of the children.

Again, some parents often leave for work much earlier than a pupil needs to be up, and the pupil is left to get to school on their own, which often does not happen. Oftentimes, while parents are out of the house trying to acquire an income, older pupils might be left at home to care for their other siblings which could either prevent them from attending school or delay their punctual attendance as stated by Zhang (2003).

Table 4. Socio-economic Status of Father or Mother and Guardian

Response	Freq	%
High	3	3
Moderate/average	17	16
Low	88	81
Total	**108**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Table 4 shows the data on the socio-economic status (SES) or background of the truant pupils. The survey established that, majority (81%) of the pupils came from low socioeconomic background, families or homes. On the other hand, 16% of them were from average socioeconomic background, while 3% came from a high SES or background. It is likely that the majority of the pupils from low socioeconomic background had parents who obtainedlow levels of education, and they were relatively low income earners. If the majority of the children came from poor socio-economic background, then their parents would not be able to adequately provide for their needs and cater for them. These children would be poorly and inadequately fed before or after school. Again, these children would find it extremely difficult to get materials for learning. They would virtually not be able to concentrate in class and this could eventually lead to disinterest in school, poor school attendance, and poor academic performance. This observation confirms Reid's (2005) assertion that family factors can negatively influence pupils' attendance. The socioeconomic status and education level of

parents are likely factors that influence school attendance, including absenteeism among pupils. This is because family or parental socioeconomic status has a significant influence on an individual and the likelihood that he or she will attend school regularly as affirmed by Crowder and South (2003), Henry (2007), and Reid (2005). Also, children in poor families are more likely to be chronic absentees than their counterparts from highest income families (Mariajose&Young-San, 2007). Moreover, pupils whose families may be suffering economically are at an increased risk to have poor attendance as observed by Drumond and Stipek (2004), Heilbrunn (2004), Henry (2007), and Zhang (2003).

Table 5: Background Information on Teachers

(n = 6)

Variable	Variable category	Freq	%
Sex	Male	4	67
	Female	2	33
Age (in yrs)	Below 30	6	100
	30-39	0	0
	40-49	0	0
	50-59	0	0
	60 yrs	0	0
Average distance (km) of school from house of most pupils	1 or below	2	33
	2	2	33
	3	1	17
	4	1	17
	More than 4km	0	0
Mode of transport to & from school by most pupils	On foot	4	67
	Bicycle	0	0
	Motorbike	2	33
	Car	0	0
	Other	0	0
Those who take custody of of most pupils	Father only	0	0
	Mother only	0	0
	Both parents/Dual custody	5	83
	Grandparents	0	0
	Stepparents	1	17
	Other	0	0
Occupation of parent/guardian of most Pupils	Farming	2	33
	Trading	2	33
	Artisan	1	17
	Civil servant	1	17
	Other	0	0

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

It is observed from Table 5 that the sampled teachers comprised 4 (67%) males and 2 (33%) females. All the teacherswho participated in the current study were below 30 years of age.This result suggests that there were more younger and maleteachers in the district.It can be concluded from the results that the majority (67%) of teachers covered a

93

distance of 1-2 kilometres on foot to and from school. On the other hand, 2 (33%) teachers covered a distance of 3 to 4 kilometres via motorbike.

Onthe occupation of parents/guardians of the truant pupils,2 (33%) teachers mentioned farming, 2 (33%) reported of trading, 1(17%) teacher stated artisanship, while 1 (17%) mentioned civil servant. This implies that 83% of the parents/guardians of the truant pupils work in the informal sector.

Table 6: Hours of Work Absence from Home by Father or Mother/Guardian of Pupils: Teachers' response

Response	Freq	%
Less than 2 hrs	0	0
2-4 hrs.	0	0
5-7 hrs.	2	33
8+ hrs	4	67
Total	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

In terms of hours of work-absence from home by parents and guardians of the truant pupils, table 6 above indicated that majority (67%) of the parents and guardians of the pupils spent 8 hours or more, while 33% spent between 5 and 7 hours at work outside home. This implies that parents/guardians of the truant pupils worked for long periods.

94

Table 7.   Socio-economic Status of Father or Mother/Guardians of Pupils: Teachers' response

Response	Freq	%
High	0	0
Moderate/average	1	17
Low	5	83
Total	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

It emerged from table 7 that 83% of parents/guardians of the truant pupils came from low socioeconomic background, families or homes. On the other hand, 17% of them were from average socioeconomic homes or families.
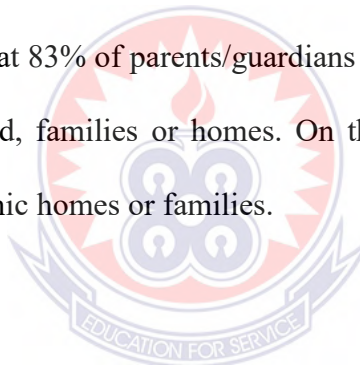
4.3 Analysis of Research Questions

Research question 1: What is the nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District?

This section presents information on nature of school attendance by the truant pupils.

Table 8. **Response on Whether Truant Pupils Always Attend School**

Response	Pupils		Teachers	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Yes	23	21	1	17
No	85	79	5	83
Total	**108**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Twenty-three (21%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher responded in the affirmative that truant pupils always attended school as indicated on table 8. However, 85 (79%) pupils and 5(83%) teachers answered in the negative.

**Table 9. Response on Average Number of Days Per Week of School Attendance
by the Truant Pupils**

Response	Pupils		Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
One	0	0	0	0
Two	0	0	2	33
Three	75	69	3	50
Four	31	29	1	17
Five	2	2	0	0
Total	**108**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017)

Table 9 shows the average number of days of attending school in a week. At the pre-
intervention stage, some truant pupils attended school for two days only during the five
school days. Most of the pupils attended school for 3 days only in a week as reported by
75 (69%) pupils and 3 (50%) teachers. This was followed by those who attended school
for days only as stated by 31 (29%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher. Only 2 (2%) truant pupils
reported of attending school for five days in a week. This result implies that as many as
98% or more of the truant pupils missed out at either 1 or 2 school days in a week. This
means that they infrequently attended school.

Table 10.Time of School Attendance in a Week by the Truant Pupils

Time of school attendance	Pupils		Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Before 7:00 a.m	0	0	0	0
7:00 to 8:00 a.m	22	20	1	17
8:00 to 8:30 a.m	28	26	3	50
8:30 to 9:00 a.m	32	30	2	33
After 9:00 a.m	26	24	0	0
Total	**108**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017)

Table 10 shows the time of school attendance by the truant pupils.Twenty-two (20%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher stated that some truant pupils normally arrived at school between 7:00 am and 8:00 am. Of the rest, 28 (26%) pupils and 3 (50%) teachers stated that pupils often got to school between 8:00 am and 8:30 am. Further to that, 32 (30%) pupils and 2 (33%) teachers mentioned that pupils habitually came to school from 8:30 am to 9:00 am. Twenty-six (24%) pupils admitted that they sometimes got to school after 9:00 am.

It could be concluded from this result that most of the pupils always got to school late as reported by 80% or more of the respondents. This could be attributable to long distance to and from school, and other factors such as poor parental attitude to school, parental

irresponsibility, pupils' disinterest in school, fatigue due to domestic work overload, and the habit of pupils going to bed late and waking up late.

Table 11: **Time Truant Pupils Leave School**

Time of leaving school	Pupils		Teachers	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Before 9:00 am	0	0	0	0
9.00am to 10:00 a.m	20	19	1	17
11.00am to 12;00 p.m	45	42	2	33
1.00pm to 2.00 noon	38	35	2	17
After 2.00 p.m	5	5	1	17
Total	**108**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017)

Table 11 shows the time at which the truant pupils normally absconded or left school. 22 (20%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher stated that some truant pupils normally absconded from school between 9:00 am and 10:00 am. This is followed by those who left 11:00 am and 12;00 noon as mentioned by 45 (42%) pupils and 2 (33%) teachers.38 (35%) pupils and 2 (33%) teachers reported that some truant pupils absconded from school between 1.00 to 2.00 p.m. Only 5 (5%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher observed that a few truant pupils departed from school after 2.00 pm.

Table 12. **Response on places where the truant pupils visit after absconding from school**

Place	Pupils		Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Bush to hunt for snails, animals	39	36	2	33
Hide at places to play	30	28	1	17
Wandering on the streets	12	11	0	0
River to swim	0	0	0	0
River to catch fish	5	5	1	17
Petty jobs, farm labour, household chores	10	9	2	33
Engage in secret love affairs	0	0	0	0
Market to sell	8	7	0	0
Recreational centres	4	4	0	0
Total	**108**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork data (2017)

Table 12 indicates places where the truant pupils visit after absconding from school. A few of the truant pupils hunt for snails and animals in the bush as reported by 36% of 108 pupils and 33% of 6 teachers. This is followed by those who normally hide at places just to play as affirmed by 28% of 108 pupils and 17% of 6 teachers. Some of the pupils wandered on streets (streetism) as reported by 11% of 108pupils only. Others often went to the riverside to catch fish as stated by 5% of 108 pupils and 33% of 6 teachers. A minority of the truant pupils also engaged in petty jobs, farm labour and household

100

chores as mentioned by 9% of the pupils and 33% of the teachers. Seven percent (7%) of 108 pupils often went to sell at market, and 4% admitted that they often went to recreational centres such as video/cinema centres and internet cafes.

In an interview, some of the teachers commented as follows:

> Most of the truant children skip lessons.They usually report late at school, but abscond before 2:00 p.m. So, they miss out lessons. Yes, some go to places such as farms to fetch firewood, bush to hunt for snails and other animals. Others wander in town or hide at internet cafes **(Teacher #1).**

> We experience what is called school attendance by most of the truant pupils in our school. Some of the truant pupils attend school on certain days of the week, but fail to report at school during certain periods. For instance, these children do not usually come to school on market days, during farming and harvest seasons, and during some events like festivals, sports and culture, and funeral celebrations. Some even attend school throughout the week, but they come late and leave early. It is problematic. Some of the children are stubborn, and they are difficult to control. I mean they are truants. It is difficult to manage the behaviour of such children **(Teacher #2).**

> Truant pupils have deviant behaviours. Certainly, boys are more truant than girls. They dodge classes or lessons. They run to internet cafes. Some of them just abscond from classes to play ―chess" and other games. **(Teacher #3)**

> Certainly, some of pupils habitually come to school late. Others skip lessons and abscond to recreational centres to watch football, and to internet cafes for browsing. Sometimes, they go to swim and catch fish in a nearby river. Some even go to market centres to sell, while others go to work on farms **(Teacher #4).**

> A few pupils play truant because of frequent illness. They are sickliers. They frequently absent themselves because of ill-helath. So, about 99% of these pupils are not always regular and punctual to school. They usually get to school by or after8:30 am for morning classes. These pupils do not promptly respond to the school bell **(Teacher #5).**

> Indeed, some of the truant pupils sometimes report late at school,and they disrupt lessons. School activities such as Independence Day celebration, sports and culture activities, and other co-curricular activities even keep them away from school. They miss out some school days because of these activities **(Teacher #6).**

101

This result implies that as many as 98% or more of the truant pupils missed out at either 1 or 2 school days in a week. It is evident from this result that most of the pupils always left school before the end of each school day as reported by 83% of the 6 teachers and 95% 108 pupils. It could be concluded from the results that a few but significant number of truant pupils usually went to bush to hunt for snails and animals; hid at places to play; and engaged in petty jobs, farm labour and household chores as reported by 28% to 36% of the 108 respondents.

Research question 2: *What factors are responsible for the act of truancy among JHS pupils in the district?*

The data presented and analysed under this theme answer questions 17 to 45 in the pupil and teacher questionnaires, and interview question 3.

Table 13. **Pupil Factors that Contribute to Truancy among the Pupils**

| | | | | | | $(n^0 = 108; n^1 = 6)$ |
| Factor/reason | Pupils | | | Teachers | | |
	A	N	D	A	N	D
Illness/chronic sickness	58(54)	8(7)	42(39)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Physical & emotional handicaps	57(53)	10(9)	41(38)	1(17)	0(0)	5(83)
Dislike for school	58(54)	6(6)	44(41)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Indiscipline	88(81)	0(0)	20(19)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
Negative peer/social pressure	57(53)	0(0)	51(47)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Laziness & poor attitude to school	54(50)	7(6)	47(44)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
"Self-mentality" not to attend school on market, funeral days; fishing & harvesting seasons	57(53)	12(11)	39(36)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Wanting to avoid tests/examinations	45(42)	0(0)	63(58)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Fear for school/school phobia	46(43)	0(0)	62(57)	1(17)	0(0)	5(83)

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Key: n^0 = sample of pupils; n^1 = sample of teachers; A = Agree; D= Disagree;

N= Neutral.

Note: The numbers or figures in parentheses are in percentages.

The majority of the pupils(54%) and teachers (50%) affirmed that illness or chronic sickness accounted for truancy among the pupils as indicated on table 13. However, 39% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement. Seven percent (7%) of the108 pupils were irresolute with the statement. Fifty-three (53%) pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers linked truancy among the pupils tophysical and emotional difficulties. Forty-one percent (41%) of the 108 pupils and 83% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement. Nine percent (9%) of the teachers were undecided.

Fifty-four percent (54%) of the 108pupils and 83% of the 6 teachers averred that the truant pupils disliked school. However, 41% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers held opposing views and only 6% of the 108 pupils were indecisive.Also, 81% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers attributed truancy among the pupils to indiscipline. Conversely, 19% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers held incongruent views.

The majority of pupils (53%) and teachers (83%) also linked truancy among the pupils to negative peer pressure. Similarly, a large number of the pupils (50%) and teachers (83%) attributed it to laziness and/or poor attitude of pupils to school. A few of the pupils (44%) and teachers (17%) held divergent views, while 6% of the pupils were irresolute with the statement.

More so, 53% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers linked truancy to ‗self-mentality' of pupils not to attend school on market and funeral days as well as during fishing and harvesting seasons. However, a minority of the pupils (36%) and 50% of the

103

6 teachers disagreed with the statement. Eleven percent (11%) of the 108 pupils were uncertain.

In addition, 42% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers linked truancy to the desire of pupils to avoid test or examination. A substantial number of the pupils (58%) and teachers (83%) held contrary views. Forty-three percent (43%) of 108 pupils and 17% of the 6teachers agreed that the pupils were truant because of school phobia. However, 57% out of the 108 pupils, and 83% of the 6 teachers, disagreedwith the statement.

It could be deduced from the results in Table13 a plethora of pupil-related factors accounted for truancyamong the JHS pupils. The major factors were (in rank order): indiscipline (1st), negative peer/social pressure (2nd), poor attitude to school (3rd), and illness (4th).

It is apparent from the result of this study that truancy is directly linked to poor school attendance. Some pupils might play truancy because of negative peer influence as stated by Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996); some pupils might also play truancy because of their physical health, and others are due to intelligence and sex differences. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) pointed out that pupils leave home with the pretext of going to school, but would never get there at all while others do go but vanish after a few hours. He therefore concluded that, persistent truancy affects school attendance.

Table 14. **Home Factors that Contribute to Truancy among the Pupils**

Factor/reason	Pupils			Teachers $(n^0 = 108; n^1 = 6)$		
	A	N	D	A	N	D
Poor parental control/parenting	63(58)	2(2)	43(40)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Stay home to run errands/care for others	63(58)	2(2)	43(40)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Financial constraints	59(55)	1(1)	48(44)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Single parenthood due to broken homes	43(40)	2(2)	63(58)	6(100)	0(0)	0(0)
Child labour	58(54)	0(0)	50(46)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Tiredness due to work overload	45(42)	0(0)	63(58)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Domestic violence & troubles at home	59(55)	0(0)	49(45)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Excessive attendance at funerals, etc	43(40)	0(0)	65(60)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
Little or no value placed on education	49(45)	0(0)	59(55)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Key: F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n^0 = number of pupils; n^1 = teachers; A = Agree;

N = Neutral; D = Disagree

Note: The numbers or figures in parentheses are in percentages.

Table 14 discusses the home factors which accounted for truancy amongpublic school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brawkwa District. Fifty-eight percent (58%) out of the 108 pupils, and 83% of the 6 teachers, agreed that truancy of pupils was due to poor or lack of parental/guardian control. However, 40% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers held divergent views, while 2% of the 108 pupils were irresolute with the statement.Similarly, 58% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers asserted that

105

truancy of pupils was because pupils stayed at home to run errands, and care for siblings and aged and sick ones. Conversely, 40% of 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers gave incongruent views, whereas 2% of the 108 pupils were indecisive.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of the 108 pupils and 83% of the 6 teachers confirmed that truancy of pupils was due to financial constraints. Forty-four percent of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers gave opposing views and 1% of 108 pupils gave a neutral response.Forty percent (40%) of the 108pupils and all the teachers (100%) agreed that truancy of pupils was due to single parenthood as a result of broken home (divorce, separation or death of parent/guardian). In contrary, 58% of the 108 pupils disagreed with the statement, while 2% of the 6 pupils were irresolute with the statement.

Also, 54% of the 108 pupils and 83% of the 6 teachers stated that truancy of pupils was because of child labour and neglect. Nevertheless, 46% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers held opposing views.Moreover, 42% of the 108 pupils and 83% of the 6 teachers admitted that truancy of pupils was due to fatigue due to work overload at home. However, 58% pupils and 17% teachers disagreed with the statement.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers concurred that truancy of pupils was due to domestic violence and child abuse. Nevertheless, 45% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers held divergent views.In addition, 40% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6teachers attributed truancy of pupils to excessive participation or attendance of pupils at funerals and religious festivals. However, 60% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.Forty-five percent (45%) of the 108 pupils and 50%of the 6 teachers attributed the truancy of pupils to little or no value

placed on education by parents/guardians as well as the pupils. On the other hand, 55% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers gave opposing views.

During the interview, some of the teachers made the following comments about the home factors:

> A few truant children stay barely 2km away from the school, and they come to school on foot. So, I think that is why they sometimes report late at school. They usually miss out some lessons whenever they are late. However, leaving beyond 2km from the school is no excuse for lateness. I think it is because of indiscipline. Some of these children stay deep into the night, and they wake up late. Certainly, some of these pupils miss out lessons due to over-sleeping. Sometimes, some pupils show disinterest in school, and they play truant on their way to school. This sometimes makes them to arrive late at school **(Teacher # 1).**
>
> Transportation from home to school is a challenge for some of these pupils. They do not get to school on time because they trek for a long distance to school. Sometimes, it rains very heavily in the morning. So, they get to school late. Hence, they miss out instructional time due to lateness **(Teacher # 2).**
>
> Most of the parents are illiterates and jobless. So, they have little knowledge on the importance of education. Some children play truant because they fend for themselves. They are not given breakfast in the house, so they had to look for something to eat before coming to school. Some parents do not care whether their wards perform well or not or even if they partake in every activity in the school **(Teacher # 3).**
>
> For some of the girl-children, their mothers always assign a lot of household duties to them. They are already late by the time they finish with the numerous duties. Their parents engage them in cleaning of the house, cooking and also selling after school as well as in the morning. This leaves them no option than to come to school late. That is why they sometimes miss out or skip early morning lessons **(Teacher # 4).**
>
> Some parents are unconcerned about the time their children come to school, because most of them leave the house at dawn and get home very late in the night. They do not care about what their children do during the day. So, these children play truant **(Teacher # 5).**
>
> I have observed that some pupils get to school late, and miss out classes due to poor attitudes of some parents to school. Some of the pupils too

are lazy. You will see them doing their homework on their way to school. I can surely say that there are pupils who dodge lessons due to late completion of their homework. Also, some of the pupils report late at school, and skip lessons because of absence or lateness of teachers **(Teacher # 6).**

The main home factors which contributed to truancy of public basic school pupils in the district were (in rank order): poor parental guidance and control (1st); financial constraints (2nd), broken homes (3rd); and child labour (4th).

Table 15. **School Factors that Contribute to Truancy among the Pupils**

						$(n^0 = 108; n^1 = 6)$
Factor/reason	**Pupils**			**Teachers**		
	A	**N**	**D**	**A**	**N**	**D**
Poor pupil-teacher relationship	24(22)	0(0)	84(78)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Bullying & teasing at school	36(33)	0(0)	72(67)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
Verbal abuse & threats from teachers	46(43)	0(0)	62(57)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Corporal punishment/severe caning	50(46)	0(0)	58(54)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Fear of school/school phobia	46(43)	1(1)	61(56)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Avoidance of test/examination	48(44)	0(0)	60(56)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Strict/harsh school rules & discipline	42(39)	0(0)	66(61)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Ineffective teaching/poor instruction	50(46)	0(0)	58(54)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
Poor school/learning environment	47(44)	0(0)	61(56)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Frequent absence of teachers	72(67)	0(0)	36(33)	4 (67)	0(0)	2(33)
Frequent school activities, e.g. athletics	58(54)	0(0)	50(46)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Key: n^0 = sample of pupils; n^1 = sample of teachers; A = Agree; D= Disagree; N= Neutral.

Note: The numbers or figures in parentheses are in percentages.

In Table 15:22% of the 108 pupils and 83% of the 6 teachersattributed truancy of school pupils to poor pupil-teacher relationship. Nonetheless, 78% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.Thirty-three percent (33%) of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers agreed, while 67% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement that truancy of pupils was due to bullying and teasing at school.Forty-three percent (43%) of the 108 pupils and 83% of the 6 teachers corroborated thattruancy of pupils was due to verbal abuse and threats from teachers. However, 57% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers held opposing views.

Also, 46% of the 108 pupilsand 83% of the 6 teachers held thattruancy of pupils was because of corporal punishment/severe caning. Conversely, 54% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers gave divergent views.Fear of school/school phobia was cited as probable cause of truancy among the school pupils as stated by 43% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers. However, 56% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers gave incongruent opinions, while 1% of the 108 pupilswas irresolute with the statement. More so, 44% of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6 teachers linked truancy of the pupils to avoidance of test/examination. However, 56%of the 108 pupils and 50% of the 6teachers disagreed with the statement.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) out of the 108 pupils, and 33% of the 6 teachers, attributed truancy of pupils to strict/harsh school rules and discipline. On the contrary, 61% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers gave negative responses.Furthermore, 46% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers attributed truancy of pupils to ineffective teaching

109

or poor instruction. However, 54% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.Again, 44% of the 108 pupils and 50%of the 6 teacherslinkedtruancy of pupils to poor school infrastructure or learning environment. Conversely, 56% of the 108 pupils and 50%of the 6 teachers held divergent opinions.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the 108 pupils as well as 67% of the 6 teachers agreed, while 33% of the 108 pupils as well as 33% of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement that truancy of pupils was due to frequent absence of teachers (teacher absenteeism). Lastly, 54% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers linked truancy of pupils to frequent school activities (culture, sports). However, 46% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6teachers gave negative responses.

It emerged from the findings of this study that there are mixed opinions on the school-related factors which contribute truancy among school pupils in the district. The results indicate that the main school factors which contributed to truancy of the pupils were: teacher absenteeism, excessive caning and corporal punishment, bullying and teasing of pupils, and threats of expulsion and verbal abuse of pupils. It becomes clear from the results of this study that corporal punishment, bullying, threats of expulsion, dismissal and suspension of pupils, and harsh school rules are ―push out" factors which discourageregular school attendance. The ―push out" factors consist of disciplinary actions that focus on excluding, suspending, automatically failing, and/or transferring out pupils. This result suggests that school issues on disciplinary actions such as corporal punishment, expelling a pupil from school and bullyingonly add to poor school attendance. This result further suggests that excessive disciplinary actions in schools could cause some pupils to experience great anxiety and panic over attending school.

110

The anxiety that pupils might experience from attending school as a result of disciplinary measures such as caning is problematic and could contribute to absenteeism and/or truant behaviours as observed by researchers such as Fremont (2003) and Kearney (2007). This situation makes the school environment or climate unfriendly for the pupil, and thus contributing poor school attendance. An unsafe environment is a likely school related factor that can affect pupils' attendance as stated by Heilbrunn (2004). This finding further confirms the views of Gastic (2008), who identified bullying as a potential factor that increases pupils' nonattendance in school. Gastic (2008), found that being bullied was found to be positively associated with increased risk of being frequently absent. This is becausevictims often feel hopeless or defenseless and choose to miss school, rather than having to face their bullies and/or the social stigma that is associated with being a victim of bullying as observed by Juvonen, Graham and Schuster (2003).

Table 16. **Community Factors that Contribute to Truancy among the Pupils**

	Pupils			Teachers		
					($n^0 = 108$; $n^1 = 6$)	
Factor/reason	A	N	D	A	N	D
Availability & attraction of pupils to video centres, internet cafes	58(54)	0(0)	50(46)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Long distance & transport problems	27(25)	0(0)	81(75)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Severe water problems	35(32)	0(0)	73(68)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Unfavourable & harsh weather conditions	45(42)	0(0)	63(58)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Key: F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n^0= number of pupils;n^1= teachers; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree

111

Note: The numbers or figures in parentheses are in percentages.

Table 16 presents information on the community factors which influence truancy among public basic school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. A significant number of the pupils (54%) and teachers (83%) confirmed thattruancy of pupils was due to the availability and attraction of pupils to video/cinema or recreational centres, and internet cafes in the community. However, 46% of the 108 pupils and 17% of the 6 teachers held opposing views.Twenty-five percent (25%) of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers attributed truancy of pupils to long distance and transportation problems. Conversely, 75% of the 108 pupils and 67% of 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.

More so, 32% of the 108 pupils and 33% of the 6 teachers linked truancy of pupils to severe water problem. On the other hand, 68% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers gave divergent views. Forty-two percent (42%) of the 108 pupilsand 33%of the 6 teachers attributed truancy of pupils to unfavourable and harsh weather conditions. On the contrary, 58% of the 108 pupils and 67% of the 6 teachers gave a negative response.

During the interview, some of the teachers made the following comments:

> Most of the truant pupils stay less than 1km away from the school. So, they go to school on foot. However, they often report late for class. So, they miss out some instructional time. I do not know why they should be missing out school. Perhaps their parents do not encourage them to attend school always. It may be that they play truant because of negative peer influence **(Teacher #1).**

> Commuting from home to school is not a challenge for these pupils because their houses are just nearby the school. Yet, they get to class late because they play truant. Some of these truant pupils leave the house early for school. Yet, some visit other places like internet cafes during school hours. Eventually, they report late at school (**Teacher #2).**

112

Some of the truant pupils are overburdened at home. They have been assigned several duties at home. They do all household chores before they prepare for school. Sometimes, they help their parents/guardians on the farm very early in the morning before they get back and prepare for school. Yes, some parents or guardians also engage them at market on market days. All these activities just affect their school attendance. It is either they are late for school or they absent from school.Some even miss out or skip out lessons in order to accomplish these tasks (**Teacher #3).**

Sometimes, I skip lessons because there is no money at home. How can I eat and buy school materials when my parents do not have cash? I am a sicklier. I have no option other than to stay at home during emergency situations such as sudden illness. I missed out a period on two occasions because I had to attend hospital facility for treatment **(Teacher #4).**

Oftentimes, they feel guilty that they miss out instructional periods. But it is not their fault. They get bad influences from their peers. Sometimes, it is because of unfavourable weather conditions like rainfall season which keep them away from school and class activities.Again, the schools are overcrowded because of large enrolment. So, this partially account for truancy in the schools **(Teacher #5).**

A few of the truant pupils in my school are sickliers. Certainly, they miss out lessons on several occasions due to sudden illness or attack. Sometimes, they also skip instructional time in order to attend clinic. Nevertheless, I always make alternative arrangement to make up for the lost periods. I organise extra classes for such pupils **(Teacher #6).**

It is evident from the findings of this study that the community factor which primarily accounted for truancy of pupils from school was availability and attraction of pupils to video/cinema or recreational centres and internet cafes in the community.The interviewees gave similar responses. It could be concluded that truancyamong the pupils was principally attributed to a plethora of reasons linked to pupil, home, school and community factors. The current survey linked truancy to the following principal factors: indiscipline; illness/chronic sickness; negative peer pressure; laziness and poor attitude to school; poor parental guidance and control; excessive caning and other forms of corporal punishment; availability and attraction of pupils to video/cinema or recreational centres

and internet cafes. This result seems to be in consonance with the views of Ubogu (2004), who stated that the factors influencing pupils' absenteeism and lateness to schoolare illness, age, truancy, social class and geographical area. This suggests that adverse home-related factors largely contribute to absenteeism and lateness independently of learner, school and community factors. Other studies by Kutuadu and Marfo (2001), Williams (2000), Marburger (2001) and Nawaz (2005) attributed it to negligence of parents; negative attitude of pupils toward school, lack of interest and poor attitudes of community, group or parental/family toward schooling. Bond (2004), for instance, included fractional truancy, which occurs when pupils arrive late or leave early, or spend entire days away from school, and skip individual classes (Henry &Huzinga, 2000;Teasley, 2004), and non- attendance at school (Henry & Huzinga, 2000; Teasley, 2004).

The current survey also shows that the principal reasons why public junior high school pupils in the AOB district were late for school are: long distance to and from school; poor parental attitude to school and parental irresponsibilityand excessive child labour in the form of domestic work. This result seems to be in consonance with Oghuvu (2006), who stated that lateness is common as a result of pupils' involvement by parents. Another study by Peretomode (2001) and Egbule (2004) found that the habit of lateness is being copied from family members. Ubogu (2004) also attributed the factors influencing pupils' absenteeism and lateness to financial hardship, institutional influence, illness, age, truancy, social class and geographical area. Other studies by Kutuadu and Marfo (2001), Williams (2000), Marburger (2001) and Nawaz (2005) attributed it to negligence of parents; negative attitude of pupils toward school, lack of interest and poor attitudes of

114

community, group or parental/family toward schooling. Bond (2004), for instance, included fractional truancy, which occurs when pupils arrive late or leave early, or spend entire days away from school, and skip individual classes.

Research question 3: *How does truancy affect the academic performance of JHS pupils in the district?*

The data presented and analysed under this theme answer questions 46 - 52 in the pupil survey questionnaire, and interview question 3.

Table 17.Effects of Truancy on the Academic Performance of the Pupils

						($n^0 = 108$; $n^1 = 6$)
Effect	**Pupils**			**Teachers**		
	A	**N**	**D**	**A**	**N**	**D**
Poor academic achievement	87(81)	0(0)	21(44)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
School failure	67(62)	0(0)	41(38)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Loss of instructional/contact hours	46(43)	0(0)	62(57)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Disruption in teaching/learning	75(69)	0(0)	33(31)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
Poor retention	61(56)	0(0)	47(44)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Drop out	60(56)	0(0)	48(44)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
Repetition	58(54)	0(0)	50(46)	6(100)	0(0)	0(0)

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Key: F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n^0 = number of pupils;n^1= teachers; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree

Note: The numbers or figures in parentheses are in percentages.

Table 17 sought answers to the effects of truancy on the academic performance of truant JHS school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brawkwa District.Eighty-seven (81%) of the

115

108 pupils and 5 (83%) of the 6 teachers agreed thattruancy of pupils led to poor academic achievement or underachievement. However, 21(19%) of the 108 pupils and 1 (17%)of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.Similarly, 67 (62%) of the 108 pupils and 5(83%) of the 6 teachers asserted, but 41 (38%) of the 108 pupils and 1 (17%) of the 6 teacher disagreed with the statement that truancy of pupils led to school failure.

Also, 46 (43%) pupils and 2 (33%) of the 6 teachers concurred that truancy of pupils led to loss of instructional/contact hours. Conversely, 62 (57%) of the 108 pupils and 4 (67%) of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.More so, 75 (69%) of the 108 pupils and 4 (67%) of the 6 teachersadmitted, while 33(31%) of the 108 pupils and 2 (33%) of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement that truancy of pupils disrupted teaching and learning process. In addition, 61 (56%) of the 108 pupils and 5 (83%) of the 6 teachers admitted that truancy of pupils contributed to poor retention of some pupils. However, 47(44%) of the 108 pupils and 1 (17%) of the 6teacher gave negative opinions.

Further to that, 60 (56%) of the 108 pupils and 4 (67%) of the 6 teachers affirmed thattruancy of pupils contributed to drop out of some pupils.In contrast 48 (44%) of the 108 pupils and 2 (33%) of the 6 teachers disagreed with the statement.Fifty-eight (54%) of the 108 pupils and 6 (100%) teachers asserted that truancy of pupils contributed to repetition of some pupils.However, 50 (46%) of the 108 pupils disagreed with the statement.

In response to the interview question, teachers raised the following issues:

> Absenteeism and lateness due to truancy adversely influences pupils' academic performance. I believe it makes the truant pupils to miss out and skip lessons. This partly accounts for

retarded academic progress. Truancy takes the greater part of their time for studies. It really affects them **(Teacher #1).**

Indiscipline is seriously contributing to low academic performance and repetition among the truantpupils in our schools. Many of them spent so much time at internet cafes and watching of TV at the expense of their books **(Teacher #2).**

A considerable number of the truant pupils are lazy. They don't like learning. They exhibit deviant behaviours. They skip lessons and disrupt lessons whenever they come to school **(Teacher #3).**

These truant pupils are not punctual and regular at class. They are undisciplined, stubborn and are not law abiding.Some are calm, withdrawn and shy. They exhibit antisocial activities and do not usually partake in group activities. Some of these pupils are temperamental. They are not patient. So, they are afraid to even ask for explanations in class. I think this does not promote effective teaching and learning. They do not take their lessons seriously **(Teacher #4).**

They have less time for books and this does not promote their academic progress. Eventually, they experience school failure and dropout. Most of the truant pupils are just not serious with school **(Teacher #5).**

I must also admit that poor school attendance, particularly absenteeism by the truant pupils is a problem which hamper teaching and learning in this school. It retards teaching and learning as well as pupils' academic achievement **(Teacher #6).**

The survey established that truancy among public junior high schoolpupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District had significantly contributed to school failure (1st), poor retention of pupils (2nd), dropout (3rd), and poor academic achievement or underachievement (4th). This was followed by repetition of some pupils (5th), disruption in teaching and learning process (6th), and loss of instructional time or contact hours (7th). These findings seem to be in tandem with the views of Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2005) who found that absenteeism which is linked to truancy has serious repercussions on educational achievement because it impairs teaching and learning; it significantly

contributes to loss of instructional time. The implication is that pupils who always absent themselves from school or arrived late missed out lessons. They might lag behind in learning, and this could affect their learning achievement. Other studies by Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson and Kirk (2003) identified effects of absenteeism or school absence on children such as: academic underachievement which increases costs and wastage, difficulty in making friends which could lead to boredom, loss of confidence and engagement in premature sexual activity which could lead to pregnancy resulting in dropout and stress among young careers. Studies by Williams (2000) also found that pupils who have absenteeism problems generally suffer academically and socially; they have lower achievement (Chang & Romero, 2008); they might be penalized on test scores (Barker & Jansen, 2000); it might affect retention as it might degenerate into truancy (Barker & Jansen, 2000); and it lowers the literacy and numeracy rates of any country (Thompson, 2008).
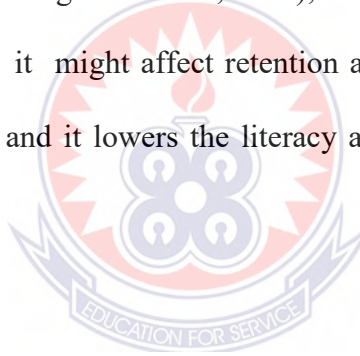
Research question 4: *What intervention measures can be put in place to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district?*

The data and discussions under this sub-topic sought to provide answers to questions 53 to 62 in the pupils' and teachers' questionnaires as well as interview question 4.

Table 18. **Intervention Measures to Mitigate Truancy among JHS Pupils**

						$(n^0 = 108; n^1 = 6)$
Factor/reason	**Pupils**			**Teachers**		
	A	**N**	**D**	**A**	**N**	**D**
Parent should adequately provide my needs	108(100)	0(0)	0(0)	6(100)	0(0)	0(0)
Parents to encourage wards to attend school	72(67)	0(0)	36(33)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)
GES to sensitize parents	62(57)	0(0)	46(43)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Truancy patrol swoops	50(46)	0(0)	58(54)	5(83)	0(0)	1(17)
Counselors to counsel truant pupils	66(61)	0(0)	42(39)	6(100)	0(0)	0(0)
Teachers to limit use of cane, etc	60(56)	0(0)	48(44)	3(50)	0(0)	3(50)
Teachers to punish truant pupils	42(39)	0(0)	66(61)	2(33)	0(0)	4(67)
Rewards good school attendance	58(54)	0(0)	50(46)	4(67)	0(0)	2(33)

Source: Fieldwork data (2017).

Key: F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n^0 = number of pupils; n^1 = teachers; A = Agree;

 N = Neutral; D = Disagree

Note: The numbers or figures in parentheses are in percentages.

Table 18 gives information on intervention measures to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district. All (100%) the pupils, and teachers (100%) suggested that parents

should adequately provide for the needs of their wards. Also, 72 (67%) pupils and 4 (67%) teachers proposed that parents should encourage their wards to attend school always. Conversely, 36 (33%) pupils and 2 (33%) teachers gave divergent views.

Moreover, 62 (57%) pupils and 5 (83%) teachers stated that the Ghana Education Service should sensitize parents on the value of education. Notwithstanding, 46 (43%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher held incongruent views. In addition, 48 (44%) pupils and 5 (83%) teachers mentioned that truancy patrol swoops should be carried out by schools. However, 60 (56%) pupils and 1 (17%) teacher held opposing views.Also, 66 (61%) pupils and 6 (100%) teachers averred that school counselors should counsel truant pupils. In contrast, 42 (39%) pupils gave incongruent views.

Sixty (60) which represents 56% pupils and 3 (50%) teachers proposed that teachers should limit the use of cane and other forms of corporal punishment on truant pupils. Conversely, 48 (44%) pupils and 3 (50%) teachers disagreed with the proposal.Forty-two (39%) pupils and 2 (33%) teachers suggested that teachers should punish truant pupils, but 66 (61%) pupils and 4 (67%) teachers disagreed with this suggestion.Similarly, 58 (54%) pupils and 4 (67%) teachers stated that truant pupils should rather be rewarded for good school attendance. However, 50 (46%) pupils and 2 (33%) teachers held divergent views.

In response to the interview question, some of the teachers gave several opinions as below:

> Nowadays, most parents are absentee parents. Parents/guardians should adequately provide for the needs of their wards. I mean every parent should do his/her best to provide for the basic and school needs of children. They should motivate and encourage pupils to go to school

regularly and early. Also, parents and teachers should frequently carry out truancy sweeps on pupils **(Teacher #1).**

Truant pupils need counselling. The school counselors should frequently counsel pupils who usually come to school late, and even skip lessons. They should counsel pupils who habitually absent themselves from school too. Again, teachers should moderate the use of corporal punishment. They should be aware of the rights of children and they must sparingly use the cane.I feel parents must support wards with their needs. They need to supervise their homework, and show interest in our school work **(Teacher #2).**

Teachers should give prizes for punctuality, and other awards to motivate truant pupils to be punctual at school. Both parents and teachers must always encourage pupils to learn. Parents need to show more commitment to their children's education. Specifically, parents must adequately provide for the basic and school needs of their wards **(Teacher #3).**

On the average, most of the pupils are punctual to school. Notwithstanding, I think time of school attendance of pupils should be monitored. A time book should be used in each class to check pupils' regularity and punctuality to school. What we need is proper discipline. There is the need for effective rewards and punishment mechanism in the school to change truant pupils. Again, parents should provide wards with the basic needs. I mean food, clothing and items for school **(Teacher #4).**

It is prudent to use corrective and reformative techniques such as counselling truant pupils who habitually absent themselves from school. I also feel that we (teachers) should restrain the use of punitive measures to disciplinethem. Instead, corrective measures such as counselling should be used to reform truant pupils.I think some of the truant pupils are from single parent families need scholarship and financial support **(Teacher #5).**

There is the need for effective guidance and counselling in the school. I also think periodicmotivational talks from role models would change the attitudes of truant pupils to school and learning. We must enforce the school rules but I also believe that positive reinforcement and proper use of rewards and punishment would positively change thesepupils. Certainly, parents should be more responsible. They should be sensitized not deprive their wards of their basic and school needs **(Teacher #6).**

121

The informationshow that 35% of the pupils and 29% of teachers recommended the counselling of pupils. This is followed by giving of awards such as sectional marks for punctuality, effective home and school discipline, joint school and PTA truancy patrols and swoops, and corporal punishment. The least suggested measures include providing means of transport such as bicycles to pupils who leave more than 2km away from school, less engagement of pupils in domestic tasks and child labour activities, verbal warning or reprimand, and giving query.

From the data, the pupils and teachers proposed the following measures to mitigate truancy among school pupils: provision of basic and school needs of pupils by parents, counselling of pupils, parental encouragement, giving of rewards such as awards for punctuality and regularity. This finding concurs with Ubogu (2004), who recommended counseling support for pupils with poor school attendance.

4.4.   Testing of Hypotheses

Chi-square ($\chi2$) test was used to analyse the relationship between truancy and poor academic performance of JHS pupils. Similarly, independent samples test (t-test) was used to determine significant gender and age differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district. The hypothesis was tested at a significance level of $p <$ ..05at a Confidence Interval (C.I.) of 95%.The $\chi2$ test and t-test results are presented in Tables 19 and 20 respectively.

4.4.1   Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: There will be no significant relationship between truancy and poor academic performance of JHS pupils in the AOB District

Table 19: Chi-square (χ^2) Test of Association between Truancy and Academic Performance

Test variables	Truancy as a predictor of academic performance
Chi-square	4.481[a]
Df	1
*Asymp. sig. (p-value)	0.034

Note: χ^2 = 4.481[a], df = 1, *p <0.05

Key: Chi-square (χ^2) test-statistics; df - degrees of freedom; **p-value:**$\chi^2$is significant at

The 0.05 level (2-tailed).
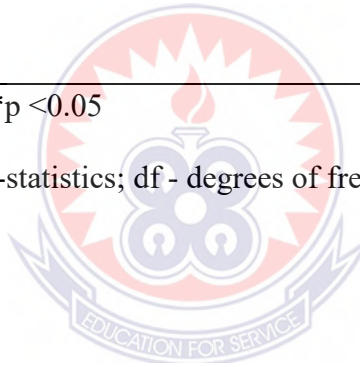
Table 19 shows the χ^2test result of the hypothesis. The χ^2test result revealed a strong relationship between truancy and academic performance (df = 1; χ^2= 4.481[a]; p = 0.034). It becomes clear that there is a significant positive relationship between truancy and academic performance [χ^2(1, N = 108) = 4.481, p < 0.05]. This result implies that truancy negatively influences academic performance. The null hypothesis (**Ho₁)** is rejected since p<0.05.

Ho₂: *There is no significant age differences in pupils' involvement in truancy*

behaviour in the district.

Table 20. Independent Samples test (t-test) Results of Age Differences in Involvement of Pupils in Truancy

Age (yrs)	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df	p	Decision
Below 12	2	1.000	.000					
12	24	1.000	.000					
13	36	1.000	.000	-7.517	1.98	106	0.000	Reject
14	40	1.370	.490					
15 & above	6	2.000	.000					
Total	108	1.190	.398					

T-test is significant at the 0 .05 level (2-tailed).

Key: n – sample size; **SD**- Standard deviation; **t-cal** means test statistics;**t-crit** means critical value; **df** - degrees of freedom;**p** – probability (p) value.

The results in table 20 indicates thattruant pupils who were aged 15 years and above (M= 2.00, n= 6, SD= .000) were more likely to engage in truant behaviours than their counterparts who were 14 years of age (M= 1.37, n= 40, SD=.490) and those within 13 years of age (M= 1.00, n= 36, SD =.000) and pupils who are 12 years of age (M= 1.00, n= 24, SD =.000) as well as those who are below 12 years (M= 1.00, n= 2, SD =.000). This result suggests that adolescent children aged between 14 and 19 are more likely to be truants than adolescents who are aged 10 to 13 years. This result reveals a negative, but significant marginal age differences in truancy characteristicsor behaviours of adolescent school children in the district. For instance, it is evident from the results that truancy is more prevalent among public junior high school pupils who are 15 years and above (M = 2.00, SD =0 .000) than for their counterparts who are 14, 13, 12 and below 12 years of age in the district, $t(106)$ = -7.517, p = 0.000. The null hypothesis (**Ho₂)** is rejected since p<0 .05.

Null Hypothesis (Ho₃): *There will be no significant gender difference in pupils'*

involvement in truancy behaviour in the district

Table 21. Independent Samples test (t-test) Results of Gender Differences in
Involvement of Pupils in Truancy

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df	p	Decision
Male	65	1.49	.506					
Female	43	1.00	.000	-3.542	1.98	106	.059	Reject
Total	108	1.19	.398					

T-test is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Key:n – sample size ,**SD** - Standard deviation; **t-cal** means test statistics; **t-crit** means

critical value; **df** - degrees of freedom; **p** – probability (p) value.

The result in Table 21 shows that there are significant gender differences in the

prevalence of truancy among public junior high school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-

Brakwa District. A comparison of the mean differences indicate that male pupils(M=

1.49, n= 65, SD= 5.06) were more likely to be truant than their female counterparts (M =

1.00, n= 43, SD= 0.000). This implies that prevalence of truancy is high among

adolescent male junior high school pupils as compared with their female counterparts in

the district. The t-test output indicates that the observed difference in the means is

significant; t(106) = -3.542, p = 0.059, at a confidence interval (C.I.) of 95%.   This result

statistically shows a negative but significant gender differences in the prevalence of

truancy among junior high school pupils in public basic schools within the district.Hence,

the decision that **Ho₃** is rejected since p<0.05.

4.5. Summary of Results and Discussion

This study, which investigated how truancy relates to academic performance of junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana, unfolds that truancy was prevalent among public JHS pupils in the district, and that 79% of the 108 truant pupils engaged in truancy. It emerged from the results that pupil-related factors such as indiscipline, negative peer pressure, and illness primarily accounted for truancy among the JHS pupils.

Also, the findings indicate that truancy has significantly contributed to school failure and poor academic performance, poor retention, repetition and dropout among the truant pupils. It came to light that the respondentsproposed the provision of basic and school needs of pupils by parents, counselling of pupils, giving of rewards such as awards for punctuality and regularity as measures to curb truancy among the pupils.
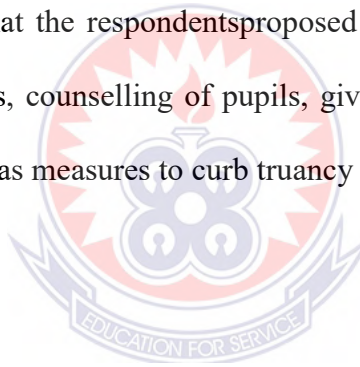
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the summary of the findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies are also put forward.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This study was conducted in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. It investigated truancy and academic performance of junior high school pupils. To achieve this purpose, four (4) objectives were set, and they were to:

1. Find out the nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District.

2. Investigate the causes of truancy among the pupils.

3. Determine the effects of truancy on academic performance of JHS pupils in Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District.

4. Identify interventions to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district.

Four research questions were formulated to guide the study, and these were:

1. What is the nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District?

2. What factors are responsible for the act of truancy among JHS pupils in the district?

3. How does truancy affect the academic performance of JHS pupils in Asikuma Odoben Brakwa district?

4. What interventions can be put in place to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district?

Also, three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, and these were:

1. There will be no significant relationship between truancy and poor academic performance of JHS pupils in the AOB District.

2. There is no significant age differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district.

3. There is no significant gender differences in pupils' involvement in truancy behaviour in the district.

The design for the study was a mixed methods sequential explanatory approach. A total of 108truant pupils were selected using simple random sampling technique, while 6 teachers were purposively sampled for the study. Questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.73) and semi-structured interview schedule were used for data collection. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively usingthe Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21 software, and this was presented in tables in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation while the qualitative data was analysed thematically. Inferential statistics was computed using t-tests at a significance

level of $p \leq 0.05$ using a confidence interval (C.I.) of 95%. This chapter highlights the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations drawn from the study. Suggestions for further studies are also put forward.

5.3   Summary of Findings

Among the findings of this study were the following:

a. The first research question sought to find out the nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. It emerged that truancy was prevalent among public JHS pupils in the district. It emerged from the study that 79% of the 108 truant pupils engaged in truancy.

b. Also, truant school pupils in the district usually engaged in petty jobs, farm labour and household chores as reported by 28% to 36% of the 108 respondents.

c. The second research question looked at the factors that were responsible for the act of truancy among JHS pupils in the district. The study found that pupil-related factors such as indiscipline, negative peer pressure, and illness primarily accounted for truancy among the JHS pupils.

d. Even though there are mixed opinions on the school-related factors which contributed to truancy among the school pupils, it unfolds that teacher absenteeism, excessive caning and corporal punishment contributed to truancy among the pupils.

e. It also emerged that the availability and uncontrolled attraction or patronage of pupils to video/cinema or recreational centres and internet cafes in the community accounted for truancy among the pupils.

f. The third research question sought to determine the effects of truancy on the society. The findings of this study reveal thattruancy has significantly contributed to school failure and poor academic performance, poor retention, repetition and dropout among the truant pupils.

g. It unfolds that truancy is statistically found to negatively and significantly influence academic performance of the truant pupils (p = 0.034).

h. There is negative, but significant marginal age differences in the prevalence of truancy among the school pupils (p =0 .000).

i. Truancy is statistically found to be more prevalent among public junior high school pupils who are 15 years and above.

j. There is a negative but significant gender differences in the prevalence of truancy among the pupils (p =0 .059). Truancy is statistically found to be more prevalent among male adolescent junior high school pupils.

k. The fourth research question sought to identify intervention measures to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district. It came to light that the respondentsproposed the provision of basic and school needs of pupils by parents, counselling of pupils, giving of rewards such as awards for punctuality and regularity as measures to curb truancy among the pupils

5.4 Conclusion

Overall, it is evident from the findings that truancy is prevalent among public junior high school pupils in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana.Acts of truancy among the pupils manifest in the form of fractional school attendance, including absenteeism, lateness, and skipping of classes.It came to light from

the findings of this study that most of the predictors and/or causes of truancy transcend the home, school, and community. The major factors responsible for truancy among the pupils include, but not limited to too much parental irresponsibility, manual labour and corporal punishment. Hence, negative home and school-community factors are recipes for truancy among the school pupils.The major consequences of truancy in schools are: poor learning outcomes, school repetition and drop out among the pupils. The provision of basic needs of the pupils, and the use of correctional measures such as counselling rather than the use of punitive measures have been seen as a measure to control this canker among the pupils.

5.5 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

a. It emerged from this study that truancy was prevalent among public JHS pupils in Asikuma Odoben Brakwa district. Therefore, school counsellors in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District should frequently counsel truant pupils who habitually absent themselves from school, skip lessons or get to school late.

b. It also unfolds from the findings that a plethora of pupil, home, school and community related factors accounted for truancy among the pupils. In this regard, teachers and parents and guardians in the district should promote effective class or home discipline, behaviour control and management of truant pupils.

c. Furthermore, school authorities in the district should provide meaningful activities to engage the pupils throughout their stay in school. This will help reduce visits outside the school.

d. The school authorities, teachers and the PTA/SMC of basic schools in the district should institute punctuality awards for truant pupils who are punctual, and of good behaviour.

e. More so, teachers in basic schools in the district should sparingly and moderately use corporal punishment especially caning and expulsion to control truancy, lateness, absenteeism, and indiscipline among truant pupils who habitually report late at school.

f. Too much manual labour and corporal punishment should be mitigated to discourage apathy to schooling and school activities.

g. The Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa Assembly should pass bye-laws to restrict or ban pupils from patronizing internet cafés, video or cinema centres, and funeral programmes during school hours, and in the evenings. Pupils should be banned from attending wake-keepings. When these laws are implemented and enforced, it will help to minimize the problem of truancy, absenteeism and lateness of pupils to school.

h. The findings of this study proposed the provision of basic and school needs of pupils by parents, guardians, individuals and institutions as a measure to curb truancy among the pupils. Therefore, parents in the district should adequately provide for the basic and school needs of their wards. They should motivate and encourage pupils to always attend school on time.

i. More so, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the district should support the education of truant pupils in the district.

132

5.6. Suggestion for Further Studies

There is the need for future researchers to draw conclusive evidence that punitive measures rather predicts or cause truancy behaviours such as non-school attendance, absenteeism and lateness among pupils, especially among adolescents and by teachers and pupils.

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134

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139

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

INTRODUCTION:

I am a student of the University of Education; Winneba. I am carrying out a study on truancy and academic performance of junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. All information provided here shall be kept confidential and shall be used for research purpose only. **Thank you.**

<u>**SECTION A**</u>:   **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (Please write or tick (√) as appropriate**

1. Sex: Male   [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age (in yrs): Below 12[ ] 12 - 13 [ ] 13 - 14[ ] 15 years & above [ ]

3. How far (km) is your ward's school from house?

    0-1km [ ] 1-2km [ ] 2-3km [ ] 3-4km [ ] More than 4km [ ]

4. What mode or means of transport do you use to and from school?

    On foot [ ] Bicycle [ ] Motorbike [ ] Car [ ] Other [ ], **specify:** ……………

5. Who do you stay with? Father only [ ] Mother only [ ] Both parents/Dual custody [ ] Grand parents [ ] Stepparents [ ] Other [ ], **Specify:** ....

6. What is the occupation of your parent? Farming [ ]   Trading [ ] Artisan [ ] Civil

servant [ ]   Other [ ],   **Specify:** ....

7. How long do your parents stay at work place: less than 2 hrs [ ] 2-4 hrs [ ]   4-6 hrs[ ]   6-8 hrs [ ]   More than 8 hrs [ ]

8. How do you rate the socio-economic status of your parents ?Very low [ ] Low [ ] High [ ] Very High [ ]

SECTION B: NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF TRUANCY

Please write or tick (√) as appropriate

10. Do you always attend school in a week?   Yes [   ] No [   ]

11. If yes, how many days or times do you go to school in a week?

   Once [   ] Twice [   ] Thrice [   ] Four days in a week [   ] Five days in a week [   ]

12. How often do you go to school in a school week?

   Very Frequent [   ] Frequent [   ] Sometimes [ ] Rarely [   ] Never [   ]

13. At what time (how early) do you usually get to school, in the morning, during school

   days?

  Before 7.00 a.m [   ]   Between 7.00 and 8.00 a.m [   ]   Between 8.00 and 8.30 a.m [   ]

  [   ]   Between 8.30 and 9.00   a.m [   ]   After 9.00 a.m [   ]

14. At what time do you usually come home during school days?

Before 9.00 a.m [   ]   Between 9.00 and 10.00 a.m [   ] Between 11.00 and 12.00 a.m [   ]

  [   ]   Between 1.00 and 2.00   p.m [   ]   After 2.00 p.m when school closes down [ ]

15. At what place do you usually go and/do after leaving school before school day/class

   ends? **You may tick (√) more than one (1) response**

   i.   Go to bush to hunt for snails, animals and collect fruits [   ]

   ii.   Hide at places to play [   ]

   iii.   Just wondering about on the streets [   ]

   iv.   Go to the river to swim [   ]

   v.   Go to the river to catch fish [   ]

   vi.   Engage in petty jobs, farm labour, household chores and errands [   ]

   vii.   Engage in secret love affairs [   ]

viii.   Go to the market to sell [ ]

ix.   Go to the recreational (video/cinema) centres and internet café [ ]

SECTION C: FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACT OF TRUANCY

AMONG JHS PUPILS

Please tick (√) as applicable to reflect your opinion or experiences on the causes of

truancy:

Key: **SA** – Strongly Agree; **A** – Agree; **D** – Disagree; **SD** – Strongly Disagree;
N – Neutral

PUPIL FACTORS

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	D	SD	N
Most truant pupils always absent or run away from school or class due to/because of …………………………………………………….…..					
16. illness/chronic sickness					
17. physical, emotional handicaps					
18. dislike for school					
19. truancy & indiscipline					
20. negative peer/social pressure					
21. laziness & poor attitude to school					
22. ─self' mentality" not to attend school on funeral days, market days, fishing and harvest seasons					
23. wanting to avoid tests/examinations					
24. fear for school (school phobia)					

HOME FACTORS

Statement	Responses				
Most truant pupils always absent or run away from school or class due to/because of	SA	A	D	SD	N
25. poor or lack of parental/guardian control or poor parenting					
26. need to stay at home to care for siblings/old parents/ sick family members and to run errands.					
27. financial constraints/hardship					
28. Single parenthood due to broken homes (parental divorce/separation, death of parent/guardian)					
29. child labor (helping parents on the farm, market, etc), child abuse and neglect/abandonment					
30. tiredness due to work overload, that is excessive household					
31. domestic violence & other troubles at home					
32. excessive attendance/participation of pupils' families at funerals, religious festivals.					
33. little or no value placed on education by parents/guardian					

SCHOOL FACTORS

Statement	Responses				
Most truant pupils always absent or run away from school or class due to/because of	SA	A	D	SD	N
34. dislike for teachers due to poor pupil-teacher relationship					
35. bullying and teasing at school					
36 verbal abuse & threats from teachers					
37. Corporal punishment (severe caning)					
38 unnecessary caning & excessive corporal punishment at school					
39 fear of school (school phobia)					
40. Avoidance of test/examination					
41. Strict/harsh school rules & discipline					
42 threats of expulsion and verbal abuse (casting insults) of pupils by teachers					
43 ineffective teaching/poor instruction					
44 poor learning (class/school) environment/infrastructure					

45. frequent absence of teachers					
46 frequent school activities - music, drama, athletics					

COMMUNITY FACTORS

47 Availability & attraction of pupils to the video / cinema/recreational centers					
48 long distance from school & transportation problems (travel to school on foot)					
49 severe water problems					
50 Unfavorable & harsh weather conditions					

SECTION D: IMPACT OF TRUANCY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

OF JHS PUPILS

Instructions: Please check the effects absenteeism on the pupils, the family/home, school and community/society. *Please tick (√) as applicable to reflect your opinion or experiences on the effects:*

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	D	SD	I
Most truant pupils experience ……….…………due to habitual absenteeism					
51poor academic achievement/academic under-achievement of pupils/school					
52school failure					
53loss of instructional/contact hours					
54disruption in teaching/learning process					
55poor retention					
56drop out					
57repetition					

SECTION E: INTERVENTION MEASURES TO MITIGATE TRUANCY

AMONG JHS PUPILS IN THE DISTRICT

Instructions: Please check the measures to best reduce truancy of JHS pupils. *Please*

Tick (√) as applicable to reflect your opinion or experiences on the best strategies:

Key: **5** – Most important; **4** – Important; **3** – Fairly important; **2** – Less important;
1 – Least important

Statement	Responses				
	5	4	3	2	1
58 Parent/guardian should adequately provide for my needs & become responsible					
59 Parents/guardians should persuade/motivate or encourage me to go to school regularly					
60 G.E.S/PTA/SMC should organize education/sensitization programs for parents/community on the value of education & need for regular school attendance					
61 Truancy patrols sweeps by parents, teachers, PTA/SMC					
62 G.E.S/school counselors should counsel truant pupils and their parents					
63 Teachers should limit the use of cane or any form of corporal punishment					
64 Teachers should punish pupils who always play truant & absent from school					
65 Giving of awards for excellent school attendance (regularity & punctuality)					
66 Parents, government and NGOs to provide means of transport (e.g. bicycle) to pupils who live 2km or more away from school.					

67 Other [ ], **specify:** ……………………………………………………………

154

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION:

I am a student of the University of Education; Winneba. I am carrying out a study on truancy and academic performance of junior high school pupils in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. All information provided here shall be kept confidential and shall be used for research purpose only. **Thank you.**

SECTION A: **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (Please write or tick (√) as appropriate**

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age (in yrs): Below 30[ ] 30 - 40 [ ] 40 - 50 [ ] 50 years & above [ ]

3. How far (km) is your ward's school from house?

    0-1km [ ] 1-2km [ ] 2-3km [ ] 3-4km [ ] More than 4km [ ]

4.   What mode or means of transport do most of your pupils use to and from school?

    On foot [ ] Bicycle [ ] Motorbike [ ] Car [ ] Other [ ], **specify:** ……………

5.   Who do most of your pupils stay with? Father only [ ] Mother only [ ] Both parents/Dual custody [ ] Grand parents [ ] Stepparents [ ] Other [ ], **Specify:** ....

6. What is the occupation of most of your pupils ?Farming [   ]   Trading [   ] Artisan [   ] Civil servant [   ]   Other [ ],   **Specify:** ....

7. How long do most of the parents of your pupils stay at work place: less than 2 hrs [ ]   2-4 hrs [ ]   4-6 hrs[ ] 6-8 hrs [ ]   More than 8 hrs [ ]

8. How do you rate the s ocio-economic status of most of the parents of your pupils?Very low [   ] Low [   ] High [   ] Very High [   ]

SECTION B: **NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF TRUANCY**

Please write or tick (√) as appropriate

9. Do pupils ward always attend school in a week?   Yes [   ] No [   ]

9. If yes, how many days or times do most of   your pupils go to school in a week?

   Once [   ] Twice [   ] Thrice [   ] Four days in a week [   ] Five days in a week [   ]

10. How often do most of your pupils go to school in a school week?

   Very Frequent [   ] Frequent [   ] Sometimes [ ] Rarely [   ] Never [   ]

 11.   At what time (how early) do most of your pupils usually get to school, in the
        morning, during school days?

  Before 7.00 a.m [   ]   Between 7.00 and 8.00 a.m [   ] Between 8.00 and 8.30 a.m [   ]

  [   ]   Between 8.30 and 9.00   a.m [   ]   After 9.00 a.m [   ]

 12.   At what time do most of your pupils usually come home during school days?

  Before 9.00 a.m [   ] Between 9.00 and 10.00 a.m [   ] Between 11.00 and 12.00 a.m [   ]

  [   ]   Between 1.00 and 2.00   p.m [   ]   After 2.00 p.m when school closes down [   ]

13. At what place do most your pupils usually go and/do after leaving school before
    school day/class ends? **You may tick (√) more than one (1) response**

    x.   Go to bush to hunt for snails, animals and collect fruits [   ]

    xi.   Hide at places to play [   ]

    xii.   Just wondering about on the streets [   ]

    xiii.   Go to the river to swim [   ]

    xiv.   Go to the river to catch fish [   ]

    xv.   Engage in petty jobs, farm labour, household chores and errands [   ]

    xvi.   Engage in secret love affairs [   ]

156

xvii.   Go to the market to sell [ ]

xviii.   Go to the recreational (video/cinema) centres and internet café [ ]

SECTION C: FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACT OF TRUANCY

AMONG JHS PUPILS

Please tick (√) as applicable to reflect your opinion or experiences on the causes of

truancy:

Key: **SA** – Strongly Agree; **A** – Agree; **D** – Disagree; **SD** – Strongly Disagree;
              N – Neutral

PUPIL FACTORS

Statement	Responses				
Most truant pupils always absent or run away from school or class due to/because of …………………………………………………….…..	SA	A	D	SD	N
14. illness/chronic sickness					
15. physical, emotional handicaps					
16. dislike for school					
17. truancy & indiscipline					
18. negative peer/social pressure					
19. laziness & poor attitude to school					
20. ─self' mentality" not to attend school on funeral days, market days, fishing and harvest seasons					
21. wanting to avoid tests/examinations					
22. fear for school (school phobia)					

HOME FACTORS

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	D	SD	N
Most truant pupils in your class/school always absent or run away from school or class due to/because of ………………………………………………………..					
23. poor or lack of parental/guardian control or poor parenting					
24. need to stay at home to care for siblings/old parents/ sick family members and to run errands.					
25. financial constraints/hardship					
26. Single parenthood due to broken homes (parental divorce/separation, death of parent/guardian)					
27. child labor (helping parents on the farm, market, etc), child abuse and neglect/abandonment					
28. tiredness due to work overload, that is excessive household					
29. domestic violence & other troubles at home					
30. excessive attendance/participation of pupils' families at funerals, religious festivals.					
31. little or no value placed on education by parents/guardian					

SCHOOL FACTORS

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	D	SD	N
Most truant pupils in your class always absent or run away from school or class due to/because of ………………………………………………………..					
32. dislike for teachers due to poor pupil-teacher relationship					
33. bullying and teasing at school					
36. verbal abuse & threats from teachers					
37Corporal punishment (severe caning)					
38 unnecessary caning & excessive corporal punishment at school					
39 fear of school (school phobia)					
40. Avoidance of test/examination					
41. Strict/harsh school rules & discipline					
42 threats of expulsion and verbal abuse (casting insults) of pupils by teachers					
43 ineffective teaching/poor instruction					
44 poor learning (class/school) environment/infrastructure					

158

45. frequent absence of teachers					
46 frequent school activities - music, drama, athletics					

COMMUNITY FACTORS

47 Availability & attraction of pupils to the video / cinema/recreational centers					
48 long distance from school & transportation problems (travel to school on foot)					
49 severe water problems					
50 Unfavorable & harsh weather conditions					

SECTION D: IMPACT OF TRUANCY ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

OF JHS PUPILS

Instructions: Please check the effects absenteeism on the pupils, the family/home,

school and community/society. *Please tick (√) as applicable to reflect your opinion or*

experiences on the effects:

Statement	Responses				
	SA	A	D	SD	I
Most truant pupils in your class/school experience ………………….due to habitual absenteeism					
51poor academic achievement/academic under-achievement of pupils/school					
52school failure					
53loss of instructional/contact hours					
54disruption in teaching/learning process					
54poor retention					
55drop out					
56repetition					

SECTION E: INTERVENTION MEASURES TO MITIGATE TRUANCY

AMONG JHS PUPILS IN THE DISTRICT

Instructions: Please check the measures to best reduce truancy of JHS pupils. *Please*

Tick (√) as applicable to reflect your opinion or experiences on the best strategies:

Key: **5** – Most important; **4** – Important; **3** – Fairly important; **2** – Less important;
1 – Least important

Statement	Responses				
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
58Parent/guardian should adequately provide for my needs & be more responsible					
58Parents/guardians should persuade/motivate or encourage me to go to school regularly					
59G.E.S/PTA/SMC should organize education/sensitization programs for parents/community on the value of education & need for regular school attendance					
60Truancy patrols sweeps by parents, teachers, PTA/SMC					
61G.E.S/school counselors should counsel truant pupils and their parents					
61Teachers should limit the use of cane or any form of corporal punishment					
62Teachers should punish pupils who always play truant & absent from school					
63Giving of awards for excellent school attendance (regularity & punctuality)					
64Parents, government and NGOs to provide means of transport (e.g. bicycle) to pupils who live 2km or more away from school.					

65 Other [ ], **specify:** ……………………………………………………

160

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. Bio-data.

2. The nature and prevalence of truancy among junior high school pupils.

3. Factors responsible for truancy among JHS pupils.

4. Effects of truancy on the academic performance of JHS pupils.

5. Intervention measures to mitigate truancy among JHS pupils in the district.