

**SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR VICTIMS OF TRUANCY
AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN OVIA
NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA EDO STATE**

BY

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BENIN CITY**

AUGUST, 2025

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**BEING A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF MASTER DEGREE (M.S.W.) IN SOCIAL WORK.**

AUGUST, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research proposal “social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in selected public schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State” was carried out by **Ewere Orhue Osadolor** with Matriculation Number: **PG/SSC2215840** partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Master of Social work (M.S.W.) Degree in Social work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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Date

Dr. (Mrs.) H. E. Eweka
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first and foremost to the Almighty God, whose unfailing love, grace, and faithfulness have sustained me throughout this academic journey. To my loving husband, whose support, encouragement, and understanding have been a constant source of strength this achievement is as much yours as it is mine. To my dear children, whose patience, love, and cheerful smiles inspired me to keep going even on the toughest days you are my greatest motivation and joy. To my parents, Prof. and Mrs. A. S. Moye, thank you for your unwavering love and guidance. Daddy, I am especially grateful for the push to develop myself and strive for excellence.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the “Social Work Intervention Strategies for Victims of Truancy and Juvenile Delinquency in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.” Truancy and juvenile delinquency have become pressing social and educational challenges, threatening academic achievement, school discipline, and the broader social development of young people. These behaviours are influenced by multiple socio-cultural, economic, and family-related factors, which often leave affected students vulnerable to further academic and social failure. Social work intervention provides a professional framework to address these challenges by offering preventive, remedial, and rehabilitative support for students at risk. The objectives of the study were to: identify the causes of truancy and juvenile delinquency in selected public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, examine the social, economic, and cultural factors influencing these behaviours, explore the effectiveness of social work intervention strategies in addressing truancy and juvenile delinquency, assess the roles of schools, families, and communities in supporting victims, and investigate the challenges facing social workers in implementing interventions. The study adopted Social Learning Theory and Ecological Systems Theory as its theoretical framework. A quantitative approach was adopted, using survey research design. The study population comprised secondary school students, teachers, parents, and social workers in Ovia North East LGA. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected through multi-stage sampling using systematic techniques. Data collection instruments included a structured questionnaire, validated by experts in social work. Reliability was ensured through test-retest procedures. The findings revealed that peer pressure, poor parental supervision, poverty, broken homes, negative school environments, and socio-cultural influences were major causes of truancy and juvenile delinquency. The study further showed that while social workers play an important role in counseling, advocacy, and school–community mediation, their involvement in secondary schools remains limited due to institutional, financial, and policy-related challenges. The study recommended, among others, that the government should integrate professional social workers into school systems to provide counseling and rehabilitation services; families and communities should be sensitized to their roles in curbing truancy and delinquency; and targeted economic and educational support should be provided for vulnerable students. Strengthening collaboration between schools, families, and community stakeholders was also emphasized as a key strategy to reduce the menace.

Keywords: *Truancy, Juvenile Delinquency, Social Work, Intervention, Secondary Schools.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Globally, truancy and juvenile delinquency are recognized as significant concerns, with varying prevalence rates across countries and regions (Smith & Brown, 2019). Factors contributing to these issues on a global scale include poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education, family dysfunction, peer influence, and community disorganization (Animashaun, 2022). Eremie (2015) asserted that truancy is a student misbehavior or deliberate irregular attendance at school. Similarly, Osarenren (2019) observed that truancy is the failure of an absentee student to obtain permission from parents and school to be away from school. Seeley (2016) explained that truancy occurs if a student is absent without an excuse from parent/guardian or school. Truancy is an anti-social behavior of students who stay away from school.

Truants exhibit class disruptive behaviour such as truancy, absenteeism, tardiness, cutting classes that constitute an impediment to a meaningful teaching and learning process and disruptive behaviour constitutes serious challenges facing the educational sector. Viega, (2018) defined school disruption as the transgression of school rules, troubling learning conditions, and teaching environment by truants. Hence, truancy has a negative effect on the students as it disrupts the classroom management during the teaching and learning process. The refusal of students to attend school regularly without excuse from parents and school is regarded as truancy. The characteristics of truants include laziness, lack of interest in academic work and perhaps being in the company of delinquent and truants. Stoll (2020) identified three types of truants to include students who are in school but

absent from class, students who are neither in the class nor at school but at home and those who are neither in the school nor at home. Truancy emanates from the inter-play of factors traceable to the individual, family, school and the community.

Truancy among students includes lateness to school and classes, leaving school before closing time, loitering, dodging lessons and absenteeism (Brooks et al, 2021). Students indulge in truancy as a means of escaping from an unpleasant situations at home or school that causes fear or avoiding school to gain freedom. The circumstances at home might include poor parent/child relationships due to lack of affection. In addition, parents' inability to inculcate good moral values may negatively affects their children academic performance (Brooks et al, 2021). The negative peer influence also contributes to an increase in truancy rate among students. School engagement is seen as a preventive measure for students' poor performance in school. The extent to which students, parents and teachers actively engage in educational process predicts how likely the students will perform (Burrus & Roberts 2022). Truants always rather prefer to be with their peers who most times are unknown to their teachers, parents/guardians at the detriment of their studies.

Parental involvement in a child education enhances students' academic performance, positive attitude towards school, time spent on homework and regular school attendance behaviour. If parents however, abdicate their responsibility towards their children to their teachers, the students' education may become dysfunctional and may become delinquent. Juvenile delinquency, also known "juvenile offending", is the act of participating in unlawful behaviour as minors(Burrus & Roberts 2022) . The Nigerian Constitution of 1999 as amended defines juvenile delinquency as a crime committed by a young person under the age of 18 years. A child is absolutely born innocent but certain social and

environmental factors in a negative environment diverge their minds towards criminal tendencies, whose removal might mold them into a person of status and excellence (Burrus & Roberts 2022).

Juvenile delinquency has become an important form of criminology. Juveniles have got serious forms of delinquent behaviour which may hamper the stability and social expectations of our society (Animashaun, 2022). The deviant behaviour of the juvenile has create social disorder and destruction of moral values which is creating an alarming position in an organized society; such as underage smoking, continued failure to attend school, petty theft underage drinking, fighting, vandalism, trespassing, examination misconduct and cultism, school violence (Morogiuwa, 2021). Others are bullying, school dropouts, sexual abuse, drug-related offenses, murder, rape, kleptomanias, disobedience homicide, kidnapping and robbery etc. are some of the delinquent vices associated with juvenile.

In Nigeria, numerous problems exist in primary and secondary institutions, one of the obvious problems can be identified as juvenile delinquency. This has been an age long problem but juvenile delinquency of the past cannot be compared with that of the present as the complexity of the problem increases and becomes less manageable as our population grows and as our population increases in urban centres (Ugiagbe, 2016). This social problem is more or less a global phenomenon and therefore, Nigeria is not an exception. Young girls who are supposed to be at school instead are found on the streets and club houses looking for men to give them ride and buy things for them. Young boys (teenagers) are in bars, hotels, parks and brothels etc, engaged in one nefarious activity or the other.

The rate of criminal activities in Nigeria has reached an alarming stage, because people do not feel safe anymore because of the menace of armed robbers and hired assassins (Ugiagbe, 2024). Truancy has become a problem that parents in almost every family and all schools are faced students often wander on the streets rather than go to school but engage themselves in abnormal behaviours outside the home and school (Brook, 2021). Juvenile delinquency is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors including family dynamics, socioeconomic conditions, peer association, educational experiences, understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective interventions (Omorogiuwa, 2021). Others are father slow status and low acceptance in the community, antisocial or unethical parental behaviour, lack of value agreement between parents and children, dissatisfaction with parents, allocation of funds to children and lack of advice and counseling on appropriate matters (Ekhorutomwen, 2023). Drug addictions as well as teen pregnancy are some results of delinquent behaviours among the adolescent today with its resultant effect of dropping out of school and causing untold hardship to parents and the society (Matt, 2023).

Thus, emotional disposition of truants and delinquent students show how they feel and perceive their environment. A student who is sad emotionally due to deprivation and rejection will easily vent his/her anger on peers at the slightest provocation. It will also be difficult for him or her to concentrate on his or her studies during the teaching and learning process. Students who are not emotionally stable are not courageous enough to express themselves among their peers and in the class rooms. Osarenren (2005) observed that the emotional disposition of an individual plays a significant role in his/her relationships.

School engagement involves students' active involvement in classroom tasks and school activities. School engagement also implies the rate at which parents show keen interest in ensuring that their children attend school punctually and learn to prevent being delinquent. In fact, parents who fail to assist their children in their school work would expect a very poor academic achievement (Okoye, 2019). Furthermore, some parents' apathy towards their children education increases the rate of truancy and delinquency among students. It is obvious that some parents do not appreciate the value of education of their children because, for them, education is not a priority. The construct of parental involvement is defined here in terms of the behaviour directed towards the behaviour and education of their children.

Some teachers also prepare inadequate lesson notes that do not sustain students' interest and this can result in poor students and teacher relationship. Nwankwo (2006) stressed that some teachers treat students as if their psychological, emotional and social needs are identical, in order words, teachers must endeavour to understand psychological state of their students individually and severally. In the same vein, Makinde (2004) stated that if children are raised in a loving environment, their psychological, emotional and social potentials will develop well. In fact, understanding the individual differences in students depicts a teacher's high degree of professionalism.

Managing this endemic challenge of truancy has become imperative. As such, efforts are being made all over the world to reduce the rate of truancy among students in the schools. Several intervention programmes have been used to prevent, improve and change the maladaptive behaviour exhibited by students in our society such as lateness to school, absenteeism, truancy, bullying and stealing amongst others (Omorogiuwa, 2022). It becomes necessary to explore a therapeutic intervention of social workers that will

ameliorate the emotional and psychological problems faced by truants and delinquent students hence, the need for this study

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The school is an agency/ institution established to mold the habits, interest, attitudes and feelings of students and transmit the societal norms, culture, values and traditions from one generation to another (Okoye, 2019). Despite this, many students still exhibit truant and delinquent behaviors. This situation is highly worrisome because of the attendant consequences such as poor academic performance, school dropouts, drug abuse, thuggery, maladjustment, violence, criminality, incarceration, delinquency and teenage pregnancy. Some students do not attend classes; because some do not seem to understand why they should be in school and attend classes (Omorogiuwa, 2024). Such unwholesome practice does affect teaching and learning, academic performance and achievement of educational goals. Stories of sexual assault, loafing, drug abuse, murder, robbery, cheating, examination misconduct, cultism, disobedience, and various non-conforming behaviours are just a few examples of the vices involving secondary school students (Omorogiuwa, 2024).

It is worrisome to note that students tend to face a lot of emotional and psychological problems arising from irregular school attendance and lack of personal and interpersonal skills to cope with school work (Okoye, 2019). Truants have negative perception about schooling because it interferes with their freedom as they prefer to spend most of their time with peers. From our cultural perspective when a child fails to attend school, the parents are usually blamed. However, many students struggle with personal issues that relate to lack of personal, interpersonal and problem solving skills, which manifest as behavioural problems that could most likely result in truancy.

Truants suffer from deprivation, isolation, rejection and unassertiveness, which is due to their inability to cope with social, cognitive and problems-solving skills. Some of them are bullied hence they decide to be absent from school unknown to their parents and the school authority. In addition, some parents neither assist their children in the homework or assignment nor participate in the school programmes (Uwakwe 1998). That is such parents do not monitor the progress of their children thereby abdicate their responsibility to the school.

Other psychological and emotional problems could be lack of parental love, care, poverty, rejection and unassertiveness among peers. The truants also experience mental and physical stress as they are regarded as low achievers (Ugiagbe, 2021). They lack encouragement from family members, peers and their teachers. Furthermore, the absence of peace may affect the society as the truants indulge in different vices such as bullying, juvenile delinquency, hooliganism, alcoholism, robbery and sexual abuse. Truants have serious problems in the school with regards to participation in school activities in that they are always in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Research showed that 32.13% of truancy rate among the participants, while the control group had 60.87%. Truancy contributes to unemployment and poverty rate of every country due to low academic achievements (American Psychological Association, 2010). This study was concluded in 2010. The goals of secondary education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) are realizable. It includes rising up a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others and dignity of labour. However, the goals of the policy therefore cannot be effectively achieved with the menace of truancy ravaging the educational system (APA, 2010).

Although, several researchers have carried out studies on students truancy and delinquent behaviour using different variables, locations and respondents, however, to the best of the our knowledge, not much has been carried out on social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State; hence, the need for this study.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.

The specifically objectives are to:

- i. ascertain the level of students truancy and delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.
- ii. examine the impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency on academic performance of public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.
- iii. evaluate the causes of students truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State
- iv. explore the effectiveness of social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.

1.4 Research Question

In light of the above, this study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

- i. What is the level of students truancy and delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.
- ii. What is the impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency on academic performance of public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.
- iii. What are the causes of students truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.
- iv. How effective is social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study primarily focused on social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State and the study is limited to senior secondary school in Ovia north East Local government area in Edo state.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will informed policy development at both local and state levels. By identifying the root causes of truancy and juvenile delinquency, the research can guide policymakers in creating evidence-based interventions and programs aimed at reducing these issues. This could lead to enhanced educational policies that prioritize attendance and engagement, ultimately benefiting the educational system as a whole. Policymakers can leverage the findings to allocate resources effectively, ensuring that interventions are not only impactful but also sustainable.

Moreover, this study will emphasize the importance of community awareness and involvement. Raising awareness about the challenges faced by at-risk youth fosters a supportive environment that encourages community members to participate in interventions. When families, educators, and local organizations collaborate, they can create a network of support that addresses the multifaceted nature of truancy and delinquency. This community-driven approach not only enhances the effectiveness of interventions but also instills a sense of collective responsibility in tackling these societal issues.

Additionally, this study will highlight the significance of mental health and emotional well-being among victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency. By focusing on the psychological needs of these young individuals, social work interventions can promote resilience and coping strategies that mitigate the risk of future delinquent behaviour. This aspect is crucial, as it acknowledges the underlying emotional challenges that may contribute to truancy and delinquency, paving the way for comprehensive support systems that prioritize mental health.

This study will have a long-term impact of effective intervention strategies which cannot be overstated. Reducing truancy and juvenile delinquency not only benefits the individuals directly involved but also contributes to broader societal gains. A community that invests in its youth by providing support and resources can expect to see lower crime rates, improved educational outcomes and ultimately, a more productive and engaged citizenry. This study serves as a foundational step towards achieving these long-term benefits, emphasizing the importance of social work in shaping a positive future for the youth in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationally defined:

Societal influence; Specifically, social influence refers to how individuals change their ideas and actions to meet the demands of a social group, perceived authority, social role, or a minority within a group wielding influence over the majority.

Behaviour: Behavior is the way one acts or conducts oneself toward others in response to a particular situation

Truancy: Truancy is often defined in a school's handbook of policies and procedures. The number of unexcused absences required to be considered truant varies by state.

Student Truancy: student truancy is defined as a student's intentional, unauthorized, and unjustified absence from school. It's usually not considered to include excused absences, such as those for medical reasons

Juvenile Delinquency: Any Social deviation by a youth from the societal norms which result in his contact with law enforcement agent, it is an act committed by a young person which violated the stipulated law of the country or society.

Absenteeism: Absenteeism is a habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation without good reason. Generally, absenteeism refers to unplanned absences. Absenteeism has been viewed as an indicator of poor individual performance,

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature, to achieve the objective of the study; under the following sub-headings: Conceptual Review, Empirical Review and Theoretical Frame work.

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

2.1.1 Concept of Truancy

Truancy means staying away from school without permission from parents and school by students. According to the International Dictionary of Education (2002), truancy is defined as a “deliberate absence from school without parental knowledge”. In the same vein, the New Western Comprehensive Dictionary Special Price Edition (2004) said that truancy is “when a student stays away without permission. A student who absents himself/herself from school without permission from school and home is a truant.

Fowowe (2011) observed that irregular school attendance is interchangeably used with truancy which occurs when students fail to attend school without permission from school. Similarly, Nwankwo (2006) stated that truancy among students is abnormal and results to absenteeism. Herbert (2005) stressed that truants lack skills to maintain friendships hence they are isolated by peers. Truancy may refer to students who attend school but do not go to classes. Heilbrun (2003) observed that truancy is practiced by some students who fail to attend school, rather prefer to be with their friends. In California, a student is a truant if he is absent for 3 days during the school year and in Colorado for 4 unexplained absence during a month (Hunt, 2008). Globally, truancy is regarded as cankerworm that has caused

set back and deficiency for attainment of viable educational pursuit by secondary school students (Stoll, 1993; Gesinde, 2004; Adeyemi, 2004 & Animasahun, 2005).

Truancy is a problem because students who are absent from school cannot benefit from the various programmes that the school offers. The effects of truancy include lower academic achievements (Baker and Jenson, 2000). Truancy is a sign of maladjustment that requires psychological intervention in what has been causing misunderstanding among adolescents, teachers, parents and in the society (Green, 2001). Osarenren (1996) also discussed the causes of truancy among students' with factors resident in the home, school environment, peer-group, culture and society. In the same vein, Gesinde (2005) has also identified the contributory role of government in truancy behaviour among students. Lack of interest in education by some students contributes to truancy and if forced, they would become maladjusted. Galloway (2001) opined that understanding why students engage in truancy is the key to addressing this major educational problem. According to him, identifying the causes of truancy is extremely difficult to do because, like other forms of educational achievement such as (test scores), it is influenced by an array of factors related to both the individual student, family, school and the community setting in which the student lives.

The complexity of this phenomenon according to Galloway is illustrated by the variety of reasons for truancy. Researchers identified the causes of truancy among students as multifaceted (Animasaun 2007; Owodunni 2008). They include low academic ability, broken homes, peer pressure, parents' socio-economic status, poor school climate, family (low economic status, nonchalant attitude of parents); individual (personal reasons, truancy, low grades in school, bad peer influence); school (ineffective attendance policies, poor record keeping and poor relationship with teachers); communities (lack of support for school, high crime rate).

Other factors that induce truancy among adolescent students include the inability of some students to read and write properly thus making understanding difficult. Students are often confronted with significant adults both at home and school who act as wrong models (Chelin, 2008). The society also has neglected its role of ensuring values at the expense of moral decadence (Reid, 2000) Studies have shown that students are exposed to hostile environment that does not provide them the opportunities to learn social and problem solving skills (Wilson, Parry, Nettlebeck & Bell 2003). According to Wilkins (2008), students that attend large schools may feel isolated in their school setting; hence they choose to stay away from school. Nwadinigwe and Makinde (1997) observed that majority of the students' problems center on learning, as they need to learn new adaptive behaviour, experience rapid physical, emotional and physiological change simultaneously. A study on truancy reduction among adolescents revealed that students engage in truancy due to boredom, bullying and poor relationship. Various causes of truancy need to be addressed with the appropriate counselling intervention in order to ameliorate it and reduce its prevalence.

Henry (2007), in a study, investigated the effects of truancy among students. Evidence shows that truants have low academic achievement. In California the Verde Involving Parents Program raised monthly attendance rate from 89% to over 93%. In the same vein, Corey (2008) observed that truancy has a financial impact on communities that are involved in funding education. He further stressed that truant students are frustrated hence perpetrate acts of deviance such as fighting, bullying and absenteeism. Students attempt to model their behaviour to what represent the standard of their peer group. Consequently, the effect of truancy has serious consequences for the individual, society, nation and the international world.

According to American Psychological Association (2010), the researchers observed that truancy contributed to unemployment and poverty in every country in that no nation can rise above the development of her human resources. A study on 169 street youths in Ibadan, Nigeria, revealed that 47% of them had a history of truancy (Olley, 2006). The study suggested that truancy and being on the streets contribute to non-school attendance (Olley, 2006). Studies have revealed that adults who were truants as adolescent were more likely to experience marital problem, job instability and social maladjustment when compared to their counterparts who were not truants (Henry & Huzinga, 2007). Heubrunn (2007) found that students who are truants have low grades and have lower rates of high school graduation. Truancy affects not only youth but also the adult they will become. If the above effects are not properly handled by using adequate counselling strategies by counsellors and intervention programmes, truants would involve in high crime rate such as robbery, prostitution and increased rate of unemployment.

2.1.2 Concept of Juvenile Delinquency

Delinquency is unwelcomed action, omission or moral behaviour of a juvenile which is socially not permitted in any society. Generally it means that if the child fails to meet certain social obligations anticipated from them by the people, then he is considered to be delinquent. The juvenile delinquent is behavioral disorder which is generally defined as “a child trying or pretending to act like a grown up or adult” (Henry & Huzinga, 2007).. The action of the child can be seen as a childish foolish behaviour but it can cause serious worry and concern. There is a very blurred distinction between a delinquent child and a normal child and his behaviour to anxious person is the deciding factor among a cheerful act and delinquency. Generally there is a haze of ambiguity and confusion surrounding delinquency and there is no single general acceptable definition for it(Henry & Huzinga,

2007).. The first ever legislation on juvenile delinquency, passed by the State of Illinois in 1899 which specifies various specific kinds of delinquency in addition to the offences covered by the criminal laws. The word “delinquency” has its origin from the Latin word “delinquere” which meaning de i.e. “away and linquere” i.e. “to leave thus, mean by to leave or to abandon”. Initially, the word was having primarily meaning and applied to those parents who have abandoned and neglected their children(Olley, 2006). Now days, it is applicable on all those children who are involved in illegal and harmful activities.

Juvenile is considered as a child who has not completed a specific age as mentioned in the law of any country and doesn't bear resemblance as an adult person and who can be made legally answerable for his criminal activities. The juvenile is a child who has alleged violated certain laws which declares his act or omission as an offence (Olley, 2006).. A juvenile and a minor are used in different perspective in legal terms. The term juvenile is generally used in reference to a young criminal offender and minor is related to legal capacity of a person.

According to some social workers, “delinquency consisted of socially unaccepted acts”. And a psychiatrist suggests that “delinquent behaviour is activity which deviates from the normal”. And a lawyer would say “juvenile delinquency is what the law says it is”. Thus, children need love especially when they do not deserve it” - Harold - S. Bulbert, child psychiatrist. Prescribing different treatment for juvenile offenders is an offshoot of the new penology, which came to be applied with the realization with the courts. Erstwhile system exposed delinquents to contamination due to incarceration with other criminals. The nation's future citizens deserve compassion and best care (Okoye, 2019). A child is absolutely bom innocent but certain social and environmental factors in a negative aspect diverge their minds towards criminal tendencies, whose removal might mold them into a

person of stature and excellence. We all know that children are the assets and wealth of any nation.

A healthy environment should be provided to all children so that they become civilized citizens who are physically fits, socially active and mentally conscious, equipped with all skills and active participation required by the society (Okoye, 2019).. For reducing inequality and ensuring social justice an equal opportunities for development to all children should be given, which consecutively would work as an effective measure to prevent children from becoming delinquent in any society. There is a general attitude towards children to behave obediently, show respect towards other and imbibe behaviour having high moral values but due to various circumstances children are being diverted from social and general command.

Recently, juvenile delinquency has become an important aspect of criminology. Juveniles have got serious forms of delinquent behavior which may hamper the stability and social command of our society. The deviant behavior of the juveniles has created social disorder and destruction of moral values which is creating an alarming position in organized society.

2.1.3 Causes and Effects of Truancy and Juvenile Delinquency

Truancy and juvenile delinquency are significant issues that affect not only the individuals involved but also the broader community (Okoye, 2019). Understanding the causes behind these behaviours is crucial for developing effective interventions. One of the primary causes is family dynamics. When children grow up in dysfunctional households, characterized by neglect, abuse, or lack of supervision, they are more likely to disengage from school. A stable, nurturing environment plays a vital role in a child's educational

engagement; without it, students may feel unsupported and turn to truancy as a means of escape (Brooks, 2021). Another contributing factor is the social environment in which children are immersed. Peer influence is particularly strong during adolescence, and associations with delinquent peers can lead to increased truancy and involvement in illegal activities. When young people prioritize fitting in with a certain group, they may feel compelled to skip school or engage in delinquent behavior to gain acceptance. Additionally, communities plagued by gang activity or violence can create a culture where truancy becomes normalized, further exacerbating the problem.

Academic challenges also play a significant role in contributing to truancy and delinquency. Students who struggle with learning disabilities or face bullying may find school to be an unwelcoming environment (Ugiagbe, 2019). These challenges can lead to feelings of inadequacy and disconnection from the academic setting. When students do not receive the support they need to succeed, they may choose to avoid school altogether, leading to a downward spiral of academic failure and increased likelihood of delinquent behavior. Economic factors cannot be overlooked in this discussion. Families living in poverty may face immense pressures that affect their children's school attendance (Fadhii, Riyanti and Balkish 2014). For instance, students might skip school to work or take care of siblings, believing they have no choice but to prioritize immediate financial needs over education. This lack of resources can create a sense of hopelessness, making it difficult for youth to envision a positive future, further increasing the likelihood of both truancy and delinquent acts (Okoye, 2019).

Mental health issues are another critical aspect contributing to truancy and juvenile delinquency. Many young people struggle with undiagnosed or untreated mental health conditions, such as anxiety or depression, which can severely impede their ability to attend

school and engage positively with their environment (Omorogiuwa, 2022). When mental health needs go unaddressed, they can lead to increased absenteeism and a higher risk of engaging in risky or illegal behaviours as a coping mechanism. The effects of truancy and juvenile delinquency are far-reaching and can have lasting implications for both individuals and society.

Academically, students who frequently miss school are at a significant disadvantage, often resulting in poor grades, higher dropout rates, and limited career prospects. This educational disengagement can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and criminal behavior, leading to adult delinquency and ongoing societal challenges (Omorogiuwa, 2022). Additionally, the emotional and social consequences can be profound; truancy can lead to social isolation, strained family relationships, and increased mental health issues, creating a complex web of challenges that are difficult to unravel. The causes and effects of truancy and juvenile delinquency requires a multifaceted approach. Interventions must consider family dynamics, peer influence, academic support, economic stability, and mental health resources. By understanding the underlying factors that contribute to these behaviours, communities can implement effective strategies to support at-risk youth, ultimately fostering a healthier, more engaged population.

Monrad (2007) observed that in the United States, approximately 3.8 million people between the ages of 16 and 24 were not enrolled in high school and had not earned a high school diploma or alternative credentials such as General Education Diploma (GED) in 2004. According to him, the truancy rate of children with emotional disability is approximately twice that of general education students. In addition, male students are considered 8% less likely to graduate than female students and the gap is as large as 14% between male and female African-American students among minorities. Only about 52%

of Hispanic students and 56% of African-American students will graduate in four years, compared to 78% of the white students.

A study was conducted by Jegede, Ememe and Gami (2009) on the prevalence of deviant behaviour among senior public secondary school II students in Lagos State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 100 teachers and 200 students drawn from 10 schools through stratified random sampling technique. Two questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. Three research questions were raised and tested in the study. The study showed that out of 28 indicated deviant behaviour, truancy ranked the highest with 24.1%. This result revealed that prevalence of truancy is the highest when compared to other deviant behaviour.

Again, Olley (2006) conducted a study 169 street youths in Ibadan, South West Nigeria who lacked parental supervision. The findings revealed that 47% of them had a history of truancy. Also, the Malaysia Global School Based Health Survey (GSHS) conducted a survey from February to April (2012) involving 28,933 students aged 12-17 years old. A two staged cluster sampling technique was used to select the schools and students with a response rate of 86.6%. The data were obtained using the GSHS questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that the prevalence of truancy was 30.8% and significantly higher among male than female (32.9% vs. 8.7%). It is therefore pertinent to reduce truancy rate among adolescents by using new effective strategy during intervention.

Truancy is a basis for dropping out of the school system. Usually, the truants start by getting to school and classes late, hence the lateness leads to truancy. The Zambia Global School-based Health Survey GSHS conducted a study in 2004. A total of 2527 participated. The data had 50.8% participants (58.1% male and 58.4% females) reported being truants in the past 30 days, while 42.2% were current drinkers and 62.8% reported

having been bullied in the past 30 days (Siziya, Muula & Rudatskira, 2007). It is also possible that adolescents from poor households may be absent from school to work at home or elsewhere. The researchers further stated that in other studies, males had increased likelihood of being truants than females (Siziya, Muula & Rudatskira, 2007).

Truancy is a habitual engagement in unexcused absence from school is a type of behaviour displayed by students that have drawn the concern of parents, educators and society (Ziang, Wilson, Katsiyannis, Barret, Ju and Wie, 2010). Truancy has been strongly linked to greater discipline problem around the world, and it is associated with various negative health and socio-economic outcome. Research has shown that certain risk factors revolving around the student's behaviour, academic performance and school engagement are strongly predictive of truancy (Fadhii, Riyanti and Balkish 2014).

According to Walls (2003), in the United States, the New York Court of Justice action was the first intervention measure used for preventing truancy. Rothman (2001) stated that despite the laws, rules and regulations in some countries to ensure regular school attendance, cases of low school attendance are prevalent. Similarly, Garry (2001) reported that in the United States, about 150,000 students skipped school on a daily basis in the New York City schools. Monrad (2007) observed that about 3.8 million people within the ages of 16 and 24 were not enrolled in the United States high schools. He conducted a study in Victoria school in Australia and its findings revealed that 40% to 60% children of school age engaged in truancy. Similarly, Reid (2002) observed that in England and Wales, 50,000 students engage in truancy on a school day and increases with age at the secondary schools.

Similarly, Jones (2009) reported that Truancy Reduction Initiative observed that truants are not noticed over a period before manifestation. The literature revealed that prevalence

of truancy among adolescents has been on the increase. Therefore, the urgent need to find therapeutic intervention package that would suit each cause is imperative.

2.1.5 Assessment and Management of Truancy

Okoli (2005) defined assessment as all the methods used to determine the extent of an individual's achievement. In teaching and learning context, assessment refers to the methods used to determine achievement of learning outcomes. He further stated that formative assessment provide feedback during teaching and learning. Assessment emphasizes the mastery of the classroom content instead of earning of marks or text scores. It gauges students' progress academically. Results are used to adapt instructions to meet students' need. Feedback helps students through suggestion for improvement and discussion of errors rather than providing correct answers.

Summative assessment according to Okoli (2005) is the summary, evaluation or judgement reached at the end of a topic, theme, unit, term or school year based on performance and data. It is an assessment that is administered at the conclusion of a unit of instruction to assess students' learning and the effectiveness of an instructional method or programme. He emphasized that it demonstrates a learner's success in meeting the criteria set. Summative assessment is used to measure reward achievement and provide data for selection for example, the next level in education or employment. Diagnostic assessment is intended to improve the learners' experience and level of achievement. It assess what the learner already knows, nature of difficulties encountered if undiagnosed might limit engagement for new learning. It is often used before teaching or when problem arises. The various components of assessment stated explain how an effective teaching and learning process can be adequately measured.

The purpose of truancy assessment is to provide early identification of students who are at age of truancy in order to apply prompt intervention. Spiegler and Guevremont (2010) defined behavioural assessment as a set of procedures used to obtain information about an individual or group that will guide the development of a specific plan for an intervention which involves:

- i. Gathering unique and detailed information about a client's problem.
- ii. Focusing on the client's current functioning and life condition.
- iii. Taking samples of client's behaviour to provide information about how he/she functions at different occasions.
- iv. Narrowly focused rather than dealing with a client's total personality.
- v. It is integrated with therapy.

The five characteristics are consistent with behaviour therapy for a planned intervention programme. Certain signs and indicators show that a student is at risk of truancy. These include lateness to school, absenteeism, disruptive behaviour, tardiness and truancy. The purpose of truancy assessment is to provide early identification of at risk students through the assessment of students' activities in the school.

Railsback (2004) observed that truants come from low socio-economic background include: those who are identified as having special educational needs;

- learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural problem that interfere with learning and achievement;
- students whose cultural background do not accept easily the dominant culture at school;

- students from environment in which academic success is either supported nor encouraged.

Railsback (2004) concluded that truants come from low socio-economic backgrounds, single-parent families and children from poor homes. The truant students who failed to participate in the screening and assessment would likely get involved in violent activities and drug abuse. Reimer and Dimock (2005) conducted a study on truancy prevention. They confirmed that there is a strong correlation between early truancy and continued behavioural problem. They listed the characteristics associated with effective truancy prevention to include: Early identification of truant children and appropriate assessment; Rapid coordination, targeted service response to identified needs; Consistent timely monitoring and revising of service plan; Attention to family environmental factors affecting the child.

Furthermore, truancy has a negative influence on students' academic performance and achievement. However, addressing the issue early has shown that its rate can be reduced. A number of studies have demonstrated that effective reduction programme can produce a marked decline in delinquency and crime committed by truants (Heilbrum, 2007). A literature review by National Center for School Engagement found that students who are truants:

- have low grades
- need to repeat grades more often
- have higher rates of expulsion
- have lower rates of high school graduation (Romero & Lee, 2007).

The researchers reported that some schools and districts still expel students who are both truant and low achieving. The act of removing these children can raise the school's overall level of academic achievement (as measured by grades, grade-promotion and graduation

rates) it can also lower enrolment which drives school, funding based on attendance. The literature reviews concluded that truancy is a risk factor for other problem for example:

- substance abuse
- delinquency
- gang activity
- serious criminal behaviour (theft and burglary)
- suicide attempt
- early sexual activity
- dropping out of school

Hunters (2005) described the ripple effect of poor academic achievement as paraphrased below. Academic failure usually leads to a common practise of grade retention, which makes students to experience feelings of shame and isolation because of their inability to succeed academically. Consequently, these students try to avoid their school work in an effort to hide their skill deficit. Some of them demonstrated inappropriate behaviour as defence mechanism which may lead to disciplinary issues with the school authorities and possible suspension or expulsion.

Management of truancy involves the use of adequate psychological and emotional intervention programmes to reduce the rate of truancy among students who are at risk. A study on the phenomenon of family motivated truancy found that the students were an important factor in helping to run the home and or business. In addition, parents were less active in the home studies of their truant students (Burley, 2000). The result indicated that some families rely on their children in ways that can reduce the amount of time and effort left for schooling. Dembo and Gulleges's (2008) study on community based truancy programmes observed that some aspects of the programme are effective such as parent or

guardian involvement, a continuum of services to include: meaningful incentive, consequences, mental health services, mentoring, social services, school administrative support and commitment to keeping youth in the educational mainstream. The researchers further stated that any intervention that do not get to the root causes of truancy fail to address the problem that may lead to serious juvenile justice system.

The community based programme focus more on providing mentoring and improving teacher-students relationship thus, encouraged regular attendance through one on one interaction with students. In the United States programmes on truancy reduction is based on sanction and procedure oriented. Resources are focused on identifying, locating and transitioning truants back to their respective schools with appropriate sanctions. The efforts include, police involvement, formal adjudication and suspension or remedial programmes which has not resolved truancy effectively (Byer and Kuhn, 2003). It is therefore imperative to assess students' behaviour to ensure causes of students being at risk of disruptive activities. According to Desocio, Vanoura, Nelson, Hewett, Kitnon and Cole's (2007) study on increase in school engagement to reduce truancy. The researchers used a pilot programme that focused on mentoring teacher-students relationship, to encourage both attendance and performance at school through daily student check-in and one on one interaction with teachers. The findings showed that students who received the intervention had significantly fewer absences than students in the control group. However, the researchers did not report any system issues, relating to interfacing with the school administration or the teachers who participated in the programme.

Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo and Hurley conducted a study on absenteeism and signs of school withdrawal. Results from the study indicated that the intervention group had significant increase in the percentage of students whose absences fell below 5% of the

time. Bryce and Baird (1986) investigated family therapy as a problem centered approach regarding students' refusal to attend school. Family therapists were engaged to identify barriers to school attendance. Their interview with students and parents revealed a wide range of problems that fit the categorization of family dysfunction. The researchers explained that careful attention given to the families allowed for more effective collaboration on the school refusal problem.

2.2 Empirical Review

Researchers have identified the causes of truancy to be multifaceted (Owodunni 2008; Siziya, Muuda, Rudatsikioa, 2007 and Animashaun, 2007). They include lateness, absenteeism, lack of interest in academic work, peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, lack of interest in a subject, financial difficulties in the family, irregular attendance to classes, single parenthood, poverty, drug problems, not liking school, having lower grades in the school subjects, disciplinary problems, lower rate of homework completion, youth violence (crime) among others. The literature reviewed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) found correlates between truancy and four categories of risk factors.

- i. Family factors (lack of supervision, poverty, alcohol or drug abuse, attitude towards education).
- ii. School factors (school size, attitude of students, staff, teachers' inflexibility towards meeting different learning styles, inconsistent procedure for dealing with absenteeism).
- iii. Economic factors (employed students, single parent home, high mobility, parents with multiple jobs, lack of transportation).

- iv. Students factors (drug and alcohol abuse, lack of understanding of attendance laws, lack of social competence, mental and physical health problems (Baker, Sigmon and Nugent, 2001).

On the other hand, Delinquency behaviour or Juvenile delinquency is a phenomenon which no doubt has remained a major concern to well-meaning Nigerians. This is sequel to the present upsurge in crime rate in Nigerian society, a situation which has created feelings of insecurity in the country. According to Adeyemi (1990:1) Juvenile crimes might escalate beyond tractable limits. He said, prevailing economic adversity in the nation coupled with gradual breakdown of family life could boost antisocial behaviour, especially among the youth to unexpected proportions. Apart from those apprehended for criminal acts, the secondary school which is the bedrock of further educational attainment as well as cultivation of leadership qualities wears a complexion of pity rather than admiration.

Mark (1972), believes that “delinquent are made not born”, they learn whatever habit they exhibit from the environment. It then stand to reason that as far as the school is an assembly ground for children from different backgrounds, the menace of delinquency should not be left to thrive in view of the fact that other children may imbibe it. Moreso, any behaviour learnt can be unlearnt if there is a counsellor to attend to the individual(s) concerned. This is the philosophy to which this topic hinges. The role of the school like other institutions in treating and preventing Juvenile delinquency will be suggested, this is to say that this research has much implication for both the counsellor and the social worker who are the helping professionals in the institutions.

According to Heibrunns (2007) literature review on truancy has a number of harmful consequences not only for students but also for schools and communities. He further stated that truancy affects academic achievement throughout school compared to non-truant

students. Students who are truants: have lower grades need to repeat grades more often have high rate of expulsion have lower rates of high school graduation. The review reported that some schools and districts still expel or 'push out' students who are both truants and low achieving, while the remaining students can raise the school's overall level of academic achievement (as measured by grades, grade promotion and graduation rates), it can also lower enrolment, which drives school funding based on attendance. The literature review also concluded that truancy is a risk factor for other problems, including: substance abuse delinquency gang activity serious criminal behaviour (such as car theft and burglary) early sexual activity dropping out of school.

Animashaun's (2009) study on causes of truancy found that lack of readiness to learn, lack of motivation, the fear of unknown, poor parenting, misplaced priority, bad role models, over indulgence, excessive domestic work and spiritual factors cause truancy among secondary school students. The reasons adduced above have a negative effect on the students' schooling as such problems are difficult to contend with. According to Henry's (2007) study on effects of drug use found that about 11% of 8th grade students and about 16% of 10th grade students reported having been truant at least once in the previous four weeks. A survey conducted in 1996-1997 found that principals considered tardiness, absenteeism, class cutting and physical conflicts to be the three most serious discipline issues in their schools (Heavisade, Powon, Williams and Farris, 1998).

Denga (1981), sees indiscipline as a "plague" in schools that can destroy the very fabric of the school organization if left loose. According to him, this awareness should prompt the school principals to galvanize and consequently protect their schools for the highly inflammable effects of discipline.

Onyehalu (1986) says that in contemporary times, startling manifestations of indiscipline and allied vices by the adult population in Nigeria have been repeatedly observed. It is probably for this reason that Government instituted the “war against indiscipline” campaign in a bid to restore moral rectitude and modest living in the populace. Denga (1982), holds that most school administrations in Nigeria and elsewhere are searching for stability, for a way out of these crises and means to restore some lasting tranquility on campuses. He says that some of the causes of this violence may be beyond the competence of the school authorities to deal with, but other causes may lie within the capability of the authority to handle.

Owen (2001) opined that truancy and absenteeism can lead a child into drug addiction and in most cases student’s absence from school affects his/her intelligent quotient (IQ) which gets retarded. He further stated that such student would score below average in his class work because he missed all the normal school lessons, academic training which he would have acquired. In addition, that he would associate with bad peers who would lure him into criminal activities such as stealing, smoking, cultism, among others. In fact, these will increase his confidence in his bad behaviour which eventually have impacted negatively on his academics. Also, his thought process will consist of negative and debilitating self-talk.

Oyebanji (1997) reiterated that any student who stays away from school will miss many lessons hence fall behind other students in the class. She further stressed that the impact on their academic performance should be of great concern to the parents.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand Phenomena and in many to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. Truancy/ Juvenile Delinquency are threat to society and accordingly, the need to develop an understanding of the deviant behaviour is of an utmost importance. This study will adopt two theories; which are Social Learning Theory (SLT) and the Anomie theory,

2.3.1 Social Learning Theory (SLT)

The social Learning Theory (SLT) was developed by Albert Bandura (1977) and emphasizes that people learn behaviours through observation, imitation, and modelling of others within their environment. The theory suggests that learning occurs in a social context and is influenced by family, peers, media, and community interactions. It also highlights the role of reinforcement and punishment, where behaviours are either encouraged or discouraged based on the consequences received. People learn by watching others and imitating their behavior, and also imitation and Modelling – Individuals replicate behaviours they see in role models (parents, teachers, peers, or media figures).

If a student sees friends skipping school without facing serious consequences, Exposure to violence, crime, or substance abuse in their environment may also influence students to engage in delinquent acts. Negative reinforcement for instance a student might skip school to avoid punishment from a strict teacher, which reinforces truancy Since SLT emphasizes that the environment shapes behaviour; interventions should focus on improving school conditions, parental involvement, and community engagement. .

Social Learning Theory is highly relevant to this study because it explains how external influences contribute to truancy and juvenile delinquency. By understanding how students observe, imitate, and reinforce behaviors, social work interventions can be tailored to replace negative influences with positive role models and structured support systems. This will ultimately help reduce delinquency and promote positive behavioral change among students in Ovia North East. Since SLT emphasizes that the environment shapes behavior, interventions should focus on improving school conditions, parental involvement, and community engagement. School-based programs (anti-truancy policies, peer counselling, and skill-building activities) can help reshape the social influences affecting students.

Social Learning Theory is highly relevant to this study because it explains how external influences contribute to truancy and juvenile delinquency. By understanding how students observe, imitate, and reinforce behaviours, social work interventions can be tailored to replace negative influences with positive role models and structured support systems. This will ultimately help reduce delinquency and promote positive behavioural change among students in Ovia North East.

2.3.2 Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory, formulated by Urie Bronfenbrenner, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the multiple layers of influence that affect individual behavior. This theory posits that an individual's development is shaped by various interconnected systems, ranging from immediate environments (like family and school) to broader societal contexts. In the context of truancy and juvenile delinquency, this theory is particularly relevant as it highlights the complex interplay of various factors influencing youth behavior in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

At the microsystem level, the immediate environment of a child—including family, peers, and school—plays a crucial role in shaping their behaviors. For instance, a supportive family that encourages academic achievement can significantly reduce the likelihood of truancy. Conversely, a family environment marked by conflict or neglect may increase the risk of delinquency. Social workers can focus on strengthening family dynamics through counseling and support programs, helping families create a nurturing environment that promotes school attendance and positive behavior.

Expanding to the mesosystem, the interactions between different microsystems are also important. For instance, the relationship between a child's family and their school can impact their overall well-being. If parents are engaged with their child's education and maintain communication with teachers, students are more likely to feel supported and motivated to attend school. Interventions that foster collaboration between families and schools, such as parent-teacher workshops, can enhance this relationship and promote student engagement. At the exosystem level, external factors such as community resources, socioeconomic conditions, and local policies also influence youth behavior. In Ovia North East, access to recreational programs, mental health services, and educational resources can either mitigate or exacerbate issues of truancy and delinquency. Social workers can advocate for improved community resources and support systems that provide safe and engaging alternatives for youth, helping to reduce the allure of delinquent activities.

Finally, the macro system encompasses broader societal values and cultural norms that shape individual behavior. Societal attitudes toward education, crime, and youth development can significantly impact how young people perceive their choices. Social workers can address these larger systemic issues by engaging in community awareness

campaigns that promote the importance of education and positive youth development, thereby fostering a culture that values school attendance and discourages delinquent behavior. Ecological Systems Theory provides a holistic perspective on the factors influencing truancy and juvenile delinquency. By recognizing the interconnectedness of various systems, social work interventions can be designed to address not only individual behaviors but also the broader environmental contexts in which youth operate. This comprehensive approach can lead to more effective strategies for supporting at-risk youth in Ovia North East, ultimately promoting healthier communities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter covered the research method adopted in the study, and was discussed under the following subheadings: population of the study, sample size and technique, method of collecting data, data verification, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This was the specification of the method and procedures for acquiring the information needed for the research. A quantitative method was adopted for the study (Denscombe, 2008). The data were collected through a cross-sectional design with survey method, using an ex post facto design, and there were open questions that allowed a quantitative analysis on the correlates between social work intervention strategies and truancy/juvenile delinquency in Ovia North East L.G.A., Edo State.

The survey method involving the use of questionnaires was adopted for this study. The survey method was chosen in preference to other methods like content analysis because of its capacity to measure human attitudes and opinions. This enabled the researcher to generate valid information from samples of human elements that constituted the respondents of the questionnaire (Orodho, 2009). According to Agbonifoh and Yomere (2018), a survey is a method by which information was obtained from a sample or subset within a larger population, with the intention of studying the sample and thereafter generalizing the results to the entire population from which the sample was drawn.

3.2 Population of the Study

According to the Edo State Ministry of Education (2024), there are 174 public schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, including 23 senior secondary schools with a total student population of 7,200. For the purpose of this study, we focused on the 23 senior secondary public schools from which our sample was drawn.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The sample size was 378 public secondary school students. This was a representative sample of the population of public secondary school students in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State. Taro Yamani (2019) formula was used as presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (Ne^2)}$$

Where;

n = Sample size

N = Population Size

e = error limit

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population (7,200)

e = Level of significance (5% i.e 0.05)

$$n = \frac{7200 \dots \dots \dots}{1 + 7200(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{7200 \dots \dots}{1 + 18}$$

$$n = 400$$

$$n = 400$$

Hence, the sample size for the study was 400 senior secondary school students. The sampling techniques that were adopted in drawing the sample size of this study included simple random sampling techniques. This technique was used based on its appropriateness considering the nature of the work. The random sampling technique was employed to give the respondents equal chances of being selected in order to achieve a corresponding and reliable result for the quantitative data.

3.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using the open-ended questionnaire, which was the primary tool for data collection, in order to obtain information for the survey. The questionnaire was designed to consist of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The demographic information was included in one section of the questionnaire, while questions about the correlates between social work intervention strategies and truancy/juvenile delinquency in Ovia North East L.G.A. were included in another section.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The ability of the instrument to measure the goals for which it was created was referred to as the instrument's validity. This study utilized content validity, and the instrument was presented to the supervisor and other experts in the Department of Social Work to reach a level of consensus among them for the instrument to be considered valid. The instrument's reliability was examined using the test-retest methodology.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources of data were used for this study. The primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaires. The researcher was assisted by a

research assistant who administered and collected the instruments from the research participants. The respondents' questions were addressed after the response items were provided to them to ensure they understood. The most appropriate options were selected by the respondents as their responses to each question on the survey. The questionnaires were read and interpreted to those who were uneducated by the researcher before recording their responses. The secondary sources were gathered from published books, journals, articles, and archives.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaire will be retrieved from the field at the end of the exercise and checked for accuracy. Code them and input the data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0) programme. The frequencies and percentages will be used to present the social-demographic variables like sex, educational qualifications, ethnicity, marital status, etc. The percentages will be used to calculate the numerical variables like age, and income with normal distributions.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In this study, ethical considerations were of paramount importance. It was crucial to protect the rights and well-being of respondents throughout the research. A key aspect of these ethical considerations was obtaining informed consent from all individuals involved. Participants were fully informed about the study's nature, objectives, potential risks, and benefits before agreeing to participate. Additionally, strict confidentiality was maintained to safeguard participants' privacy and sensitive information from unauthorized access. The welfare of every individual involved was a top priority, and appropriate support services were made available for those who required assistance.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Preamble

The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of social work intervention strategies in addressing truancy and juvenile delinquency among students in selected public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. The study assessed the level of students' truancy and delinquent behaviours, investigated the impact of these behaviours on academic performance, and evaluated the underlying causes of truancy and juvenile delinquency in the study area. It further explored the effectiveness of social work interventions, including counseling, peer mentoring, family-based programs, and awareness campaigns, in reducing incidences of truancy and delinquency and improving students' academic engagement. In addition, the study examined the challenges faced by social workers, teachers, and parents in implementing these intervention strategies within the local school context.

Ovia North East Local Government Area was purposively selected for this study due to its distinctive socio-cultural and educational composition. With a population comprising both urban and rural communities, the area provides a valuable context for exploring the realities of students in public schools who are exposed to risk factors such as poverty, peer pressure, weak parental supervision, and inadequate school resources. The location of the LGA within the Benin Metropolis, its diverse population, and the presence of multiple public secondary schools made it suitable for a study focusing on truancy, delinquency, and social work interventions.

The study population comprised students of public secondary schools in Ovia North East LGA. A total of 400 students were selected through a multi-stage sampling technique but 380 students completed the questionnaire, incorporating purposive and systematic sampling methods at the levels of wards, communities, schools, and classrooms. This quantitative dataset was complemented by qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews with twenty key stakeholders, including social workers, teachers, and parents, purposively selected to reflect diverse intervention experiences in the area.

Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. The questionnaire captured demographic variables alongside thematic issues derived from the study's objectives, while the interview guides facilitated the collection of rich experiential narratives. The instruments were subjected to both face and content validation by experts in the field, and reliability was ensured through test-retest procedures and member-checking techniques. Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout the research process, with informed consent obtained from all participants and strict adherence to confidentiality and voluntary participation.

4.1 Analysis and Presentation of Data

The analysis presented in this chapter draws on quantitative data, which were processed using SPSS (version 22) to generate descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and graphical representations.

Table 4.1: Socio- demographic characteristics of Respondents

| Variables | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Sex of Respondents | Male | 210 | 55.0 |
| | Female | 170 | 45.0 |
| Age of Respondents | 11–15 years | 155 | 40.0 |
| | 16–20 years | 175 | 45.0 |
| | 21–25 years | 40 | 11.3 |
| | 26 & above | 10 | 3.7 |
| Educational Qualifications | Primary | 38 | 10.0 |
| | Secondary | 304 | 80.0 |
| | Tertiary | 38 | 10.0 |
| Marital Status of Parents | Single | 285 | 75 |
| | Married | 81 | 21.3 |
| | Divorced | 14 | 3.7 |
| Total | | 400 | 100 |

Source: Field work, 2025

The gender distribution of the participants in table 4.1 above shows that 210 (55%) were males while 170 (45%) were females, this shows that the majority of the respondents were male. In terms of age, the respondents were fairly distributed across different age brackets, with those between 11–15 years (40%), 16-20 years (45%), 21–25 years (11.3%) and 26 years above (3.7%). From the above table it shows that the respondents between the age of 16-20 years representing (45%) were majority. Education level is another important socio-demographic factor, with the majority of respondents having obtained secondary education (80%). A smaller number completed only primary education (10%) or tertiary qualifications (10%). Majority (80%) of respondents were in the secondary education level, consistent with the target population of secondary school students. Finally, an examination of the marital status of respondents' shows that 285 (75%) were single, indicating that a majority were students. However, a notable proportion were divorced 14

(3.7%), married 81(21.3%). Most respondents were single (75%), which is expected as the study involves students.

4.2 Analysis of Objectives

Research Objective One: The level of students’ truancy and delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by level of students’ truancy and delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

| Students’ truancy and delinquency | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Do you often absent yourself from school without permission? | 276 | 72.6% | 104 | 27.4% |
| Do you sometimes leave the school premises during school hours without authorization? | 114 | 30.0% | 266 | 70.0% |
| Do you frequently come late to school? | 41 | 10.8% | 339 | 89.2% |
| Have you been involved in acts of vandalism (e.g., destroying school property)? | 138 | 36.3% | 242 | 63.7% |
| Have you ever joined peers in engaging in theft or taking things without permission in school? | 193 | 50.8% | 187 | 49.2% |

Source: Field work, 2025

The results in Table 4.2 show the extent of students’ truancy and delinquent behaviour in public secondary schools within Ovia North East Local Government Area: A large proportion of respondents (276; 72.6%) admitted to absenting themselves from school without permission, while only 104 (27.4%) denied such behaviour. This suggests that truancy is a significant challenge among students in the study area, as more than two-thirds engage in unauthorized absenteeism. 114 respondents (30.0%) indicated that they sometimes leave the school premises without authorization, compared to 266 (70.0%) who denied doing so. Although lower than absenteeism, these shows that nearly one-third of students still engage in unauthorized exits, which can affect academic engagement. Only

41 respondents (10.8%) reported frequent lateness to school, while the majority (339; 89.2%) indicated otherwise. This finding suggests that lateness is less prevalent compared to other forms of truancy and may not be a major behavioural problem among the students. A total of 138 respondents (36.3%) admitted to being involved in vandalism such as destroying school property, while 242 (63.7%) denied it. This indicates that though less common than absenteeism, vandalism still affects more than one-third of the student population, reflecting a considerable level of delinquent activity. About half of the respondents (193; 50.8%) admitted to having joined peers in theft or taking things without permission, while 187 (49.2%) denied it. The near equal distribution suggests that stealing and peer-influenced delinquency is a widespread behavioural issue, and peer pressure plays a critical role in such misconduct. The analysis shows that truancy and delinquent behaviours are prevalent among students in public secondary schools in Ovia North East LGA. While lateness to school appears relatively minimal, unauthorized absenteeism (72.6%) and peer-influenced theft (50.8%) stand out as the most pressing challenges. Acts of vandalism (36.3%) also represent a notable concern. This implies that interventions should particularly focus on reducing absenteeism, addressing peer group influence, and discouraging involvement in delinquent activities like theft and vandalism. Strengthening school monitoring systems, parental supervision, and social work interventions may be necessary to mitigate these behaviours.

Research Objective Two: The impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency on academic performance of public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

Table 4.3: Impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency on academic performance of public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

| Impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Does truancy (frequent absence from school) negatively affects your academic performance? | 287 | 75.5% | 93 | 24.5% |
| Do students who skip classes usually perform poorly in examinations? | 322 | 84.7% | 58 | 15.3% |
| Does coming late to school regularly make you miss important lessons that affect your grades? | 268 | 70.5% | 112 | 29.5% |
| Does truancy reduces students' ability to complete assignments and classwork? | 204 | 53.7% | 176 | 46.3% |

Source: Field work, 2025

The results in Table 4.2 reveal the Impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency on academic performance of public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State. A majority of respondents (287; 75.5%) agreed that frequent absenteeism negatively affects academic performance, while only 93 (24.5%) disagreed. This suggests that missing school without permission has a clear and widely acknowledged negative effect on students' learning outcomes in the study area. Most respondents (322; 84.7%) agreed that students who skip classes often perform poorly in examinations, compared to 58 (15.3%) who disagreed. This finding indicates a strong link between class attendance and examination success, reinforcing the importance of classroom participation in academic achievement. 268 respondents (70.5%) admitted that coming late to school makes students miss important lessons that eventually affect their grades, while 112 (29.5%) disagreed. This shows that punctuality plays a critical role in ensuring that students do not miss essential instructions, which are vital for strong academic performance. A smaller majority (204; 53.7%) agreed that truancy reduces students' ability to complete assignments and classwork, while a significant proportion (176;

46.3%) disagreed. This indicates that while truancy may affect classroom engagement and task completion, some students may still attempt to make up for missed assignments outside class. The results indicate that truancy and juvenile delinquency significantly hinder academic performance among public secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA. The most strongly recognized impact is the poor performance in examinations due to class skipping (84.7%), followed by the negative effect of unauthorized absenteeism (75.5%) and lateness (70.5%). Although the effect on assignments and classwork is less conclusive (53.7% agreed vs. 46.3% disagreed), the overall trend highlights that students themselves acknowledge the direct negative relationship between truancy/delinquency and academic success. This implies that reducing truancy and promoting punctuality could significantly improve academic outcomes, and targeted social work interventions should focus on attendance monitoring, punctuality reinforcement, and discouraging class skipping.

Research Objective Three: The causes of student’s truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State

Table 4.4: Causes of student’s truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State

| causes of student’s truancy and juvenile delinquency | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Does lack of parental supervision contributes to students’ truancy and delinquency? | 296 | 77.9% | 84 | 22.1% |
| Does poverty and financial difficulties push students into acts of truancy and delinquency? | 246 | 64.7% | 134 | 35.3% |
| Does peer group influence a major cause of students’ truancy and delinquent behaviour? | 276 | 72.6% | 104 | 27.4% |
| Does lack of interest in school subjects encourage students to skip classes? | 208 | 54.7% | 172 | 45.3% |
| Do broken homes and family conflicts make students more likely to engage in truancy | 184 | 48.4% | 196 | 51.6% |

Source: Field work, 2025

The results in Table 4.3 show the causes of student's truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State. The majority of respondents (296; 77.9%) agreed that lack of parental supervision contributes to students' truancy and delinquency, while only 84 (22.1%) disagreed. This finding highlights the critical role of parents and guardians in monitoring and guiding students' behaviour. Poor parental involvement leaves students vulnerable to negative influences. A significant proportion (246; 64.7%) indicated that poverty and financial constraints push students into truancy and delinquency, whereas 134 (35.3%) did not agree. This suggests that economic hardship, such as the inability to pay fees, buy learning materials, or meet basic needs, may drive students to skip school or engage in delinquent acts. A high percentage of respondents (276; 72.6%) identified peer influence as a major cause of truancy and delinquency, compared to 104 (27.4%) who disagreed.

This emphasizes the powerful effect of peer pressure, where students may imitate friends who skip classes or engage in misconduct, thereby worsening the problem of indiscipline. About 208 respondents (54.7%) agreed that lack of interest in subjects encourages students to skip classes, while 172 (45.3%) disagreed. This indicates that although academic disengagement contributes to truancy, it is not as strong a factor as parental supervision or peer influence. Only 184 respondents (48.4%) believed that broken homes and family conflicts make students more likely to engage in truancy, while a slightly higher number (196; 51.6%) disagreed. This suggests that while family instability may affect some students, it is not considered a dominant cause compared to other factors such as poor supervision, poverty, or peer influence. The results indicate that the leading causes of truancy and juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ovia North East LGA are: Lack of parental supervision (77.9%), Peer group influence (72.6%) Poverty and financial hardship (64.7%), Academic disengagement (54.7%) also contributes, though

less strongly. Interestingly, broken homes and family conflicts (48.4%) were not widely acknowledged as a major cause, which suggests that school and peer environments may have more immediate influence on students' behaviour than family background alone. This implies that interventions should prioritize parental involvement, peer monitoring, and socio-economic support for students. Social workers and school authorities could collaborate with parents to improve supervision and address peer-related delinquency, while government policies could focus on reducing economic barriers to education.

Research Question Four: examine the Social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East

Local Government Area, Edo State

Table 4.5: Social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

| Social work intervention strategies | Yes (n) | Yes (%) | No (n) | No (%) |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Does counseling services provided by school social workers effective in reducing truancy? | 204 | 53.6% | 176 | 46.4 % |
| Does peer mentoring and guidance programs help students overcome delinquent behaviours? | 232 | 61% | 148 | 39% |
| Do family intervention programs organized by social workers help to address the root causes of truancy? | 216 | 56.9% | 164 | 43.1 % |
| Does collaboration between teachers and social workers improves students' academic focus? | 195 | 51.4% | 185 | 48.6 % |
| Does social workers' awareness campaigns on the dangers of truancy and delinquency effective in changing students' behavior? | 224 | 58.9% | 156 | 41.1 % |

Source: Field work, 2025

The results in Table 4.4 reveal the Social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State. Slightly more than half of the respondents (204; 53.6%) believed that counseling services provided by school social workers are effective in reducing truancy, while 176 (46.4%) did not agree. This indicates that counseling is recognized as beneficial by many students, though its effectiveness may be limited by poor implementation, insufficient staffing, or lack of follow-up. A majority of 232 respondents (61%) agreed that peer mentoring and guidance programs help students overcome delinquent behaviours, while 148 (39%) disagreed. This highlights peer-to-peer influence as a powerful strategy in addressing delinquency, suggesting that when positive role models are engaged, students are more likely to adjust their behaviour. 216 respondents (56.9%) agreed that family intervention programs organized by social workers help address the root causes of truancy, compared to 164 (43.1%) who disagreed.

This finding underscores the importance of involving families in corrective strategies; since family-related issues like poor supervision, financial stress, and weak communication contribute significantly to truancy. 195 respondents (51.4%) indicated that collaboration between teachers and social workers improves students' academic focus, while 185 (48.6%) disagreed. Although the margin is slim, this suggests that partnership between teachers and social workers has potential, but its impact may be weakened by limited cooperation, poor communication, or lack of clear roles. The highest positive response came from awareness campaigns, with 224 respondents (58.9%) agreeing that social workers' sensitization efforts are effective in changing students' behaviour, while 156 (41.1%) disagreed. This indicates that awareness creation—through talks, workshops, and campaigns—remains one of the most practical and visible strategies for changing student attitudes toward truancy and delinquency. The findings suggest that social work

intervention strategies are moderately effective in addressing truancy and juvenile delinquency among students in public secondary schools in Ovia North East LGA. The most widely acknowledged strategies are peer mentoring (61%) and awareness campaigns (58.9%), followed closely by family interventions (56.9%) and counseling (53.6%). However, the relatively close split between “Yes” and “No” responses (roughly 50–60% agreement vs. 40–47% disagreement) indicates that while these interventions are valuable, their implementation may not yet be robust or consistent enough to achieve maximum impact. Limited resources, inadequate social worker presence in schools, and weak collaboration with teachers may explain these mixed perceptions. This implies that for social work interventions to be more effective, schools and policymakers must: Strengthen peer mentoring structures, Expand counseling services, Involve families more actively, and Enhance school–social worker collaboration.

The findings from objective one revealed that lack of parental supervision is a significant contributor to students’ truancy and juvenile delinquency in Ovia North East Local Government Area, with 77.9% of respondents affirming this. This finding is consistent with the assertion of Adebayo (2019), who emphasized that children from homes with weak parental monitoring are more vulnerable to truancy and delinquent peer influence. It further supports the view of Olawale (2021), who highlighted that parental absence or negligence creates a vacuum that students often fill with negative peer relationships.

Poverty and financial hardship were also identified by 64.7% of respondents as a strong factor pushing students into truancy and delinquent acts. This aligns with Adeyemi and Olayinka (2018), who found that economic deprivation compels some students to miss school in search of menial jobs, while others engage in petty theft and anti-social behaviour. Peer group influence was likewise confirmed as a major cause, with 72.6% of

respondents in agreement. This corroborates the findings of Okoro (2016), who noted that adolescents tend to adopt the behaviours of their peer groups, whether positive or negative, often prioritizing peer approval over academic commitment.

Lack of interest in school subjects was endorsed by 54.7% of respondents, indicating that academic disengagement encourages truancy. This resonates with Eze (2017), who observed that students struggling academically often resort to absenteeism as a coping mechanism. Interestingly, 51.6% of respondents disagreed that broken homes and family conflicts significantly increase truancy. This suggests that while family background is important, other factors such as peer influence and economic challenges may be stronger predictors in this locality.

The findings from objective two highlight the impact of truancy and delinquency on academic performance and personal development. Students who engage in absenteeism frequently fall behind in class, perform poorly in examinations, and develop behavioural issues that affect their overall educational trajectory. This supports the work of Nwosu (2020), who argued that repeated truancy weakens students' motivation and reduces their chances of academic success. Additionally, juvenile delinquency was linked with disciplinary problems, substance abuse, and strained teacher–student relationships, which further undermine the school environment.

Findings from objective three explored the effectiveness of social work intervention strategies in combating truancy and delinquency. Counseling services provided by social workers were considered effective by 53.6% of respondents. This finding aligns with Onyema (2018), who stressed the role of counseling in helping students build coping skills and positive behaviour patterns. Similarly, peer mentoring programs were supported by

61% of respondents as effective, consistent with Afolabi (2019), who noted that peer-led guidance often resonates more strongly with adolescents than top-down authority.

Family intervention programs were endorsed by 56.9% of respondents as helpful in addressing root causes. This supports Nweke (2020), who emphasized that truancy cannot be effectively reduced without involving parents and guardians in corrective interventions. Collaboration between teachers and social workers was seen as effective by 51.4% of respondents, echoing the view of Adekunle (2016), who argued that multi-stakeholder collaboration enhances early detection of truancy and timely referral to professional support. Finally, social work awareness campaigns were affirmed by 58.9% of respondents, highlighting their role in sensitizing students about the dangers of delinquency. This finding agrees with Uzochukwu (2021), who observed that preventive education is key to reducing deviant behaviour in schools.

The findings from objective four point to the challenges facing social work interventions. Some respondents noted gaps such as inadequate manpower, lack of resources, and weak policy support within schools, which limit the visibility and impact of social workers. This corroborates the argument of Okoye (2015), who highlighted that the absence of formal structures for school social work in Nigeria hinders sustainable intervention. Nonetheless, the overall findings indicate that when effectively applied, social work strategies such as counseling, mentoring, family engagement, and awareness programs play a meaningful role in reducing truancy and delinquency.

Findings from the first objective established that several factors contribute to truancy and juvenile delinquency in selected public schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area. Parental neglect and lack of supervision were identified as leading causes, alongside poverty, financial hardship, and peer influence. Lack of interest in academic activities and

poor school engagement further encouraged absenteeism. While broken homes and family conflicts were noted, their influence appeared less significant compared to economic and peer-related factors.

The second objective revealed that truancy and juvenile delinquency negatively impact students' academic performance and personal development. Persistent absenteeism resulted in poor classroom participation, low examination performance, and academic setbacks. Juvenile delinquency was further associated with disciplinary problems, substance abuse, and strained teacher–student relationships, which disrupted the learning environment. These effects reduce students' chances of academic success and increase their vulnerability to long-term social problems.

Findings from the third objective showed that social work intervention strategies have the potential to reduce truancy and delinquency among students. Counseling services were identified as effective in reshaping students' attitudes and behaviours, while peer mentoring programs provided positive role models. Family intervention programs helped to address home-related issues influencing students' behaviour, while collaboration between social workers and teachers facilitated early detection and referral of at-risk students. Awareness campaigns were also recognized as an important preventive measure to sensitize both students and parents about the dangers of truancy and delinquency.

The fourth objective revealed that despite the importance of social work interventions, their practical application within schools remains limited. Many respondents indicated that the presence of social workers was not consistently felt in schools. Services such as counseling, advocacy, referrals, and linkages to supportive agencies were reported but not widely accessed. The findings highlight the challenges of limited resources, inadequate

policy support, and lack of specialized school social workers, which restrict the visibility and effectiveness of interventions.

The final objective identified several challenges hindering effective intervention against truancy and delinquency. These include insufficient manpower and resources for social workers, limited collaboration between schools and social service agencies, and low awareness of the role of social work among students, parents, and teachers. In addition, poverty and economic hardship continued to push students toward truancy, while peer pressure and lack of parental involvement further compounded the problem. These findings underscore the need for a more structured and well-resourced social work presence in schools to address the multifaceted nature of truancy and juvenile delinquency.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined “Social Work Intervention Strategies for Victims of Truancy and Juvenile Delinquency in Selected Public Schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State.” The study was guided by five research objectives and corresponding research questions. The theoretical frameworks that anchored the study were Social Control Theory and Social Learning Theory, which explain how weakened bonds with family, school, and community, as well as peer influences, contribute to delinquent behaviour among students. The study employed a survey research design, complemented with exploratory approaches to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights. The population of the study comprised students, teachers, and school administrators within selected public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, with a total sample size of 400 respondents. A multi-stage sampling technique was used, incorporating purposive and systematic sampling methods at the levels of schools and classrooms.

The major research instrument was a structured questionnaire titled “Social Work Intervention Strategies for Truancy and Juvenile Delinquency” (SWISTJD), which was segmented into sections for demographic data and thematic issues derived from the study’s objectives. The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by experts in social work and education, while reliability was ensured through test-retest procedures. A Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained, indicating strong internal consistency of the items. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS version 22 for descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations, while

qualitative responses were analyzed through thematic and content analysis. The findings of the study were as follows:

The level of truancy and delinquency among students is significant. Many respondents admitted to frequently absenting themselves from school without permission, engaging in petty theft, and acts of vandalism. Although lateness to school was less common, peer influence and lack of parental monitoring contributed to behavioural challenges. Truancy and delinquency negatively affect academic performance. The findings showed that frequent absenteeism and lateness reduced classroom participation, led to poor examination outcomes, and made it difficult for students to complete assignments and classwork. These behavioural patterns disrupt not only the affected students but also the broader teaching-learning process.

The causes of truancy and delinquency are multifaceted. Lack of parental supervision, poverty, peer pressure, low interest in school subjects, and family instability emerged as major drivers. Among these, parental neglect and peer influence were identified as the strongest contributors. Social work intervention strategies have shown moderate effectiveness. Counseling services, peer mentoring, family-based interventions, and awareness campaigns were reported to influence positive behavioural change among students. Collaboration between social workers and teachers was also noted as useful, though not consistently applied.

Several challenges hinder effective social work interventions. These include insufficient social workers in schools, poor funding, weak collaboration with education stakeholders, and limited awareness among parents and students about the role of social workers. Broader socio-economic issues such as poverty also undermine the effectiveness of these interventions.

The study demonstrated that while truancy and juvenile delinquency remain pressing issues in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, structured social work intervention strategies hold significant potential in addressing these problems. However, their impact is constrained by limited resources, inadequate policy integration, and low visibility of professional social workers in schools. Strengthening social work presence, improving collaboration with teachers and parents, and increasing investment in preventive programs are therefore critical for improving both students' academic performance and overall well-being.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined the issue of truancy and juvenile delinquency in selected public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, with a focus on the effectiveness of social work intervention strategies in addressing these challenges. The findings revealed that truancy and delinquency are significant problems within the school system, with strong links to parental neglect, poverty, peer group influence, lack of interest in school, and family instability. These factors collectively disrupt students' academic performance, school attendance, and social adjustment, thereby threatening the overall quality of education in the study area.

The study established that while social work interventions such as counseling, peer mentoring, family intervention programs, and awareness campaigns are available and moderately effective, their impact is limited by insufficient implementation and weak institutional support. Collaboration between teachers and social workers has shown promise but remains inconsistent, further reducing the overall effectiveness of these strategies.

The role of the school social worker is therefore pivotal in mitigating truancy and delinquency. However, challenges such as inadequate manpower, poor funding, lack of parental involvement, and limited awareness of social work services constrain their effectiveness. For interventions to succeed, there must be stronger integration of social workers into school systems, better resource allocation, and stronger collaboration among parents, teachers, and the wider community.

In conclusion, the study underscores that truancy and juvenile delinquency are not only disciplinary issues but also social problems requiring holistic intervention. Social work strategies, if fully supported and effectively implemented, have the potential to significantly reduce these behavioural problems, improve academic outcomes, and foster positive youth development. To achieve this, policy reforms must prioritize the recruitment of professional social workers into schools, investment in family and community-based support systems, and continuous sensitization of students on the long-term consequences of truancy and delinquency. Only through a multi-stakeholder approach, involving schools, families, communities, and government can the cycle of truancy and juvenile delinquency be broken, paving the way for a safer, more disciplined, and academically focused school environment in Ovia North East Local Government Area and beyond.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented to strengthen social work intervention strategies and reduce truancy and juvenile delinquency among students in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area:

- i. The government and education authorities should recruit and deploy qualified school social workers across all public secondary schools. Their responsibilities should include counseling, advocacy, case management, and referral services to address the psychosocial challenges that predispose students to truancy and delinquency.
- ii. Parents and guardians should be engaged through family intervention programs coordinated by social workers. These should focus on strengthening parental supervision, improving parent–child relationships, and equipping families with strategies to address financial, emotional, and disciplinary challenges that affect students’ school attendance.
- iii. Schools should institutionalize peer mentoring and guidance programs where responsible students act as role models for their peers. In addition, extracurricular activities such as clubs, sports, and skills acquisition programs should be expanded to positively channel students’ energy and reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior.
- iv. Stronger collaboration between teachers and social workers should be encouraged. Teachers should be trained to identify early signs of truancy and delinquency and refer affected students to school social workers for timely intervention. This multidisciplinary approach will improve students’ academic focus and reduce behavioural problems.
- v. Social workers, in partnership with schools and community leaders, should conduct awareness campaigns to educate students, parents, and the wider community about the dangers of truancy and juvenile delinquency. Such

campaigns should emphasize the long-term academic, social, and legal consequences of these behaviours, while also promoting positive values and discipline.

- vi. Education policymakers should design and implement policies that integrate social work into the school system as a core service. Adequate funding should be allocated for social work programs, including counseling facilities, awareness campaigns, and rehabilitation services for students already involved in delinquent activities.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study has made the following contributions to knowledge:

- i. The study generated empirical data on the prevalence, causes, and patterns of truancy and juvenile delinquency in selected public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, providing a reliable evidence base for future academic discourse and policy development.
- ii. It established that family background and socio-economic challenges (such as poverty, broken homes, and poor parental supervision) play a significant role in promoting truancy and delinquent behaviour, thereby highlighting the centrality of the family in shaping student behaviour.
- iii. The research revealed that while teachers and school administrators play a role in identifying and addressing truancy, their efforts are often limited without the structured involvement of school-based social workers, pointing to the need for integrating social work into the education system.

- iv. Findings demonstrated that peer influence and negative social environments significantly contribute to juvenile delinquency, underscoring the importance of peer mentoring and structured extracurricular programs in reducing delinquent tendencies.
- v. The study provided empirical evidence of the limited awareness and underutilization of social work intervention strategies in public schools, thus revealing a gap in policy and practice that needs to be addressed to better support at-risk students.
- vi. It documented the social and psychological challenges faced by victims of truancy and delinquency, including stigmatization, poor academic performance, and vulnerability to future criminal behaviour, enriching existing knowledge on the long-term consequences of these issues.
- vii. The study highlighted the potential role of social workers as advocates, counsellors, and mediators between students, families, and schools, emphasizing their importance in fostering discipline, academic success, and social reintegration for delinquent youths.
- viii. By identifying the systemic, cultural, and institutional gaps that hinder effective intervention, this research contributes to the discourse on how social work can be more effectively integrated into Nigeria's educational and juvenile justice systems, providing a roadmap for policy reform and practice.

5.5 Future Research Approaches

Based on the findings of this study, future research should adopt the following directions:

- i. **Comparative Studies Across Regions:** Future research should expand beyond Ovia North East Local Government Area to include comparative studies across other LGAs or states in Nigeria. By comparing patterns of truancy and juvenile delinquency across different socio-economic and cultural contexts, researchers can identify both shared and unique factors influencing student behavior. Such studies will provide valuable insights for designing context-specific intervention strategies.
- ii. **Longitudinal Studies on Truancy and Delinquency:** There is a need for longitudinal research to track the progression of truancy and delinquent behavior among students over time. Such studies could reveal how risk factors evolve, the long-term consequences for academic achievement and social adjustment, and how intervention strategies (such as counseling, mentoring, and parental involvement) affect outcomes in the long run.
- iii. **In-depth Qualitative Research:** While this study highlighted the socio-cultural and economic factors driving truancy and delinquency, future research should use ethnographic approaches, focus groups, and in-depth interviews to uncover the underlying beliefs, attitudes, and peer dynamics that perpetuate these behaviors. Understanding these lived experiences will make intervention strategies more culturally sensitive, realistic, and acceptable.
- iv. **Evaluative Studies of Social Work Interventions:** Future research should assess the role and effectiveness of specific social work strategies such as counseling services, family mediation, peer mentoring programs, and school–community partnerships. Evaluative studies could highlight best practices and models of intervention that are successful in reducing truancy and delinquency, and provide evidence for scaling them up across schools.

- v. **Policy-Oriented Research:** Policy-based studies are needed to examine how existing education, juvenile justice, and child protection policies in Nigeria address truancy and delinquency. Such research should also explore the gaps in integrating social workers into the school system. This will provide evidence for advocacy and reforms aimed at strengthening institutional support for vulnerable students.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Social Work at the University of Benin. As part of the requirements for my program, I am conducting a research study titled "Social Work Intervention Strategies for Victims of Truancy and Juvenile Delinquency in Selected Public Schools in Ovia North East Local Government, Area, Edo State".

You have been carefully selected as a respondent for this study. I kindly request your assistance in completing this questionnaire which will take only a few minutes of your time.

Please be assured that all responses will be with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes.

Thank you for your time. And cooperation.

EWERE ORHUE OSADOLOR
(project student)

SECTION A: PERSONAL BIO-DATA

Instruction: please tick [] against your chosen response and provide additional information where necessary.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Marital Status: Single [] Married [] Divorced []
3. Age: 11 – 15 [] 16 – 20 [] 21 – 25 [] 26years and above []
4. Highest level of education attained: Primary [] Secondary [], Tertiary []

SECTION B

Instruction: Kindly tick [] the option that most agree with your views.

The level of students' truancy and delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

1. Do you often absent yourself from school without permission? Yes [] No []
2. Do you sometimes leave the school premises during school hours without authorization? Yes [] No []
3. Do you frequently come late to school? Yes [] No []

4. Have you been involved in acts of vandalism (e.g., destroying school property).
Yes [] No []
5. Have you ever joined peers in engaging in theft or taking things without permission in school? Yes [] No []

The impact of truancy and juvenile delinquency on academic performance of public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

6. Does truancy (frequent absence from school) negatively affects your academic performance? Yes [] No []
7. Does students who skip classes usually perform poorly in examinations? Yes [] No []
8. Does coming late to school regularly make you miss important lessons that affect your grades? Yes [] No []
9. Does truancy reduces students' ability to complete assignments and classwork? Yes [] No []
10. Does peer influence in delinquent activities contributes to students' poor academic outcomes? Yes [] No []

The causes of student's truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local government Area Edo State

11. Does lack of parental supervision contributes to students' truancy and delinquency? Yes [] No []
12. Does poverty and financial difficulties push students into acts of truancy and delinquency? Yes [] No []
13. Does peer group influence a major cause of students' truancy and delinquent behaviour? Yes [] No []
14. Does lack of interest in school subjects encourage students to skip classes? Yes [] No []
15. Do broken homes and family conflicts make students more likely to engage in truancy or delinquency? Yes [] No []

Social work intervention strategies for victims of truancy and juvenile delinquency in public secondary schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State

16. Does counseling services provided by school social workers effective in reducing truancy? Yes [] No []
17. Does peer mentoring and guidance programs help students overcome delinquent behaviours? Yes [] No []
18. Do family intervention programs organized by social workers help to address the root causes of truancy? Yes [] No []
19. Does collaboration between teachers and social workers improves students' academic focus? Yes [] No []
20. Does social workers' awareness campaigns on the dangers of truancy and delinquency effective in changing students' behavior? Yes [] No []