

**SCHOOL BULLYING AS A PREDICTOR OF STUDENTS' TRUANTING  
BEHAVIOURS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NUSKKA  
EDUCATION ZONE OF ENUGU STATE**

**Chijioke Virginus Amoke & Fidelis Eze Amaeze**

Department of Educational Foundations  
Faculty of Education, Univesity of Nigeria, Nsukka

---

**Abstract** - The study investigated school bullying as a predictor of students' truanting behaviours in public secondary schools in Nuskka Education Zone of Enugu State. The study was guided by three research questions and corresponding hypotheses. The study adopted a correlation survey research design. The population of the study is 199 students identified displaying truanting behaviours. The population was used as the sample since it is small and manageable. The School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) and Students' Truanting Behaviours Questionnaire (STBQ) were used for data collection. Three experts face validated the instruments. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.77 were computed for STBQ and SBQ through Cronbach alpha. The reliability coefficients for the clusters of physical bullying, verbal bullying and social bullying are 0.71, 0.74 and 0.72 respectively. Linear and multiple regression were used to answer the research questions while t-test and multiple regression were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that physical, verbal and social bullying significantly predicted students' truanting behaviours to a very high extent in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that the teachers and principals should develop and apply close monitoring and supervisory behaviours on the students' daily school activities. The school authority should provide peaceful and conducive learning environment through the stipulation of achievable rules and regulations that are centered on bullying behaviours.

---

**Keywords:** School Bullying (Physical, Verbal and Social bullying) and Truanting Behaviours.

---

**Introduction**

Truanting behaviours are seriously becoming a commonplace in most public schools and at the same time a source of worry to education stakeholders. The case of secondary schools in Enugu State may not be different from other states of the federation. Truancy means the intentional and unapproved avoidance of school irrespective of the reasons behind such actions (ChalkyPapers, 2023). Truancy can be seen as intentional and chronic absenteeism from school and school activities (Amaeze, 2022). Amaeze further stressed that this behaviour could be habitual or chronic and in most cases happens without the knowledge of the students' parents. There are several consequences of engaging in truancy, the

most common being the inability to graduate and the denial of credits for certain classes.

Students who frequently skip school suffer negative consequences that include lower achievement, course failure, increased risk of dropping out, and disengagement from academic matters (McGee, 2018). Surveys have shown that two of the most adverse effects of absenteeism are increase in crime and the population of incarcerated individuals (Kerese-McCastler, 2019). The behavior has been linked with high rates of delinquency (McGee, 2018). Adult criminal activities such as vandalism, burglary, and auto theft are commonly reported among people who dropped out of school. This is evident from statistics that have shown that approximately 9 in 10 prisoners are high school dropouts (Kerese-McCastler, 2019). The short-term effects on students include involvement in criminal gangs, poor academic performance, and quitting education (Kerese-McCastler, 2019). Long-term effects include increased risk of incarceration and addiction, poor mental health, and poverty. Other adverse effects include unstable relationships, social isolation, failure to graduate, falling behind in school, and unemployment (Kerese-McCastler, 2019).

Truancy has many causes such as parental issues, school and peer-related issues (ChalkyPapers, 2023). The peer and school related issues cut across school bullying which include physical, verbal and social types of bullying. Physical bullying seems to be common among students. Physical bullying involves the use of physical force to inflict pain or injury on someone (Alysia Marshall-Seslar, 2022). Physical bullying can manifest in the form of shoving, spitting, kicking, destruction of properties. Physical bullying can lead to negative school related challenges (Kerese-McCastler, 2019). Physical school bullying can lead to school dropout (Alysia Marshall-Seslar, 2022). Another type of school bullying is the verbal bullying.

Verbal bullying can be found among secondary school students. The verbal bullying is the type that involves mocking, insulting, name-calling, sexual harassment and racist comments (Alysia Marshall-Seslar, 2022). According to a United Nations Population Fund (2020) brochure, it is reported that globally, 63% of children there have experienced violence and discrimination, 44% have been victims, and 24% have perpetrated violence and discrimination against other children in school. The victims who are bullied can lose concentration. They may suffer physical injuries and mental health

issues. They may suffer from depression and anxiety (Al-Raqqad et al., 2017). Victims of verbal abuse suffer from mental setback and withdrawal tendencies in the school (Koptleuova, 2023). Another type of school bullying is the social bullying. Al-Raqqad et al. (2017) found that verbal school bullying leads to a negative school environment. The last type of school bullying considered in this study is social bullying.

Social bullying seems to be one of the commonly practiced types of bullying in the schools. Social bullying has to do with a person hurting another person's relationships (Alysia Marshall-Seslar, 2022). Some of the manifestations of social bullying include abrupt ending of relationship, snubbing, avoidance of greeting, spreading of rumours and leaving in isolation. The study by Huang (2022) showed that both bullying victimization and bullying climate had significant and negative relationships with students' school dispositions. In addition, Adams and Hannum's (2016) found that bullied students experience increased isolation and loss. Based on the background of this study, it was found that there is dearth of work on the school bullying as a predictor of students' truanting behaviours in public secondary schools in Nuskka Education Zone of Enugu State. Therefore, the study investigated school bullying as a predictor of students' truanting behaviours in public secondary schools in Nuskka Education Zone of Enugu State.

### **Purposes of the Study**

The study investigated school bullying as a predictor of students' truanting behaviours in public secondary schools in Nuskka Education Zone of Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. the predictive power of physical bullying on students' truanting behaviours
2. the predictive power of verbal bullying on students' truanting behaviours
3. the predictive power of social bullying on students' truanting behaviours
4. the joint predictive power of school bullying on students' truanting behaviours

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the predictive power of physical bullying on students' truanting behaviours?

2. What is the predictive power of verbal bullying on students' truanting behaviours?
3. What is the predictive power of social bullying on students' truanting behaviours?
4. What is the joint predictive power of school bullying on students' truanting behaviours?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses raised were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Physical bullying does not significantly predict students' truanting behaviours
2. Verbal bullying does not significantly predict students' truanting behaviours
3. Social bullying does not significantly predict students' truanting behaviours
4. School bullying does not significantly predict students' truanting behaviours

### **Methods**

The study adopted a correlation survey research design. The population of the study is 199 students identified displaying truanting behaviours. The population was used as the sample since it is small and manageable. The School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) and Students' Truanting Behaviours Questionnaire (STBQ) were used for data collection. The SBQ is a 30-item instrument that has two sections. The first section contained the demographic information of the students such as school type and class level. The second section contains three clusters on Physical, Verbal and Social School Bullying with ten items respectively. The response format for the SBQ is Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1). The second instrument STBQ made use of the demographic information of SBQ and the response options. The STBQ has a total of 15 items that elicited information on students' truanting behaviours. The researcher made use of Traunting Behaviour Identification Scale to identify the students who are victims of truanting behaviour. The identification instrument has ten items with minimum and maximum response scores of 10 and 40. The average or benchmark score is 20 points for truanting behaviour among the students. The score of 1 to 19.9 does not include the respondent as a victim while the score from 20 to 40 qualified the student as a victim of truanting behaviour

who took part in the study. Three experts, two from Psychology Unit, Department of Educational Foundations and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, all from University of Nigeria face validated the instruments.

The internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.77 were computed for STBQ and SBQ through Cronbach alpha. The reliability coefficients for the clusters of physical bullying, verbal bullying and social bullying are 0.71, 0.74 and 0.72 respectively. Linear and multiple regression were used to answer the research questions while t-test and multiple regression were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that physical, verbal and social bullying significantly predicted students' truanting behaviours to a very high extent in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. The decision rule was based on Nworgu (2015) categorization as follows: 0.00 – 0.20 (Very Low), 0.20 – 0.40 (Low), 0.40 – 0.60 (Medium), 0.60 – 0.80 (High) and 0.80 and above (Very High).

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the predictive power of physical bullying on students' truanting behaviours?

**Table 1: linear regression of the predictive power on physical bullying on students' truanting behaviours**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.92 <sup>a</sup>	.86	.81	Very high predictive power

**Decision rule: 0.00 – 0.20 (Very Low), 0.20 – 0.40 (Low), 0.40 – 0.60 (Medium), 0.60 – 0.80 (High) and 0.80 and above (Very High).**

Data on table 1 shows that the regression and regression square values are 0.92 and 0.86 respectively. The coefficient of determinism of 86% showed that physical bullying to very high extent can predicted secondary school students' truanting behaviours in Enugu State. The 14% variance in secondary school students' truanting behaviours in Enugu State is not accounted for physical bullying.

**Hypothesis 1:** Physical bullying does not significantly predict students’ truanting behaviours

**Table 2: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power on physical bullying on students’ truanting behaviours**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.981	1.33		11.23	.000
	physical bullying	.93	.56	.92	16.33	.000

Data on table 2 shows that the t-test value associated with linear regression is 16.33. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, physical bullying significantly predicted students’ truanting behaviours in Enugu State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the predictive power of verbal bullying on students’ truanting behaviours?

**Table 3: linear regression of the predictive power of verbal bullying on students’ truanting behaviours**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.90 <sup>a</sup>	.81	.80	Very high predictive power

**Decision rule: 0.00 – 0.20 (Very Low), 0.20 – 0.40 (Low), 0.40 – 0.60 (Medium), 0.60 – 0.80 (High) and 0.80 and above (Very High).**

Data on table 3 shows that the regression and regression square values are 0.90 and 0.81 respectively. The coefficient of determinism of 81% showed that verbal bullying to very high extent can predicted secondary school students’ truanting behaviours in Enugu State. The 19% variance in secondary school students’ truanting behaviours in Enugu State is not accounted for verbal bullying.

**Hypothesis 2:** Verbal bullying does not significantly predict students’ truanting behaviours

**Table 4: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of verbal bullying on students’ truantiing behaviours**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	13.66	1.44		9.00	.00
	verbal bullying	.89	.67	.90	32.00	.00

Data on table 4 showed that the t-test value associated with linear regression is 32.00. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, verbal bullying significantly predicted students’ truantiing behaviours in Enugu State.

**Research Question 3:** What is the predictive power of social bullying on students’ truantiing behaviours?

**Table 5: linear regression of the predictive power of social bullying on students’ truantiing behaviours**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.98 <sup>a</sup>	.96	.94	Very high predictive power

**Decision rule: 0.00 – 0.20 (Very Low), 0.20 – 0.40 (Low), 0.40 – 0.60 (Medium), 0.60 – 0.80 (High) and 0.80 and above (Very High).**

Data on table 5 shows that the regression and regression square values are 0.98 and 0.96 respectively. The coefficient of determinism of 96% showed that social bullying to very high extent can predicted secondary school students’ truantiing behaviours in Enugu State. The 4% variance in secondary school students’ truantiing behaviours in Enugu State is not accounted for social bullying.

**Hypothesis 3:** Social bullying does not significantly predict students’ truantiing behaviours

**Table 6: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of social bullying on students’ truantiing behaviours**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	78.77	2.56		29.14	.00
	Social bullying	.96	.88	.98	42.24	.00

Data on table 6 shows that the t-test value associated with linear regression is 32.00. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, social bullying significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Enugu State.

**Research Question 4:** What is the joint predictive power of school bullying on students' truantiing behaviours?

**Table 7: multiple regression of the predictive power of school bullying on students' truantiing behaviours**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.97 <sup>a</sup>	.94	.93	Very high predictive power

**Decision rule: 0.00 – 0.20 (Very Low), 0.20 – 0.40 (Low), 0.40 – 0.60 (Medium), 0.60 – 0.80 (High) and 0.80 and above (Very High).**

Data on table 5 shows that the regression and regression square values are 0.97 and 0.94 respectively. The coefficient of determinism of 94% showed that school bullying to very high extent can predicted secondary school students' truantiing behaviours in Enugu State. The 6% variance in secondary school students' truantiing behaviours in Enugu State is not accounted for school bullying.

**Hypothesis 4:** School bullying does not significantly predict students' truantiing behaviours

**Table 8: ANOVA associated with multiple regression of the predictive power of school bullying on students' truantiing behaviours**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8007.34	3	2669.11	115.15	.00 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4519.80	195	23.18		
	Total	12526.34	198			



Data on table 8 shows that the ANOVA value (F) is 115.15 ( $F_{4,486}=115.15$ ,  $p=0.00<0.05$ ). With a degree of freedom of 3 and 195, the hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore school bullying significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Enugu State.

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study are that:

1. physical bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone.
2. verbal bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone.
3. social bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone.
4. school bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone

### **Discussion**

#### **Physical Bullying and Students' Truantiing Behaviours**

The study revealed that physical bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone. The finding of this study has shown that students' truantiing behaviours are as a result of physical discomforts that they experience in the school environment. The finding of this study has shown that most of the cases of truantiing behaviours are strongly associated with physical assaults in the school. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Karase-McCastler (2019) which reported that physical bullying can lead to negative school related challenges (Kerases-McCastler, 2019). In corroboration with the finding of this study was that of Alysia Marshall-Seslar (2022) which found that physical school bullying can lead to school dropout. Another type of school bullying is the verbal bullying.

#### **Verbal Bullying and Students' Truantiing Behaviours**

The finding of this study has shown that verbal bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone. The finding of this study has proven that the more the students verbally abuse each other the more the cases of truantiing behaviours are recorded in secondary schools. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Al-

Raqqad et al., (2017) which submitted that students who are verbally abused suffer from depression and anxiety and this may make them avoid school. In line with the finding of this study, Koptleuova (2023) found that victims of verbal abuse suffer from mental setback and withdrawal tendencies from the school. The finding of this study buttressed that of Al-Raqqad et al. (2017) which found that verbal school bullying leads to a negative school environment.

### **Social Bullying and Students' Truantiing Behaviours**

The study found that social bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone. Social bullying predicted truantiing behaviour because it has to do with abrupt ending of relationship, snubbing, avoidance of greeting, spreading of rumours and leaving in isolation. The finding of this study is in agreement with Huang (2022) which showed that both bullying victimization and bullying climate had significant and negative relationships with students' school dispositions. In corroboration with the finding of this study, Hannum (2016) found that bullied students experience increased isolation and loss of interest in school and school related activities and programmes.

### **School Bullying and Students' Truantiing Behaviours**

The finding of this study showed that school bullying to a very high extent significantly predicted students' truantiing behaviours in Nsukka Education Zone. The implication of this finding is that schools where there are combinations of physical, verbal and social bullying tend to increase the tendency of truantiing behaviours among the students. The finding of this study buttressed that of Alysia Marshall-Seslar (2022) which showed that school bullying has to do with a person hurting another in other to impact negatively on the adjustment.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that school bullying is indispensable in predicting students' truantiing behaviours in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Specifically, physical, verbal and social bullying are factors that can determine students' truantiing behaviours in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made that:

1. the teachers and principals should develop and apply close monitoring and supervisory behaviours on the students' daily school activities.
2. the school authority should provide peaceful and conducive learning environment through the stipulation of achievable rules and regulations that are centered on bullying behaviours.

## References

- Amaze, F.E. (2017). *A causal model of psychological variables on students' Physics achievement*. Unpublished Thesis, University of Port Harcourt.
- Adams, J., & Hannum, E. (2018). School violence in China: A multilevel analysis of student victimization in rural middle schools.
- Al-Raqad, H. K., Al-Bourini, E. S., Al Talahin, F. M., & Aranki, R. M. E. (2017). The impact of school bullying on students' academic achievement from teachers point of view. *International Education Studies*, 10(6), 44-50. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1144634A>
- ChalkyPapers. (2023). Truancy: causes, effects and possible solutions. Retrieved from: <https://chalkypapers.com/truancy-causes-effects-and-possible-solutions/>
- Ezurike, C.A., Amaze, F.E., Ossai, Osita & Amoke, C.V. (2021). Impact of parental violence on school adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. *Journal of Educational Foundations (Special Edition)*, 10(2), 696-704.
- Huang, L. (2022). Exploring the relationship between school bullying and academic performance: The mediating role of students' sense of belonging at school.
- Kerese-McCastler, G. (2019). *Transforming truancy: Exploring factors and strategies that impact truancy among youth*. Conneaut Lake, PA: Page Publishing Inc.
- Koptleuova, D. (2023). *The effects of verbal school bullying on the academic performance of teenage victims in Kazakhstan: The necessary support for victims*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/dnzy9>
- Marshall-Seslar, A (2022). *Physical bullying: Definition, effects and prevention*. <https://www.mcmillenhealth.org/tamtalks/physical-bullying>

- McGee, K. (2018). In D.C. 34 percent of graduates received a diploma against district policy. Web.
- Nworgu, B.G. (2015). *Educational research: Basic issues and methodology (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Nsukka University Trust Publisher.
- Research in the Sociology of Education, 41–69. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1479-353920180000020003>
- United Nations Population Fund (2020). Travlya – Otvety Na Voprosy Ob Etom kakaya ona byvayet i kak yeye ostanovit' [Bullying – Answers for questions about it what is it like and how to stop it] [Brochure]. [https://kazakhstan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/bullying\\_1.pdf?](https://kazakhstan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/bullying_1.pdf?)