



Effect of Bibliotherapy on Truant Behaviour of Schooling Adolescents in North West Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the effect of bibliotherapy on the truant behaviour of schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria. Two research questions were posed to guide the study. The study adopted a Quasi-experimental design. The population for the study comprised of 824 identified SSII schooling adolescents with truancy behavioural problems drawn from the four selected schools in the North West Nigeria. The sample size used for the study was 296 SS II schooling adolescents with truant behaviour. The study adopted a structured questionnaire which was developed by the researchers for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts drawn from Department of Educational Foundations (Special Education Unit), University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies, Kano State and Department of Psychology, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. The reliability of the instruments was subjected to Cronbach Alpha Statistics and reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. Mean score and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that school location is not a significant factor in the mean truancy behaviour of schooling adolescents; though urban schooling adolescents had a reduced mean truancy behaviour compared to their rural counterpart. The findings of the study with respect to the interaction effect of treatments and gender on schooling adolescents' truancy behaviours revealed no significant interaction effect of treatments and gender. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that special educators, guidance counsellors, educational psychologists, and curriculum planners should plan a programme of intervention based on the bibliotherapy techniques for schooling adolescents.

Keywords: Gender; Bibliotherapy; Truant behavior; Schooling adolescents.



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1. Introduction

Bibliotherapy is the use of books to aid people to solve the problem facing them. Reading can be therapeutic because adolescents enter the world described in the pages of a good book and become involved with the character therein having gained insight and ideas (Raji, 2009). Adolescents identify with a book character and events on the story, either real or fictitious. Russell (2012), defined bibliotherapy as a method for handling emotional or psychological matters through literature that aids individuals in coping, but also acknowledges "life lessons can be found in a book that is simply telling a good story" (p. 27). Bibliotherapy is the use of books to aid people to solve the problem facing them. The concept of bibliotherapy has widened over time to include self-help manuals without therapeutic intervention, or a therapist prescribing a movie that might provide needed catharsis to a client (Grabowsky, 2011).

The goal of Bibliotherapy is to broaden and deepen the adolescents' understanding of a particular problem that requires attention. The written books may educate the adolescents about their problem it could or be used to increase their acceptance of a proposed treatment (Grabowsky, 2011). Opportunity to read about emotional and behavioural disorder outside the therapist's office facilitates active participation in the rehabilitation process and promotes a strong recovery from bad behaviours (Clark, 2006). Books have been instruments of change, development and effective decision-making a long time. No wonder, books have continued to be relevant from one generation to another. In the same vein, Clarke stated that the use of books has a significant influence on the treatment of mentally sick people. Many authors have also described bibliotherapy as applicable to aiding children and adolescents improve aspects of their emotional, social, and behavioural development (Coffman *et al.*, 2012)

One of the earliest records of the use of bibliotherapy in the broadest sense namely "The use of books in the treatment of the Sick" appeared in the Middle Ages in the thirteenth century. The Al-Mansur Hospital, then newly built in Cairo, provided along with medical and surgical care, the services of Priests to read holy Koran or holy Bible to patients day and night. In the 18th and 19th centuries, this was extensively practiced in England, France, Germany and Scotland. The combination of religion and use of books (Bibliotherapy) informed the beginning of hospital libraries (Clark, 2006).

Moments in one's daily lives, such as talking with a friend, engaging in a film or book, or even experiencing an unusual occurrence, impact on the individual in a variety of ways (Lampropoulos and Spengler, 2005). The changes brought about by such experiences may include emotional reactions, sudden realizations, interpretations, revelations, processing of critical information, and other changes help to shape one's bad behaviours (Lampropoulos and Spengler, 2005). Research by McCulliss (2012) pointed that teachers have attempted and succeeded in using bibliotherapy as a mean of helping children and adolescents feel better about themselves. With the positive attitude they developed, they became more adaptable and ready to face their problems instead of indulging in homosexuality, alcoholism and drug abuse. Professional helpers have a need to shift to a more realistic application of Bibliotherapy with children and adolescents.

Through bibliotherapy, adolescents have an opportunity to identify, to compensate and to relive in a controlled manner a problem that they now are aware of. McCulliss (2012), stated that bibliotherapy has been successfully used with the specialized population such as adolescents who are drugs and alcohol abusers. If that was the case, the writers believed that bibliotherapy could be used to provide the adolescents with all the necessary information on drugs and alcohol abuse as well as the consequences of drug abuse as part of the prevention program. They would be better equipped to handle negative influences and be more assertive to say no to drugs through the use of bibliotherapy. This helps the adolescents to become more serious about school activities instead of staying away from school.

Throughout history, people have commemorated their lives through narration, perhaps hoping to discover and define life's meaning through the process of the story (Cook A., 2004). According to Atilola (2012), stories serve at least ten purposes in the lives of individuals. They serve to entertain, to build community, and help one view events from a different perspective. Stories help one understand the consequences of behaviours, and they educate one's desires. They also help one live in the moment. Stories aid one in dealing with one struggling, one's loss, and one's grief. They teach one what it is to be human while helping one appreciates the wonder and mystery of one's surroundings. The sharing of stories predates even literacy, itself, with poets and tellers of tales weaving the magic of the spoken word into experiences that are simultaneously individual and collective, vocalizing common pain, while promoting healing through the sharing (Attwood and Croll, 2006). Such restorative powers of the oral traditions of storytelling according to the authors continue to flourish in numerous universal means in every culture.

Bibliotherapy is appropriate for all grade levels of students because it uses stories told in the books (Cook A., 2004). The author contended that because the literature is presented in a non-threatening environment and gives the adolescents a model through the character of the story, therapeutic stories not only help the adolescents cope and solve problems, they also present the opportunity for a powerful relationship bond. This is strengthened by the involvement of both the teacher and the adolescents as the books are shared. Bibliotherapy can be used to intervene with adolescents facing countless types and degrees of problems and needs.

In addition, bibliotherapy is a process of helping youths struggling with truant behaviour (Merga, 2014). Research by Peterson (2006) opines that bibliotherapy is suitable for working with young people with special needs related to giftedness. Bibliotherapy is a therapy that is useful in working with adolescents who are down with stress or those who are in trouble at school and have been suspended Smith *et al.* (2006). Bibliotherapy is also an appropriate intervention for schooling adolescents who are placed in foster care, are adopted, or are adjusting to stepfamilies.

Various genres of literature can be well suited for use in bibliotherapy with adolescents. For instance, fairy tales, fables, and other works of fiction and so on, self-help materials, and even song may be fitting (Jones, 2006). Truant in- schooling adolescents or very young adolescents may benefit from taped books, predictable books, or picture books (Cook *et al.*, 2006). Multicultural literature should also be considered. Books should be provided that enable adolescents to see characters who look like themselves. Bibliotherapy is suitable for adolescents, individuals, small groups, and large groups counselling contexts, it is also in these contexts, topics such as anger, social skills, family dynamics, truancy, and grief may be suitable (Stewart and Ames, 2014). Furthermore, the effects of bibliotherapy may occur on intellectual, psychosocial, interpersonal, emotional, and behavioural levels, (Pollack, 2004). A positive outcome can be achieved with didactic texts as well as imaginative literature.

Research by Kolo (2003), also identified the following three goals of bibliotherapy, such as: to teach a person to think constructively and positively; to help people analyze their attitudes and modes of behaviour and to stimulate an

eagerness to find an adjustment to problems that will lessen conflict with society. He also noted that, with the use of bibliotherapeutic techniques, an individual is able to resolve immediate problem and also to learn to effect a change in attitude in the future. Similarly, Corsin and Wedding (2011) observed that students begin to appreciate common needs or values and become sensitive to the differences and similarities among people. In other words, through Bibliotherapy technique, an individual will gain a better understanding of his/her own reactions, frustration, and conflict which can assist him/her for positive change in behaviour or attitude. In a related development, Tijms *et al.* (2017) noted that in clinical stance, patients seem to gain a more competitive understanding of their psychological and physiological reactions to frustration and conflict by the provision of information that was earlier lacking or misunderstood.

In a similar view, Tijms *et al.* (2017) opined that the Bibliotherapy approach which is been introduced above will help the students to touch, feel and sounds of stories for the first time which are key elements in fostering teaching and learning. Also, the use of bibliotherapeutic literature or media materials will also serve as valuable guides for classroom work and could prompt many students or clients to seek teacher help to discuss related problems. In the same line of taught, the author postulated the approach as strategies to assists individuals to gain greater relevant and self-knowledge, as well as opportunities for identification, clarification and insight

In another development, the study has shown that using the bibliotherapeutic technique for changing client's behaviour or attitudes positively requires certain basic principles, for instance, Kolo (2003) identified the following basic principles: That the reading materials to be used in Bibliotherapy must address a specific attitude at a time. That is, the reading material should be able to address one problem and solve it at a time; that the reading materials must be prepared or selected to match the language, cognitive and reading level of the clients or people concerned; that the reading materials must be provided constantly that is the reading materials which could be books, handouts and pamphlets must be programmed on regular basis until when the problem is well treated and the desired positive attitude change is noticed; that the form or type of Bibliotherapy initiated for use must be maintained throughout the period of the programme and it is advisable that the teacher using the Bibliotherapy materials need to know the audience that the material will be used for. That is, the teacher needs to know the category of the audience, whether it is going to be young students, adolescents or adults.

In a similar study by McCulliss (2012) highlighted the following principles for effective use of Bibliotherapy, such as follows: the principle of knowledge of the books or reading materials the teacher recommends. That is, the teacher should only refer the clients to the books and reading materials they are familiar with; the books or reading materials should be appropriate in content, age, experiences, and language level of the client; the teacher should show evidence of confidence in the suggested or recommended reading materials to interest the client and make sure that he/she accepts the ideas presented in it and timing principles, the teacher must ensure that his client properly understands and accepts the idea of reading a book or other materials at an appropriate time.

Bibliotherapy can assist children in building confidence and self-esteem. It attempts to normalize a child's world by offering coping skills and reducing their feeling of isolation, reinforcing creativity and problem-solving. It also gives parents an opportunity to discuss their children's issues with the children (Furner, 2004). Other advantages of bibliotherapy include teaching students to solve problems, help students cope with teasing, name-calling, mockery, fears, sexuality changes, anxiety, and death (Furner, 2004). Despite the limited research on bibliotherapy and its effects, many teachers have shown improved achievement and self-concept. Bibliotherapy has not been vastly researched to ensure that it will be successful for all students. It has many drawbacks according to Furner (2004) that include unavailable literature on certain topics that students may be struggling with, many students not being ready to face their issues and parents defensively implementing the therapy. The resistance of using bibliotherapy is based on a lack of assertiveness, negative attitudes, anxiety, depression, sexual dysfunctions, and negative behaviours (Furner, 2004). The major issue that lies behind bibliotherapy is lack of research that has been conducted on this therapy device. Today, healthcare workers and institutions recognize the wide and varied use of bibliotherapy within a range of scenarios. These experts are silent on gender difference as it regards bibliotherapy. Gender, however, have been found to moderate certain treatment outcomes on students maladaptive behaviour. For instance, Lewis (2000) used models with elementary pupils who were social isolates and found that behavioural group counselling was effective with those pupils who are socially isolated.

Truancy is an intentional act by schooling adolescents to stay away from school. Truancy is the act of staying away from school or leaving home on the pretext of going to school while roaming the street only to return home at the close of the school (Williams, 2000). It is an intentional act of refusing to go to school without any reason Fantuzzo (2005). The author further added that truancy is a multidimensional problem with far-reaching effects. A student who behaves in this way is being referred to as a truant. A truant is an individual who does not want to go to school but makes plans to do some other thing else (Ogbodo, 2004). When a student becomes a truant, he is not only hurting himself but also his family, school and community as well. (McCray and Mann, 2006) perceive truancy on the individual level as a complex system of the problem that to emotional maladjustment, poor academic achievement, school dropout, substance abuse and teen pregnancies of the students. Raby (2013), also perceives truancy as an insidious problem of school and communities because of its devastating effects. In view of Ogbodo (2004), truancy among schooling adolescents is a factor that has contributed largely not only to the poor performance of the students in the examination conducted internally and externally but also to the moral decadence prevalent among adolescents in secondary schools. Hopkins *et al.* (2011), noted that truancy is a problem that has many causative agents and the homes of the students are regarded as one. Ogbodo (2004), has identified some home factors as being responsible for students' truant behaviours. These home factors include defective discipline, disability of parents and broken homes among others. Lack of or inadequate guidance and counselling services in

schools have also been identified as one of the major factors responsible for truancy among students in secondary schools. It is one of the great delinquencies committed by an adolescent in that it often leads to unwanted behaviours such as maladjustment, poor academic performance, drugs abuse, and teenage pregnancy and so on.

Generally, the correlates of truancy fall into several categories. They include school factors such as a school's size, attitudes of administrators, teachers, and other students towards the degree to which a school is flexible in meeting the diverse cultural and learning styles of students as well as the manner in which a school deals with truancy. Family factors according to Ogbodo (2004) include lack of parental supervision and/or guidance, poverty, domestic violence, lack of familiarity with school attendance laws, and varied education priorities. Economic factors include lack of unemployment as well as students who live in single-parent households, have parents with multiple jobs, and whose families lack affordable transportation and/or childcare. While student factors include substance use, limited social and emotional competence, mental health problems, poor physical health, and lack of familiarity with school attendance laws.

In another study, Williams (2000), identified another family which includes defective discipline, disability of parents, and lack of affection, marital adjustment, and broken homes among others. He further observed that truancy adversely affects students' academic performance as well as their moral standard. It is one of the greatest delinquencies committed which often leads to unwanted behaviours such as maladjustment, poor academic performance, drugs abuse, and teenage pregnancies and so on. Generally, it is obvious that truancy is a problem that has many causative agents and homes of the students is regarded as one. The home of the child seriously contributes to his engagement in truancy. Hopkins *et al.* (2011); Maduabuchi (2013); Van-Breda (2014) and Musa (2014) suggested some of the problems of truancy such as lack of parental guidance, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of family support, domestic problems, broken homes, family commitments including care duties in the home are some of the factors that make children engage in truant behaviour. Adeyemi in Musa (2014), also opined that children who are not adequately monitored by their parents may show a variety of unhealthy symptoms in behaviours.

Furthermore, Chukwuka (2013), also sees truancy as absence from school for no legitimate reason and that truancy involves intentionally absents oneself from school without permission or leaving school without authorization and dodging of specific lesson periods. When one intentionally dodges going to school without any cogent reason, neither his neither parent nor school authority is aware it can be regarded as truancy. In a similar study carried out by Reid (2010); Maduabuchi (2013) suggested that children's need to catch up on homework or assessment tasks, illness, lack of social competence, mental health difficulties and physical health, lack of self-esteem, social skills and confidence; poor peer relations, lack of academic ability are some of the causes of truancy mainly coming from the student themselves. Musa (2014), was of the view that a child would rather prefer to spend most of his days in the midst of his peers where he would be happier and more relaxed and this gives room for undue peer influence particularly in antisocial behaviours like truancy. The school is expected to provide the conducive atmosphere for proper learning and teaching.

Occasional truancy behaviour, on the other hand, occurs when the in schooling adolescent does not constantly and continually absent him from school. While casual behaviour occurs when schooling adolescents' is absent from school by chance. This type of truancy or unexcused absence from school is not regular and constant but happens by chance. Truancy as a working definition in this study, therefore, is a situation when a child under sixteen years of age who is registered at the school fails to attend classes without prior formal permission from the parent or school authority. It is also a practice of staying away from school without permission. A child who engages in this act is therefore referred to as a Truant. This implies that every child is expected to be in school and must be present in school and class attendance regularly unless when a child is duly permitted to be absent in respect to health reasons or otherwise stated.

Behaviour is the way in which one acts or conducts oneself especially towards others or things. Behaviour is the manner in which a person acts or functions or operates that may be acceptable or unacceptable to the society where such a person lives (Dorland's Medical Dictionary, 2007). The author further added that behaviour is the observable responses or actions or activities emitted by someone. These observable responses or actions can be positive or negative.

From the viewer above, American Heritage Medical Dictionary (2007) noted that behaviour is the action or reaction of a person or animal in response to external or internal stimuli. External stimuli such as peer influence and internal stimuli such as hunger affect the manner in which a person behaves. In agreement with the above assertion, Mosby (2009) sees behaviour as any or all of the activities of a person including ones physical actions which are observed directly, and mental activity which is inferred or interpreted. The author further noted that behaviour is the manner in which a person acts or performs which include physical actions either learned or unlearned. The person's physical actions could be abnormal behaviour (any behaviour judged in relation to normal behaviour), social behaviour (a behaviour that is relative to others in ones group), and adaptive behaviour (behaviour that fosters effective or successful individual interaction with the environment) and contingent behaviour (behavioural action that is dependent upon a specific stimulus).

Contributing to the concept of behaviour, Nugent (2013) opine that behaviour is an action, activity or process which can be observed and measured. This implies that these actions, activities, and processes are initiated in response to stimuli which are either internal or external. In the context of this study, the behaviour is any action initiated by the in schooling adolescents that make them develop a negative attitude towards schooling. It is the type of behavioural abnormality that interferes with the schooling adolescents' attitudes towards schooling. These attitudes are unacceptable to parents, teachers and the society. The truant behaviour of the schooling adolescents

occurs when they often absent themselves from school without permission. The absence from school may range from once a week to twice a week or absence from school throughout a week or month.

Adolescence is the period that begins with puberty stage and ends at the age of eighteen or nineteen. Adolescence is a period of great storm and stress. It is believed to make adolescents fill youthful idealism and concerns about the sexual development that makes them exhibit turbulent behaviour (Hall, 2002). Longress (2000) describes adolescent as a young person growing into adulthood. Schooling adolescents, therefore, are those students who are in between adolescent hood and adulthood stage of life usually between the ages of 12 and 18 years and are still attending schools. Comfort (2011) added that speculations are rife that affect schooling adolescents not to concentrate on their learning which may influence them to be involved in schooling restiveness and delinquent behaviours.

These delinquent behaviours such as lying, truancy, stealing and destruction of property are relatively common at different points in the course of growth and development of the schooling adolescents (Comfort, 2011). These types of behaviours attract different punishments from the school authorities and when they are punished they tend to exhibit truant behaviours. Boys usually have their major growth spurt between the ages of 12 and 17. Adult size is reached between 17 to 20 years of age (Williams, 2000). For young adolescent males, the growth spurt is outwardly apparent in increased height and weight, and in muscular definition. Underarm and pubic hair growth is followed by the emergence of upper lip hair. Adolescent males are often embarrassed during classes when they call out answers because their voice cracks as it begins to deepen. Males are interested in the growth of their testes and their penis. Between the ages of 13 and 14, the testes grow rapidly; between 14 and 17, the penis typically doubles in size. Another indicator of puberty for males is the beginning of nocturnal emissions that accompany the development of their sex organs. For females, the enlargement of breasts and also pubic hairs appear between 13 and 15 years. When the in schooling adolescents begin to exhibit these characteristics, the adults will be on hand to guide them. If they are not well guided, they may engage in certain behaviours that may send them out of school. If they are not of school, they will not engage in the truant behaviour.

However, in some situations school assists in making schooling adolescents engage in one or more truant behaviours. For instance, in a situation where a school is having teachers who are harsh to students, where there is high level of bullying, un-conducive school environment, boredom, poor management, poor relations with teachers and in some cases irrelevance of the curriculum, there must be high tendency of truant behaviours from the adolescents (Baroccas, 2012; Chukwuka, 2013; Hopkins *et al.*, 2011; Reid, 2006). Schooling adolescents for this study are those adolescents who are between childhood and adulthood stage of life usually around ages of 12 to 18 years and are within the school setting.

School location simply means where the school is cited and whether it is cited in urban or rural areas. Driscoll *et al.* (2003), cited school location as the overall climate that can put schooling adolescents at risk to commit crimes. Contributing to school location, Epstein and Sheldon (2010) note that rural schools have a consistently higher report of absence rates than schools in urban areas. The author further noted that school policies and programmes influence school location that may push students out of school. Furthermore, school location and its specific truancy policies have been shown to greatly affect students desire to attend school more in urban than in rural areas (Hassan, 2008).

Furthermore, the influence of school location on the truant behaviour of schooling adolescent has been the concern of many researchers. Bello (2001), opined that school locations are known to influence the students learning through the quality of teaching staff, class size and availability of infrastructure. The choice and location of school site have been an indispensable aspect of any effective school planning. This is so because it is the site that can influence the type of the school to be built and the quality and quantity of the buildings. A child's environment that is rural or urban exerts considerable influence on his intellectual development, Oluremi (2013) pointed out that schools in rural areas are likely to face the problem of the truant behaviour of schooling adolescents due to the inequality in the provision of human and material resources required for the positive educational achievement. This, in turn, will perpetuate inequality of access to education provision of adequate number and quality of teachers, contents and methods of teaching. An urban child has an edge over the rural ones in terms of "life chances" such as better education and the socialization pattern (Malcolm *et al.*, 2003). There are three social classes that exist-higher, middle and lower social classes. The urban, higher and middle classes through improved "life chances are exposed to a better environment with access to libraries, adequate space, continuation classes and mass media. The rural adolescents are hardly exposed to those facilities because they are mainly from lower social class. As a result, adolescents from this background have low performance in their studies as a result of lack of faculties and learning materials. Uche in Okeke (2003), contends that in terms of facilities and structures, urban schools are worse because of very high enrollment figures. In urban schools, the facilities are grossly inadequate making it necessary to run a sort of shift system, especially in secondary schools. This has been strongly condemned as it does not make for effective teaching and learning.

Stressing the urban/rural inequality, Uche (2007) noted that because of lack of social amenities in the remote rural area, the teacher sent there do not like to stay even if they agree to work they prefer to live in towns and shuttle to such areas. Wright (1998) as cited by Ross (2015) said that the teacher is one of the most important factors in the child's environment that influences his academic performance. Some experts in the field have agreed that rural secondary schools are poorly staffed, with few professionally qualified teaching personnel. This poor staffing of rural secondary schools must have accounted for better performance of urban secondary schools. Oluremi (2013) conclude that rural students perform less than that of an urban student on the standardized test of educational achievement. This may be due to educational expenditure which is smaller in rural areas.

In another development, [Baker et al. \(2007\)](#), suggested that the size and location of school have a relationship with truancy levels in the school. The authors further stated that schools in large cities report higher truancy rates than those located in small cities. A school is a social institution designed for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers. It is set up with the main purpose of bringing students from different families together under one roof the classroom. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place without the coming together of the teacher and the learners – students ([Atsua and Abdullahi, 2015](#)). Furthermore, [Maynard et al. \(2013\)](#) clarify school as the level of basic education at which learners are expected to acquire proficiency in both academic and some applied subjects. The school location a working definition in this study is a place where students are expected to take the examination that will usher them to another level of education at various fields of training in the world of work. The school location is also, therefore, refers to an area where the schools are built in relation to the distance from residences of the learners and facilitators.

Gender is a concept that draws out the distinction between the males' roles and responsibilities and that of the females. Gender and sex are related due to the fact that they perform the same functions of categorizing people into male and female. Gender differs from sex because it deals more with the socio-cultural classification of male and female. While is biological differences between male and female as seen in the appearance of genitals, gender is the classification of male and female roles [Obasi \(2007\)](#). This classification is based on the societal norms and values that define the roles males and females play in society. Allen pointed out other determinants of gender including dress, gestures, occupation, social network and especially the roles played by the sexes in society. Research by [Okeke, \(2006\)](#) explained that gender is socially or culturally construed characteristics, qualities, behaviours and roles which different gender as the amount of masculinity or femininity found in societies ascribed to females and males. Unlike sex which in the approved process of socialization is dictated by the society. According to [Okoh \(2007\)](#) gender is a grammatical corresponding roughly to sex. Gender relates to the difference in sex (that is either male or female) and how this quality affects their dispositions and perception toward life and academic activities ([Okoh, 2007](#)). According to [Lee \(2001\)](#) gender is ascribed attributes that differentiates feminine from masculine socially. [Guinand and Lemessa \(2000\)](#), argued that on “gender-roles”, “gender stereotype”, “gender identities”. “Gender disparity”, imply that these are subject to social and cultural influences. Gender roles are those functions that are culturally allotted to individuals on the basis of their gender but are not related to biological functions. The roles are a set of expectations as to what ought to appropriate behaviour for men and women under particular circumstances. It is those functions that can be carried out by a man or a woman.

Furthermore, the assignment of such roles varies from culture to culture and over a period of time. For example, child rearing is allocated to women. It is a female gender role but not a female sex role since a man or a woman can carry out the functions. Also, household chores such as washing plates are allocated to women where as men can also do it. Gender roles contrast with sex roles such as carrying a pregnancy or breastfeeding that are exclusively female sex roles. Sex roles are those functions that a person requires certain biological female sex roles. Sex roles are those functions that a person requires certain biological characteristics in order to perform. It is those responsibilities or biological functions that needs a particular body organ in order to perform them; such roles carried out only by members of that particular sex gender stereotype is a constant attribution of certain social roles to men or women according to the traditional gender division of labour in a particular society even when such attributions are not built on reality or are discriminatory.

In view of the above, [Akers and Sellers \(2009\)](#) perceives gender as a short form of the complex variable of the societal difference between male and female individuals found in the society or community. Gender can also be regarded as the psycho-social aspect of maleness and femaleness ([Kim and Page, 2013](#)). In the same line of thought, [Heilbrunn \(2007\)](#) also see gender as a psychological construct associated with either male or female which results from social, physical and psychological traits. It is the characteristics and expected behaviours and roles of males and females which are determined and assigned to each sex. Gender is a controversial issue, In other words, it is an inconclusive issue due to reports from studies carried out on gender. For instance, ([Bell et al., 2001](#)), [Attwood and Croll \(2006\)](#) and [Ward \(2012\)](#) observed that truancy behaviours are more in boys than in girls, while [Millar \(2003\)](#) found females to exhibit truancy behaviours more than males. Therefore, ascertaining gender differences in schooling adolescents with truancy behaviours is very important because of its effect on the adolescents and the society. This study would therefore, investigate the influence of gender on truant behaviours of schooling adolescents and determine the interaction effect of bibliotherapy and gender on truant behaviours of schooling adolescents.

In order to modify the truant behaviours of these students, one needs to ascertain the efficacy of bibliotherapy. Therefore it will take great efforts to get students back to good reading culture. Reading can be therapeutic because the readers enter the world described in the pages of the good books and become involved with good characters in the books and gain insight and ideas from the books to solve their problems. The reading of literature may help readers identify a character, events or stories, either real or fictitious that could turn them off from truancy or any other anti-social behaviour. It is, therefore, imperative that bibliotherapy should be tried in order to determine its efficacy in reducing truancy behaviours of in- schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Over the past decade, truancy among schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria is a serious academic issue. A large number of youths in the state are involved in street hawking, Boko Haram, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse and political thuggery. These may not be unconnected to the increased truancy behaviours of schooling adolescents in the State. In the past, all efforts used by the school authorities to check truant behaviours of schooling adolescents

were tailored towards the identification of causes of truancy, use of punishment, penalty or fine to curb truancy and it had yielded no fruit. There is, therefore, a need to ascertain if bibliotherapy will help to reduce truancy. These truancy behaviours might have resulted in the increase in student's failure in exams, highly rate of dropping out of school and increase in anti-social behaviours.

Furthermore, the issues of gender and location have not been resolved since controversy exists over which gender (male or female schooling adolescents) exhibit truancy behaviours more and whether schooling adolescents located in urban areas exhibit more truancy behaviours than those located in rural areas. There seem to be no studies known to the researcher on the use of bibliotherapy to reduce truancy behaviours in schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria. Hence the problem of this study, therefore, put into question form is: What are the effects of the use of bibliotherapy on truancy behaviours of schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria? What is the influence of gender and location on student's truant behaviour?

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the effect of bibliotherapy on the truant behaviour of schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the influence of school location on truant behaviours of schooling adolescents.
2. Determine the interaction effect of treatment and gender on schooling adolescents' truant behaviours.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of school location on the truant behaviour of schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria?
2. What is the interaction effect of treatments and gender on schooling adolescents in North West Nigeria?

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted quasi-experimental research design. The study was conducted in the North Western Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 824 SSII schooling adolescents identified with truancy behavioural problems from Tudun Wada and Dala Education Zones, comprises of 489 male and 335 female schooling adolescents from 72 secondary schools in the two selected zones. The researcher used class attendance register to identify schooling adolescents with truancy behaviours from 42 secondary schools in Dala zone (urban) and 30 secondary schools from Tudun Wada zone (rural). The sample size of 296 SSII schooling adolescents identified with truancy behaviours was used for the study. The researcher used purposive sampling through dual-stage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A contains the demographic information about the schooling adolescents such as gender and school location while Section B contains twenty items for measuring Schooling Adolescents' Truancy Behaviours. SATQ is a modified Likert-type questionnaire with four response options of strongly agree =SA, agree to =A, disagree = D and strongly disagree = SD. The response options were scored as follows: SA=4, A=3, D=2 and SD=1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts drawn from Department of Educational Foundations (Special Education Unit), University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies, Kano State and Department of Psychology, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. The experts' comments, corrections and suggestions helped in modifying the items of the instrument used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha reliability method and reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. Mean and the standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

3.1. Research Question One

What is the influence of school location on the truancy behaviour of schooling adolescents?

Table-1. Mean and standard deviation of urban and rural school schooling adolescents' truancy behaviour

School Location	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Loss Scores	Mean Loss Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Urban	166	55.01	13.25	34.86	8.89	20.15	7.23
Rural	130	60.47	14.20	33.09	7.95	27.38	

Result in Table 1 revealed that at the pre-test, urban school schooling adolescents had mean truancy behaviour ratings of 55.01 with a standard deviation of 13.25 while their rural counterpart had mean truancy behaviour ratings of 60.47 with the standard deviation of 14.20. At the post-test, urban school schooling adolescents had mean truancy behaviour ratings of 34.86 and standard deviation of 8.89 while rural counterpart had mean truancy behaviour ratings of 33.09 with the standard deviation of 7.95. The mean loss score of the urban school schooling adolescents was 20.15 while the mean loss score of the rural school schooling adolescents was 27.38. The result, therefore, shows

that urban school schooling adolescents had a reduced mean truancy behaviour compared to their rural counterpart. This can be seen from a mean loss score difference of 7.23 in favour of the urban school schooling adolescents.

3.2. Research Question Two

What is the interaction effect of treatments and gender on schooling adolescents' truancy behaviours?

Table-2. Mean and standard deviation of the interaction effect of treatments and gender on schooling adolescents' truancy behaviours

Groups	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Experimental Group	Male	64	30.69	7.65
	Female	107	29.93	8.41
Control Group	Male	60	39.87	5.65
	Female	65	38.92	5.91

The result of the analysis in Table 2 revealed that male schooling adolescents exposed to the experimental group (bibliotherapy) had lower mean truancy behaviour ratings of 30.69 and a standard deviation of 7.65 while male schooling adolescents in the control group had a mean truancy behaviours ratings of 39.87 with the standard deviation of 5.65. On the other hand, female schooling adolescents exposed to experimental group had a lower mean truancy behaviour rating of 29.93 and a standard deviation of 8.41 while female schooling adolescents in the control group had a mean truancy behaviour rating of 38.92 with the standard deviation of 5.91. The results do not suggest ordinal interaction effect between treatments and gender on schooling adolescents' truancy behaviour. This was because, at all the levels of gender, the mean truancy behaviour ratings were lower for schooling adolescents' in the experimental group than those in the control group.

4. Discussion

4.1. Influence of School Location on Truancy Behaviour of Schooling Adolescents

The result of the findings revealed that school location is not a significant factor in the mean truancy behaviour of schooling adolescents; though urban schooling adolescents had a reduced mean truancy behaviour compared to their rural counterpart. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) shows no significant difference in the mean truancy behaviour of urban and rural schooling adolescents. This shows that the lower mean truancy behaviour ratings recorded by urban schooling adolescents as earlier obtained were due to other factors. The factors may be attributed to "life chance" factor. This statement is in line with the views of Malcolm *et al.* (2003) who opined that an urban child has an edge over the rural ones in terms of "life chances" such as better education and the socialization pattern.

The result indicated that both urban and rural schooling adolescents' benefited from bibliotherapy method of reducing truancy behaviour. The result of none significant difference in the mean truancy behaviour of urban and rural schooling adolescents obtained from the study was not surprising because truancy according to Gesinde (2004) is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that can occur in both urban and rural schools. Nevertheless, the reason for urban schools students to reduce truancy behaviour may be attributed to the following factors; learners with poor or conflicting relationships with teachers such as when the teacher teases or labels learners cause the learners not to attend school. The learner's self-esteem would be lowered and as such the learner will avoid attending some lessons of such teachers. Harsh punishment from teachers, for example, corporal punishment or sexual abuse were said to cause some rural learners to absent themselves from lessons. Teaching methods and styles if they are not, for example, child centered, interesting and if the teacher is not well versed in his or her content this can lead to boredom and some students can miss some lessons. The above factors can highly be seen in the rural school.

4.2. Interaction Effect of Treatments and Gender on Schooling Adolescents' Truancy Behaviours

The findings of the study with respect to the interaction effect of treatments and gender on schooling adolescents' truancy behaviours revealed no significant interaction effect of treatments and gender. The male and female schooling adolescents exposed to bibliotherapy group reduced their truancy behaviour than male and female schooling adolescents in the control group. The result implies that schooling adolescents' truancy behaviour across gender was consistent. This is an indication that both male and female schooling adolescents benefited significantly from the treatment.

The result, therefore, suggests ordinal interaction effects between modes of treatment and gender on schooling adolescents' truancy behaviour. Among the empirical studies and literature reviewed, no study investigated the interaction effect of treatments and gender as investigated in this study which would have given the basis of comparison of the findings. However, this study will add to the literature to help other researchers who will wish to investigate in the related topic.

5. Conclusion/Recommendations

It is concluded that in order to modify the truant behaviours of schooling adolescents, one needs to ascertain the efficacy of bibliotherapy. Therefore it will take great efforts to get students back to good reading culture. Also, reading can be therapeutic because the readers enter the world described in the pages of the good books and become involved with good characters in the books, gain insight and ideas from the books to solve their problems. Moreso,

the reading of literature may help readers identify a character, events or stories, either real or fictitious that could turn them off from truancy or any other anti-social behaviour. It is based on this premise that; some recommendations were proffered by the researchers in the study, such as: federal and state Ministries of Education to organize and sponsor workshops and seminars for special educators, educational psychologists and school guidance counsellors on how to implement bibliotherapy training techniques in schools for reduction of truancy behaviour among schooling adolescents. Also, special educators, guidance counsellors, educational psychologists, and curriculum planners should plan a programme of intervention based on the bibliotherapy techniques for schooling adolescents.

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