

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF TRUANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study investigated the psychological correlates of truancy among secondary school students. A sample size of 339 (three hundred and thirty-nine) SS 2 secondary school students were drawn using purposive sampling technique. The research adopted a correlational design and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical tool. Three research questions and corresponding hypotheses were stated for investigation. The instrument for attitude to school, self-concept and locus of control measured 0.68, 0.64 and 0.72 respectively. The result of the study revealed that there was a positive correlation between students' attitude to school and truancy, a weak negative correlation between self-concept and truancy, a strong positive correlation exists between locus of control and truancy. It is recommended that federal and state ministry of education should include moral education in the school curriculum.*

**KEYWORDS:** Truancy, Attitude to School, Self-Concept, Locus of Control (internal and External)

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### INTRODUCTION

Truancy is the practice of being absent from school or work place without permission. In this study truancy will be discussed in respect to absence from regular or compulsory school attendance by students. Truancy is any intentional unauthorized or illegal absence from compulsory education. It is absence caused by students of their own free will and usually does not refer to legitimate excused absence. Truancy is a complex and serious problem that seldom occurs in isolation. It often appears along with other school, community and home problems. Esifiho, E.I. (1997) pointed out that the students are responding to the trend of events in the society of which they are members. Also Raven's in Asibor (2002) most significant findings is that pupils disenchantment is strongly related to expectations of their future social destinations that is, job, career interests and others. He commented that 'if students don't like school, it is because they cannot see the relevance of what they are doing in school'.

The reason student's skip school will be different depending on the circumstances of each student. Sometimes a student will skip school because he feels unsafe at school or on their way to or from school, other students may skip school because of family issues, financial demands, substance abuse, or mental health problems. Youth Truancy in America (ask.com 2014). A student could become a truant as a result of boredom with lessons; for example a student may decide that school offers him a little of what he want to know or do. Consequently because his parents wish him to attend school, he may consciously set out to deceive them by pretending to be going off to school every morning while he is in reality starting off for somewhere else. It is quite amazing to see a child leave his home with the intention of going to school, wandering about on the street, in uncompleted buildings doing such things as smoking 'wee wee' (marijuana), gambling and in most cases fondling with their fellow female students when they are supposed to be in school. Difficulties were encountered with school adults; the worst experiences were with classroom teachers whom the students perceived as unfriendly authoritative and unresponsive to their learning needs.

The objective of education cannot be achieved in the lives of such students if the problem of truancy is not clip at the nib. One of the steps towards this is to carry out an investigation to identify some of the factors that could be related to truancy. In education, there is a direct link between attendance and achievement. If the students are not in school, they are unlikely to be learning. They are surely not doing something that is profitable to the society. Some parents and guardians of the students are workers in public and private organizations while others are business men, women, petty traders and farmers. In most cases, the parents and guardians have little time to give proper attention to their children or wards. They do not check their school performances and what goes on during those periods they come back from school. Some of the parents are either divorced or separated and bare the responsibilities of the children/wards alone. Sometimes the children are taken to relatives or grandparents who are not equally available for the children or wards. Some parents either of the two may be employed with an oil company which make them to travel out of the home for weeks and even months, such parents give or spoil the children with huge amounts of money without moral, social and educational guardians.

It is observed by the researcher that some students from these homes are mostly truants. They absent themselves from school without good reasons and they are seen with their uniforms in beer parlours, restaurants and gambling venues. They do not care about the consequences of their actions. Some of them engage in various unscrupulous activities such as pick pocketing, gambling, smoking, drug abuse, fighting on the streets with dangerous weapons and cult activities. A considerable number of truant students engage in daily paid jobs or do something else like bus conductor, hawking of pure water, gala, dodo, and the like along busy streets and express ways. A typical example is the researchers experience at Otowvodo Grammar school. A student who is supposed to be in school left the school compound in company of his friends to go and pluck mango from a nearby compound. As they took turn to climb and pluck the mango, they did not see a snake on one of the branches, before they could climb down the snake bit one of them. The others ran away leaving him there. Before they could call for help the venom had spread over his body. That was how he lost his life. When he was taken to the hospital, we tried to contact his parents and it was told that he lived with a relative who had travelled to another village for business. On further investigation it was discovered that the boy had been a perpetual truant who was never in school for most of the term. This nature of truancy may have some psychological undertone. So as a result of the above and other observed experiences, the researcher decided to find out what psychological factors may be responsible for truancy. Richard, G, (2010) postulated that psychological, social and institutional factors are responsible for truancy. They asserted that the truants are characterized by laziness, low intelligence, low academic performance and anti-social behavior.

The study anchored on the attitude of the student to school, self-concept of students, Locus of control of the student and if the student is extraverted or introverted. Attitude could be described as one's personal feelings towards an issue. Attitude is not tangible, that is they cannot be seen or held with the hands, they are inferred from the behaviour of the individuals which can be verbal or non-verbal. Attitude is either positive or negative. In schools students acquire a lot of attitude as a result of their experiences in their social and physical environment. It can also be described as the various components which the individual possesses, the cognitive components which consist of the beliefs of the individual about an object.

According to Gozali, H. Clearly, U. O. & Walter, P. L. (1973).attitude is the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology. Yakubu as cited in (Amadi 1998) indicated that behaviour disorders stem from positive or negative self-concept.

Nevertheless one with high or positive self-concept is less prejudiced and more willing to interact with himself than the person who possesses a low or negative self-concept. If adolescents have poor interpersonal relationship with teachers and peers they may tend to be isolated into a world of their own, become anti-social, unable to interact and consequently learning suffers.

Rotters (2013) describe locus of control to be the way we attribute the sources of factors controlling our behavior, actions, achievement or failure. Locus of control is either internal or external. A person who is internal in locus of control is a person who feels that he/she is in control of his or her fate (success or failure) is within him or her. Some students who have internal locus of control ascribe their success or failure to themselves, while those with external locus of control ascribe their failure or success to other people or destiny.

Zue in (Emejuru 1998) in his Biases and Error theory of Locus of control asserts that systematic biases and errors often affect people causal ascription motivationally and cognitively. These are characterized by a tendency to form and hold beliefs that serve the individuals needs and desires. A person is internal in control is a person who feels that he/she is in control of his/her fate(success or failure) is within him/her, while the one with external attribute success or failure to other people.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of this study is to find out the psychological correlates of truancy among secondary school students. In specific terms, the study intends to:

1. To find out the relationship between truancy and attitude to school,
2. To find out the relationship between truancy and self-concept and;
3. Examine the relationship between truancy and locus of control.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between students' attitude to school and truancy among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between self-concept and truancy among secondary school students.
3. There is no significant relationship between locus of control and truancy among secondary school students.

### **RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURES**

This study involved 339 participants from senior secondary school students (ss 2). There were selected using simple random sampling technique to make up the sample for the study. Two adapted instrument were used to collect data for the study. They include Akingboye Personality Inventory and Likert four point scale. The test had the following reliability attitude to school  $r = (0.68)$ , self-concept  $r = (0.64)$  and locus of control  $r = (0.72)$ .

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique adopted in this study was Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical tool, mean, standard deviation and z-test.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between students' attitude to school and truancy among secondary school students.

**Table 1: showing the relationship between Attitude Of Students And Truancy among Secondary School Students**

N= 339	Students' Attitude (x)	Truancy (y)	Decision
$r_{xy} = 0.23$	$\sum X = 13769$	$\sum Y = 13493$	Reject the null Hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> ) /Z cal />/ z tab/ (4.18 > 1.96) Statistically Significant
$z_{cal} = 4.18$	$\sum X^2 = 563871$	$\sum Y^2 = 542043$	
Critical table value = $\pm 1.96$	$\sum XY = 549133$	$\sum XY = 549133$	
	$\bar{X} = 40.62$ ; SD = 3.69	$\bar{Y} = 39.8$ ; SD = 3.84	

The z-ratio is the value of z calculated; DF = 339-2 = 337;  $\infty = 0.05$

Table 1 of the study is presented in line with the hypothesis testing procedure for a simple correlation study. The test was conducted with the sample size of 337, sum of product ( $\sum XY$ ) = 549133, correlation coefficient (r) of 0.23, mean scores of 40.62 and 39.8 for students' attitude and truancy (X and Y) respectively. The value of sum of squares for x and y are 563871 and 542043; and sum of scores of 13769 and 13493 respectively. The values of calculated z and critical table are 4.18 and 1.96 respectively. Based on the result, the calculated z is greater than critical value; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between attitude of students and truancy among secondary school students.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and truancy among secondary school students.

**Table 2: Showing the Correlation between Self-Concept and Truancy among Secondary School Students**

N= 339	Self Concept (x)	Truancy (y)	Decision
$r_{xy} = -0.061$	$\sum X = 13898$	$\sum Y = 13493$	Accept the null hypothesis (H <sub>0</sub> ) /z cal/ </ z tab/ (-1.11 < 1.96). Not Statistically Significant.
Cal z tab value = -1.11	$\sum X^2 = 578406$	$\sum Y^2 = 542043$	
Crit table value = $\pm 1.96$	$\sum XY = 552774$	$\sum XY = 552774$	
	$\bar{X} = 41.0$ ; SD = 5.05	$\bar{Y} = 39.8$ ; SD = 3.48	

The z-ratio is the value of z calculated; DF = 339-2 = 337;  $\infty = 0.05$

Table 2 documents the result of the second hypothesis tested in this study. The test was conducted with 339 numbers of paired scores and sum of product ( $\sum XY$ ) of 552774. The coefficient correlation ( $r$ ) is -0.061, mean scores of self concept and truancy are 41.0 and 39.8 their values of sum of squares are 578406 and 542043 respectively. The calculated- $z$  value is -1.11 and the critical is 1.96. This indicates that the calculated  $z$ -value is less than the critical value; hence, the null hypothesis is retained, implying therefore, that there is no significant relationship between self-concept and truancy among secondary school students.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between locus of control and truancy among secondary school students.

**Table 3: showing the Correlation between Locus of Control and Truancy among Secondary School Students**

	Locus of Control (x)	Truancy (y)	Decision
N = 339	$\sum X = 13491$	$\sum Y = 13493$	Reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) / $z$ cal/ >/ $z$ tab (13.27>1.96). Statistically significant
$r_{xy}=0.73$	$\sum X^2 = 545551$	$\sum Y^2 = 542043$	
Cal. $z$ table value = 13.27	$\sum XY = 541760$	$\sum XY = 541760$	
Crit table value = $\pm 1.96$	$\bar{X}=39.8$ ; SD = 5.05	$\bar{Y}= 39.8$ ; SD = 3.48	

The  $z$ -ratio is the value of  $z$  calculated;  $DF = 339-2 = 337$ ;  $\alpha = 0.05$

The sum of squares is 54551 and 542043 for locus of control and truancy respectively. The result produced calculated  $z$  table value of 13.27 and critical 1.96, which demands the rejection of the null hypothesis because the value of the calculated  $z$ -is greater than the critical value implying that the result is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is, therefore a significant relationship between locus of control and truancy among secondary school students.

## DISCUSSION

This study established that the attitude of students' to school have no statistical significance with truancy but if students eventually change their behavior there is tendency that such a student might eventually become truant. It is established that an increase in self-concept is related to a decrease in truancy.

This study has also established the fact that student with external locus of control is very likely to be a truant, so it is advised to always look inward in order to solve problems of truancy.

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