

Effect of Peer and Family Relations on Truancy in Public Sector Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of the current study was to examine the effect of peer and family relations on truancy among truants. Within the present study, the survey research design was used. The sample included males (n = 150) and females (n = 150) truants from different universities, colleges, and schools. The sample was approached through purposive convenient sampling. To collect data and access information from participants' Index of Peer Relations (Hudson, 1992), the Index of Family Relations (Hudson, 1992), and the Truant Behavior Questionnaire (Scott, 1996) were used. The collected data were collected through a standardized process and analyzed through the SPSS-23 version. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, Regression analysis, and independent-sample t-test were applied to test the hypothesis. The finding indicated that peer and family relations negatively predict truancy. Another finding indicated that there were no gender differences among male and female truants among study variables.

INTRODUCTION

Truancy is an important topic of educational psychology. When it comes to the Pakistani viewpoint of truancy is concerned some researchers have been carried out (Ambreen, 2012; Aqeel, 2012; Tahira, 2011; Zahra, 2012) that has attempted to discover the role of psychosocial issues and results associated with school truancy. For instance, research on the function of apparent parenting styles and societal adjustment has proposed that students who have been truants suffered lesser societal adjustment or adaptation as in the comparison to students who have been high achievers and punctual. Pupils who are truants felt their parents were even more permissive than high achievers and punctual pupils (Tahira, 2011). Another study discovered the role of parental school participation and difficulties encountered by pupils and discovered a substantial connection to punctuality and truancy. A comparable study on truancy discovered that character trait, paternal school participation (Aqeel, 2012).

As per Henry's (2007) study, many foundations or family-related factors are related to delinquency. Thusly, family mediations would be suitable to consider. In an ongoing report on eighth and tenth-grade understudy non-attendance, Henry (2007) associated family factors with truant conduct. Henry's investigation delineates that the lower the dad's training, the more probable the kid is to submit delinquency. The possibility the kid

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would submit delinquency was significantly higher if the mother was a secondary school dropout. Furthermore, Henry's work demonstrates that the more extended a youngster is solo after school, the more probable that kid is to turn into a truant; 29.9% of truants were unaided for five hours or more after school while just 11.3% of truants were never solo after school. When all is said in done, past investigations have highlighted three wide and essential classifications that conceivably add to delinquency: family factors, singular factors, and school factors (Cook, Sigman, & Nugent, 2001; Ringer, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Jones & Lovrich, 2011).

In an ongoing report on truant guilty parties in the juvenile equity framework, Zhang, et al. (2007) connected delinquency to family unit pay. They set up that minors that are first alluded to the juvenile equity framework will, in general, be all the more monetarily devastated, with a moderately higher level of families making under \$15,000 every year than they are routinely going to peers. That is, understudies are bound to show delinquency on the off chance that they live in families that net under \$15,000 every year. As per Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett, and Wilson (2010), the foundations for delinquency can be situated inside four significant classes. These classes incorporate family factors, school factors, financial impacts, and understudy factors. Bosworth (1994) detailed that the school workforce, as a rule, ascribes delinquency to individual, family, and network factors beyond their ability to do anything about it, which leads to misery and absence of exertion to change factors. Similarly, Ezekwugo (2005) remarks that the education and training of kids begin in the house, and where this is appropriately performed, the groundwork set in the home, the school shall not find it hard to proceed to school appropriately. Moreover, the writer emphasizes that in most situations, the spores of truancy are set out in the home. Odueze (2017), claims that for learning to be genuine and efficient, there must be sensible collaboration among school and home. Zimchek (2009) and Ezekwugo (2005) suggested that the planting of truancy is set out in the home. Bad home upbringing might express themselves at school in the shape of truancy. They focus on the necessity for sensible coordination among the school and home for some serious and productive confronting of the truancy issue.

Ambreen (2012) and Zahra (2012) noticed that temperament and peer control played a major role in moving youngsters further towards truancy. Zahra (2012) performed a research analyst focused on focus group conversations and noticed that the condition was very prominent in males compared with female students. Reid (2005) while leading the study in regards to causes, perspectives, and qualities of school non-appearance and truancy, he found that peer gathering, relations with instructors, educational plan configuration, family foundation, and abuse are the components that add to truancy. The class fellows and peer groups have sound effects on the pupil's truancy. When the kid liberates themselves from the reliance and supervision of parents as well as the other adults, he sinks back to his peers, for control and supervision. According to Eremie's (2015) point of view, peer group members do put inside their personal feeling and then continue to pursue the rules of peers to stay in the group. Because of this attachment and strong feeling, peers' group has usually been seen as the vehicle over which pupils involve in truant behavior.

Another investigation to announce that the need for a pupil to compare and enjoy by his peer gathering may carry the student into an encounter with his family individuals. This sensitive youthful student is anxious to satisfy his companions and to protect the notoriety in seeing his one-of-a-kind age. This normally takes the students to enter in the demonstration of leaving all the things he is intended to do like joining classes and begin to work starting with one spot then onto the next in the mission of any place he will get cash to be like his peer gathering. On the off chance that this happens, the understudy never going to comprehend what's going on in the school because of the way that he is continually avoiding the school classes (Dewey and Humber, 2006). Punitive approaches, though indefensible, are understandable. People unconnected with school often have little appreciation of 1) the intense pressure on administrators; 2) the effects of inadequate resources; 3) the desperation and futility experienced by school officials when selecting a punitive approach. Unless the overall school, family, parents, and peer context is addressed, long-term resolution cannot prevail (Hakin, 2018).

The purpose of the present study was to examine the impact of peer relations and family relations on truancy among truants. This study will address a major gap in the knowledge concerning peer relations and family relations and truant truancy among truant students. No studies have been conducted that evaluate the impact of peer relations and family relations on truancy among truants in Pakistan. The skills that are learned from this study may enhance the ability of the professionals to work effectively with this population. About the Pakistani truancy context, few kinds of research have been carried (Ambreen, 2012; Aqeel, 2012; Tahira, 2011; Zahra, 2012) that aimed to investigate the function of psychosocial elements and school truancy-related outcomes. Research on the position of perceived parental patterns and social change, for instance, indicated that students who've been truants might have less social adaptation as opposed to students who have been high performers and punctual students.

Furthermore, truant pupils viewed their parents as even more permissive than high performers and punctual pupils (Tahira, 2011). Aqeel (2012) noticed the function of parental school engagement and the challenges children experienced and noticed a substantial connection to punctuality and truancy factors. Related truancy research showed the personality characteristics, the role of parental engagement in school. But no study was done to explore the effect of peer relations and family relations on truancy among truants. No study was conducted which explored the effect of the whole family relationship on truancy. No research was conducted to explore gender differences among peer relations, family relations, and truancy in Pakistan.

Rather, it becomes apparent that many interacting variables must be considered; hence this exploratory descriptive study will examine the effect of peer and family relations on truancy among truants. It is beyond the scope of this study to deal with the many philosophical questions and value-laden issues existing regarding truancy. Thus, the present study attempts to give priority to two variables: Peer relations and family relations that might prove useful to the professionals working directly with this population. The school is a social foundation with which all individuals have had some understanding. It is both legitimate and mandatory

in its very nature requiring a sensible and scholastic accomplishment as well as normal participation. The necessity of ordinary participation at school for all youths between specific ages is nevertheless one of the cutoff points set by society in light of a legitimate concern for the individual and the network.

This study stresses the importance of recognition of the significance of the "school leavers" family, even when the relationship is conflicting, tenuous, or estranged. We must understand that the "school leavers" as part of the formal developmental processes of the student are struggling to establish his/her own identity and emancipate from the family. For some of the "school leavers," the act of truancy may even be motivated in part by a desire to establish an adult identity by becoming a dropout. Hence, the dilemma: the developmental need to separate from family, and to become involved with peers. The dilemma heightens the sense of anxiety, crisis, conflicts not only for the "school leavers" but for the family as well. This study is significant in that the findings of the study could be beneficial to the school, social workers, psychologists, parents, teachers, and school administrators in dealing with truants. The problem of truancy has serious implications for society, both in humanitarian and economic terms, this study is significant because it devotes itself only to how the truant perceives the impact of peer relations and family relations on their (truant) behaviour.

The objectives of the study included 1) to examine the effect of family relations on truancy among truants and 2) to investigate the effect of peer relations on truancy among truants. The study hypothesized that 1) peer relations are likely to negatively predict truancy among truants and 2) family relations are likely to negatively predict truancy among truants.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Participants

Within the present study, a survey research design was used by utilizing standardized scales or questionnaires. It was considered that survey design be the best appropriate design for the current research to investigate the effect of peer and family relations on truancy among truants. The sample has consisted of 300 truant male (n=150) and female (n=150) students from different educational institutes of Punjab. The age range of the sample from 12 years to 25 years and older. The sampling technique adopted for the study was the purposive convenience sampling technique. 350 forms were distributed among different universities, colleges, and schools' students out of which 300 forms were returned. The return rate of the questionnaire was 85%.

2.2. Instruments

The Index of Family relations was used to measure the degree, severity and nature, and degree of the problem with their family members, especially with parents and children. This scale was originally developed by Hudson (1992). The IFR is comprised of 25 items. This index is comprised of the 7-point rating scale. Each item/statement is scored according to the following 7 categories '1' as "none of the time", '2' as "very rarely" '3' as "the little of the time". '4' as "some of the time, '5' as "a good part of the time", '6' as "most of

the time” and ‘7’ as “all of the time”. Some of the items, 1,2,4,5,8,14,15,17,18,20,21 and 23 are positive statements, Others are negative to partly control for the response set bias. The maximum item score is 7 and the cutoff score is 30. The scale consistently achieves an Alpha coefficient of .90. The scale has been investigated concerning the content, construct, factorial, and known groups validity. It nearly always achieves validity coefficients of .60 or greater.

The truant represents a strong relation to their peers. Peer relations were measured through a self-reported measure named as Index of Peer Relations. IPR was developed by Walter W. Hudson, 1992. It comprised of 25 items, about the peer group influence and the nature of the subject company. This index is compromised of the 7-point rating scale. Each item/statement is scored according to the following 7 categories ‘I’m as “none of the time”, ‘2’ as “very rarely” '3' as “the little of the time”. '4' as “some of the time, ‘5’ as “a good part of the time”, ‘6’ as “most of the time” and ‘7’ as “all of the time”. Some of the items, 1,4,7,8,11,12,15-18,21 and 22 are positive statements, all other statements are negative to somewhat control for the response set bias. The maximum item score is 7 and the cutoff score is 30. The scale consistently achieves an Alpha coefficient of .94. The scale has been investigated concerning the content, construct, factorial, and known groups validity. It nearly always achieves validity coefficients of .60 or greater.

Truancy was measured through a self-reported measure named as Truant Behavior Questionnaire. TBQ was developed by Scott in 1996. It is comprised of 10 items. This questionnaire is comprised of the 4-point rating scale. Each item/statement is scored following the following 4 categories ‘I’m as “never”, ‘2’ as “seldom” '3' as “usually” and '4' as “always”. Item 9 and 10 are positive statements; all other statements are negative to somewhat control for the response set bias. The maximum item score is 4. The Cronbach alpha value of the questionnaire is .79

2.3. Procedure

First, permission was sought from the head of a department for the data collection. The participants in this study were individually contacted after making sure that they met the criteria for participating in the study. At the start of the data collection process, the researchers collected data personally by going to the educational institutes but in between my data collection process, COVID-19 pandemic situation arises due to which it was impossible to directly go and collect data so the researchers decided to collect the remaining data by online google forms and by telephonic interviews. They were informed about the purpose of the research and have been provided with detailed guidelines regarding the format of the response and the completion of the scales. After that, informed consent was taken from them to fulfil the ethical requirements of the study according to APA ethical guidelines. Then the scales were administered to them to collect the data. There was no time limit and participants and the participants were invited to answer honestly and openly. The confidentiality of their information was ensured and there had no time restriction for the completion of scales to obtain the desired personal information. No incentives were offered to the participants. They have completed the questionnaire were collected personally. The participants were assured about privacy and confidentiality. In the end, the

participants of the study have been apprised for their cooperation and support of the study. The 350 forms were distributed to collect data. A total of 300 forms were collected back in data collection. So, the response rate of this study was 86%. After data collection statistical analysis was done to test the hypothesis, on basis of that analysis some hypothesis was rejected, and others were accepted.

RESULTS

3.1. Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	150	50
Female	150	50
Age		
12-17 years	101	33.7
18-24 years	98	32.7
25 years and older	101	33.7
Education		
Matric	62	20.7
Intermediate	66	22.0
Graduation	55	18.3
Masters	61	20.3
Higher Education	56	18.7
Socioeconomic Status		
Lower Class	113	37.7
Middle Class	97	32.3
Higher Class	90	30

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of participants concerning gender, age, education, and socioeconomic status. The number of male students ($n=150$, 50%) who participated in the study was equal in number to female students ($n=150$, 50%). Several students of age range 12-17years ($n=101$, 33.7%) were the same as of age range 25 years and older ($n=101$, 33.7%), and age range 18-24years students ($n=98$, 32.7%) were smaller in number as compared to all other age groups. Greater number of students from educational level of intermediate ($n=66$, 22%) as compared to matric ($n=62$, 20.7%), masters ($n=61$, 20.3%), higher education ($n=56$, 18.7%), and graduation level students ($n=55$, 18.3%) were smaller in number as compare to all other education levels. Number of students participated in the study belongs to lower socioeconomic status ($n=113$, 33.7%) was higher in as compare to middle class ($n= 97$, 32.3%) and upper-class students ($n=90$, 30%).

3.2. Table 2: Psychometric Properties and Correlations in Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	Cronbach's α	1	2	3
1. Peer relations	89.97	12.25	25-129	.73	-		
2. Family relations	142.27	25.62	57-175	.93	.28**	-	
3. Truant behavior	16.93	3.76	10-33	.88	-.16**	-.13*	-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The Cronbach's α value for index of peer relation scale was .73 ($> .70$) which indicate satisfactory internal consistency. The Cronbach's α value for index of family relations scale and truant behavior questionnaire were .93 and .88 ($> .80$) respectively which indicated higher internal consistency. Peer relation has significant positive correlation with family relation ($r = .28, p < .01$) and significant negative correlation with truancy ($r = -.16, p < .01$). Family relation has significant negative correlation with truancy ($r = -.13, p < .05$).

3.3. Table 3: Regression Coefficient of Peer Relations and Family Relations on Truancy

Variables	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Constant	22.52***		1.77
Peer Relation	-.40**	-.13	.18
Family Relation	-.14**	-.23	.09
R^2	.28		

Note. $N = 300$.

Multiple Regression analysis was computed with peer relations and family relations as predictor variables and truancy as the outcome variable. The R^2 value of .28 indicates that 28% variance in the dependent variable can be accounted for, by the predictors with $F(2, 297) = 5.75, p < .01$. The findings indicate that peer relations ($\beta = -.13, p < .01$) and family relations ($\beta = -.23, p < .01$) have significant negative effect on truancy among truants.

DISCUSSION

The current research was aimed to explore the effect of peer and family relations on truancy among truants. Peer relations and family relations were taken as independent variables whereas truancy was considered a dependent variable. The first hypothesis of the present study indicated "peer relations have a significantly negative impact on truancy among truants" was supported as the finding indicates that peer relations have a significant negative correlation with truancy. To see whether peer relations predict truancy among truants, regression analysis was conducted and the findings indicate that peer relations have a significant negative effect on truancy among truants. Numerous researches have been shown that

peer relation is a significant negative predictor of truancy among truants. Khoza (1997) noticed peers interested in truants sometimes wind up playing truant. When researching the causes, attitudes, and characteristics of school absenteeism and truancy, Reid (2005) found peer-group relationships to be factors leading to truancy. Truancy in some cases begins with negative peer control (Wilcox 2003). Research conducted by Smith (1996) indicates that certain students are truants due to challenges and conflict in peer relationships. The regular students reported that they got along well with their peers as compared to truants (Scott, 1996). According to a study by Khoza (1997), the students who bully by their peer group tend to be truants and attend school less regularly than other students. Students with poor peer relationships may experience school difficulties like absenteeism and poor academic performance (Curtis, 2008).

The second hypothesis of the present study indicated “family relations have a significantly negative impact on truancy among truants” was supported as the results indicate that family relations have a significant negative correlation with truancy. To see whether family relations predict truancy among truants, regression analysis was conducted, and results indicate that family relations have a significant negative effect on truancy among truants. This hypothesis is accepted. Previous researchers have identified three specific and key categories that may lead to truancy that involves family relationships (Baker, Sigman, & Nugent, 2001; Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Jones & Lovrich, 2011). Cronbach (1998) argues that the truants come from unsatisfactory interactions with the family, relieving homes, fractured family, and the like. In the same way, Ezekwugo (2005) remarks that children's schooling begins at home, and where this is achieved correctly, the cornerstone established at home, the school does not find it challenging to proceed with the education of child correctly. Moreover, researchers emphasize the fact that in many situations, the seeds of truancy are laying in the home unsatisfactory relationships. The researcher describes family relationships, directly and indirectly, influence child school attendance (Spandel, 1991). Henry (2007) correlated family relations and many other family factors with truant behavior. Henry's research shows that the more a kid becomes unsupervised after school, the more probable the kid tends to become a truant; 29.9 % of truants were unsupervised after school for five hours or more, while only 11.3 % of truants were rarely unsupervised after school. The study carried out on the position of perceived parental patterns and social change revealed that truant teenagers considered their parents to be more permissive than regular and good performer's students (Tahira, 2011). Inconsistent family dynamics which have been shown to lead to truancy include parental isolation, divorce, and marital dispute (Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Haddon, 1996; Hallom, & Roaf, 1995; Smith, 1996). When the prenatal bond explodes, there is a possibility that children may be staying with single parents or with an expanded family environment. Thus, some truants have been identified to live with at least one biological parent (Nhlapo, 1997).

Implications

Empirical research in every area of psychology is useful not only for professionals and researchers of psychology but also for other relevant individuals. The present study does have entailed some practical implications. This study is significant in that the findings for the study could be beneficial to school social workers, parents, teachers, and school administrators in dealing with truants. The problem of truancy has serious implications for society, both in humanitarian and economic terms, this study is significant because it devotes itself only to how the truancy effected by the family relations and peer relations on their (truant) behavior. Results of the current study can help educationists, and counselors to resolve the issues and problems of the truant students specifically in the way that they can plan strategies to increase positive attitudes, behaviors, and emotions toward peers and family relations and minimize negative ones. It helps those parents who did not have sufficient information regarding their child's truant behavior. This study provides help to truant students to adopt a positive attitude toward peers. This helps them to progress in their school and daily living in a physically and psychologically healthy manner. The findings of the present study can also be applicable in clinical and mental health settings. The skills that are learned from this study may enhance the ability of the social worker to work effectively with a truant population. Despite the limitations, this research may be contributed to enhancing the basic knowledge regarding peer relations, family relations, and truancy.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION

The most concerning limitation of the present study were data was collected by self-report measures, these measures are subjective and are vulnerable to biases and common answers. Self-report measures are vulnerable to desirable and fake good or fake bad responses. In the present research, another limitation as students proved to be a cause of difficulties was that people had to fill self-report measures. This created resistance among the participant as they hesitate to provide their demographic information so in the future another instrument for data collection should be used like a semi-structured interview. This study involves only truant students in the study. Further studies should include parents and teachers in the study for a better understanding of the phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to find out the effect of peer and family relations on truancy among truants. The sample of the present study was composed of 300 truant students that were approached from different schools, colleges, and universities of Punjab, Pakistan. The study explored that peer relations and family relations have a significantly negative correlation with truancy among truants. Results also indicate that peer relations and family relations negatively predict truancy among truants. Thus, the present study has importance in the field of family, social and educational counseling, or psychology.

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