

Demographic Factors and Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

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ABSTRACT

Background: Contemporary secondary school students exhibit a wide range of social maladjustment behaviors, especially truancy. Given this, the present study looked into the Demographic Factors Influencing Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. *Method:* The study used descriptive survey design with a multi-stage sampling procedure which involved purposive, stratified, and simple random methods. The research involved a total of 400 participants. The "Truancy Behavior Scale (TBS)", was adapted to gather pertinent data. The instrument underwent validation by five seasoned lecturers specializing in Guidance and Counseling Educational Management and Test and Measurement. To assess the instrument's reliability, the researcher utilized the test Split-half method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.74. Demographic data was analyzed with frequency counts and percentages, and the four hypotheses formulated were tested using a t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a significance level of 0.05. The findings show that demographic variables of student, family, and school contributed significantly to truancy behavior. The four null hypotheses tested in this study indicate that there was a significant difference in the demographic factors contributing to truancy behavior among secondary school students in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, based on gender and family type ($t = 2.88, p < 0.05$); ($t = 2.56, p < 0.05$). Nonetheless, no significant differences were found based on the respondents' age and religion.

Keywords: Demographic Factors, Truancy Behavior, Secondary School Student



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INTRODUCTION

Truancy poses a significant social maladjustment challenge for secondary school adolescents in Nigeria. It is increasingly recognized as a pressing issue by key stakeholders in the education sector, including school counselors/psychologists, teachers, parents/guardians, school administrators, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations. If left unchecked, truancy has the potential to hinder the educational goals of a nation (Esther et al., 2023). The term truancy has been defined in various ways by scholars and educational researchers. Alhassan et al. (2023) defined truancy as any unauthorized, unrecorded absence or abstention from school that disregards the school's rules and regulations. This can manifest in various forms, such as frequent tardiness or missing an entire day of school. Kelechi (2024) defined truancy as a deliberate pattern of behavior characterized by avoiding or skipping school without a valid purpose or justification. Omolekan et al. (2023) characterized truancy as a situation where students establish a persistent habit of staying away from school without the knowledge of parents and teachers. It involves taking matters into one's own

hands by not attending school for a specific period. There is a contentious debate among academics regarding the frequency and reasons a student must be absent from school in a term before being labeled as truant. While some viewpoints allow no exceptions, the prevailing belief is that truancy is unacceptable for pupils or students unless they have genuine reasons for their absence. Truancy is a multifaceted issue that must be viewed as a behavior pattern that may stem from various structural levels such as the individual, the family, and the school (Esther et al., 2023).

Individual circumstances and unique characteristics can also exacerbate the rate of truancy. Factors such as learning disabilities, bullying, mental health issues, and personal challenges can influence truancy behavior among secondary school students greatly (Aliero et al., 2023). He further stressed that family type plays an important role in the development of truancy behavior among secondary school students, it is common among low-income households and single-parent families. Truancy tendencies are also common among residents of disadvantaged areas, such as slums (Tanko & Ajayi 2023). Additionally, truancy is frequently observed in

students who lack adequate support from their parents or guardians about their academic responsibilities (Douthit, 2022). On a school level, research has indicated that institutions failing to meet the needs of their students are at an increased risk of fostering truancy behavior (Havik & Ingul, 2021).

Unfavorable circumstances within a child's environment can lead to feelings of frustration and personal inadequacies, including an inferiority complex, and rejection by teachers, parents, or peers, all of which contribute to truancy behavior (Ramberg et al., 2019). It is further emphasized that certain conditions, such as overprotection or rejection by parents, can precipitate truancy behavior in school-aged children (Barnard-Brak et al., 2023). There is no universally agreed-upon determinant of truancy among students. However, the underlying causes of truancy behavior vary from individual to individual, as well as across different cultural contexts. According to Aliero et al. (2023), factors contributing to truancy include persistent nagging from teachers, aversion to school, dysfunctional family dynamics, excessive permissiveness from parents, poor physical and mental health conditions, and lack of appropriate school attire, among others. The literature consistently highlights a multitude of causal factors for truancy among school-aged students. Revelations by Yusuf and Rahim (2023) and Onongha (2020) identify student-related, parent-related, teacher-related, and mental health-related factors as significant contributors to truancy behavior.

The rise in irregular school attendance is emerging as a concerning trend, causing distress among key educational stakeholders including parents, educators, school counselors, and administrators. The researcher noted instances where secondary school students, donning their uniforms, were spotted idling around the community during school hours while classes were in session. This issue is swiftly becoming widespread among secondary school students and demands immediate attention from all parties involved in the education sector. The repercussions of this behavior have significant implications for a nation's education objectives.

Ensuring students attend school consistently is paramount for their academic success. There is substantial evidence highlighting the consequences of truancy on the truant and the society they belong to. Therefore, calls for the urgent attention of concerned stakeholders, all hands should be on deck to address and curtail the ugly trend of truancy among secondary school students before it escalates further. The available figure on the index of truancy rates among school-aged children in Nigeria indicates that a staggering 27.6% of these students do not attend school regularly due to one reason or the other, this figure poses a serious threat to any nation striving for development.

The level of truancy among secondary school students in Nigeria, including those in the Ilorin metropolis, calls for urgent attention from all education stakeholders.

There is no doubt that when a student attends school regularly their achievements in academic activities improve and this, puts them on the pathway to success. Several authors have carried out studies on truancy behavior among secondary school students in different parts of Nigeria such as, Steve et al. (2022) work on causes and Consequences of Truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial Gideon and Eremie (2023) based on their findings on Psychological Variables as a Predictors of Truancy reduction among Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Omolekan et al. (2023) made findings on Truancy on Truancy indices and Peer group pressure as a correlate of Students' academic performance in Social Studies in Ekiti State, Nigeria. In addition, Isah and Tijani (2021) research on Impact of Truancy on the academic performance of Secondary School Students in Kano State, These studies have explored the causes and consequences of truancy among adolescents in various settings, shedding light on factors such as home environment, peer influence, family type, peer pressure and psychological variables.

This current research aims to address a gap in the existing literature by investigating the demographic factors influencing truancy behavior among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. By focusing on this specific geographical area and demographic group, this study aims to provide unique and valuable insights into the issue of truancy among students.

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this research is to examine the impact of demographic variables on truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in the Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Find out the difference in the truancy behavior of male and female participants.
2. Determine the difference in the Truancy behavior of older and younger participants.
3. Determine the difference in the Truancy behavior of the Muslims, Christians, and traditional worshippers of the participants.
4. Find out the difference in truancy behavior of the participants from intact and broken homes.

Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses:

There is no significant difference in truancy behavior among Secondary School students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, based on gender.

There is no significant difference in truancy behavior among Secondary School students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, based on age.

There is no significant difference in truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, based on religion.

There is no significant difference in truancy behavior among Secondary School Students based on family type.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher employed a descriptive survey design to facilitate the acquisition of information from a considerably large population. This particular design enables the researcher to depict a specific phenomenon being studied as it unfolds during the duration of the study. Bus et al, (2023) noted that the descriptive survey design allows the researcher to observe, depict, and gather information on a phenomenon being studied without the necessity of manipulating any other variable. The population under scrutiny in this study consisted of all secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, with a reported figure of 48,467 according to the Kwara State Schools Census report for the 2020\2021 Analysis.

The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique that encompassed purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling methods. Initially, students from public secondary schools were purposively chosen in the first stage of the selection process, followed by the utilization of a stratified method in the second stage to classify respondents based on gender and age. Finally, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select 400 secondary school students from 20 schools out of the total 148 public Secondary Schools in Ilorin Metropolis that took part in the study. This figure is substantiated by the recommendation from Research Advisor, 2006, which suggests 384 as an appropriate sample size for populations ranging from five thousand to one hundred thousand.

In this study, a modified scale entitled "Truancy Behavior Scale (TBS)" was utilized to gather pertinent data from the respondents. The instrument is comprised of two sections, namely Section A and B. Section A entails the personal information of the respondents, including gender, age, and religion, while Section B of the instrument consists of only 20 items evenly distributed across the four demographic categories of truancy behavior among secondary school students in this study. These categories include; 1. Family factors, 2. Student's factors, 3. School factors, and 4. Community factors. Responses on the (TBS) the 4-Point Likert Type Scale, ranging from Very True of Me (VTM), True of Me (TM), Not True of Me (NTM), to Not Very True of Me (NVTM). The instrument was validated by Okwakpam and Okwakpam in 2012 and was subsequently revalidated by five experienced lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Counselling at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State.

To establish the credibility of the tool, a pilot study was conducted. In this endeavor, 30 questionnaires were distributed to 30 students who did not participate in the main study but shared similar characteristics with the study's population. The split-half reliability method was employed to assess the questionnaire's reliability, with the questions being administered once and then systematically divided into odd and even numbers. The Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula was utilized to calculate the instrument's reliability coefficient,

resulting in an R-value of 0.74, which confirmed the instrument's reliability for the study. Demographic data of the participants were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, and four null hypotheses were formulated and tested using t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender, Age and Religion

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1.	Gender		
	Male	214	53.5
	Female	186	46.5
	Total	400	100.0
2.	Age		
	11-13	122	30.5
	14-16	227	56.8
	17 & Above	51	12.7
	Total	400	100.0
3.	Religion		
	Christianity	110	27.5
	Islam	284	71.0
	Others	06	1.5
	Total	400	100.0
4.	Family Type		
	Intact	287	72
	Non-Intact	113	28
	Total	400	100.0

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents in this study based on gender, age, religion, and family type. A total number of 400 respondents participated in the study. However, 214 (53.5%) were male students, while 186 (46.5%) were female students. Of the respondents' age, 122 (30.5%) were between the ages of 11-13; 227 (56.8%) were between the age of 14-16, and 51 (12.7%) were from 17 years of age and above. On religion distribution of the respondents, 110 (27.5%) were Christians, 284 (71.0%) were Muslim faithful, and 6 (1.5%) were from Traditional religious backgrounds. Finally, on the respondents' family type, 287 (72.0%) were from intact homes and 113 (28.0%) were from non-intact (separated) families.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State based on gender.

Table 2. The t-test Result Comparing Respondents' View of the Demographic Factors That Are Influencing Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students Based on Gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. T	Crit. T	p-value Decision
Male	214	56.60	7.84	398	2.88	1.96	0.000 Rejected
Female	186	49.88	8.0				

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the truancy behavior among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, based on age.

Table 3. ANOVA Result Comparing Respondents' View of the Demographic Factors That Are Influencing Truancy Behavior among Students on the Bases of Age.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F	Crit. F	p-value Decision
Between-group	386.458	2	193.229	1.26	3.00	0.180 Accepted
Within group	60882.332	397	153.356			
Total	61268.79	399				

Table 3 shows that the calculated F-value of 1.26 is less than the critical F-value of 3.00 at the degree of freedom of 2 and 397, with a corresponding p-value of 0.180 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This result shows that there is no significant difference in the truancy behavior among secondary school students in the Ilorin Metropolis based on age. This implies that age does not influence truancy behavior among secondary school students in the Ilorin metropolis. Based on this result, hypothesis two is rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the truancy behavior of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, based on religion.

Table 4. ANOVA Result Comparing Respondents' View of the Demographic Factors That Are Influencing Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students Based on Religion

Source	Sum of Squares	d f	Mean Square	Cal. F	Crit. F	p-value Decision
Between-group	508.108	2	254.054	1.16	3.00	0.315 Accepted
Within group	86947.495	397	219.012			
Total	87455.603	399				

Table 4 shows that for degrees of freedom (df) of 2 and 397, the calculated F-value of 1.16 is less than the critical F-value of 3.00, with a corresponding p-value of 0.315 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that there was no difference in the truancy behavior among secondary school students in the Ilorin metropolis based on religion. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Four: *There is no significant difference in the truancy behavior of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, based on the family type.*

Table 5. T-test results comparing Respondents' View of the Demographic Factors That Are Influencing Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students Based on Family Type

Family Type	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. T	Crit. t	p-value Decision
Intact	287	72.20	8.04	398	2.56	1.96	0.000 Rejected
Non-Intact	113	64.18	6.42				

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.56 is greater than the critical value of 1.96 at the degree of freedom of 398, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is a significant difference in the truancy behavior of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis based on family type. Hence, hypothesis four which stated that there was no significant difference in the truancy behavior among secondary school students based on family type is rejected. This implies that the respondent's family type influences truancy behavior.

Discussion

In testing the null hypotheses formulated for this study, the results of hypothesis one stipulate that there was a significant difference in the demographic factors influencing truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State based on gender ($t = 2.88, p < 0.05$). This outcome suggests that male and female students exhibit varying responses to the demographic factors influencing truancy behavior. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn by Karababa (2024), Suleiman and Uhueghu (2020), and Aqeel and Rehna (2020), whose research subjects displayed differing responses regarding the factors contributing to truancy behavior based on gender. Aqeel and Rehna (2020) further asserted that male students tend to skip school more frequently than their female counterparts. However, these results contrast with the findings of Steve et al (2022) whose findings reported that both male and female students did not show differences in their responses regarding the influence of truancy among Secondary School Students. Hypothesis two indicated that there was no significant difference in truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in the Ilorin Metropolis based on age. This result suggests that the respondents' responses did not vary based on age. Conversely, this finding contradicts the results of Kelechi (2024) and Vadivel et al (2023), whose studies stipulate differences in respondents' views on the causes of deviant behavior such as truancy among Secondary School Students based on age group.

The third hypothesis tested in this study suggested that there was no significant difference in truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis based on their religious affiliation. This finding, however, supports the outcome of the study conducted by Kambo (2023). These research findings suggest further that truancy behavior cuts across the boundaries of religion, suggesting that students, regardless of their religion, can exhibit truancy tendencies at an individual level. The results of hypothesis four indicated a significant difference in the demographic factors influencing truancy behavior among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State based on family type ($t = 2.56, p < 0.05$). This result also revealed those students from intact families statistically differ in their truancy behavior from those that come from non-intact families. This finding is in agreement with the conclusions drawn by Adekoya-Olapade (2015), who stated that students from non-intact or separated families tend to be more prone to truancy.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that truancy behavior among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, varies based on gender, age, religion, and family type. However, there is no significant difference in truancy behavior

irrespective of age or religion. The study recommends the employment of counselors in all secondary schools to help students, particularly male students, overcome truancy challenges. Stakeholders should encourage punctuality and regular school attendance for all ages. Religious institutions should promote a regular school attendance culture among school-aged worshippers. Family institutions should also focus on the impact of separation or divorce on children's education and the implications it has on regular school attendance.

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