

**TRUANT BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO SELF CONCEPT****Balbir Singh Jamwal**K.M. College of Education Balachaur,
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Abstract

A study was conducted on truant behaviour in relation to self concept. Sample of the study was consisted 1000 of truant (500) and non-truant (500) of high school students. A technique of stratified random sampling was employed to select the sample. The findings revealed that the non-truant high school students exhibit significantly higher level of self concept on its social, moral and total self concept dimensions in comparison to truant high school students. Truant and non-truant high school students exhibit more or less similar level of self concept on its physical, temperamental, educational and intellectual dimensions.

Key Words: *Truant Behavior, Self Concept***Introduction**

According to Thorpe and Katz (1961) refusal to go to school is a common problem in adolescents. The truant is usually hostile, aggressive adolescent who resents authority and dislikes school or home or both. His aggression stems from his basic insecurity and is frequently aggravated by unhappy experiences in school. Parental friction and dissension, strict and severe discipline, lack of affection and attention, and constant nagging to do better in school work are the usual bases of the adolescents' insecure feelings and hostile states. In most instances truancy is an indication of hostility directed toward authority. The teenager feels resentful toward his parents because of unreasonable and unfair treatment and transfers this attitude to the authority figures in school. He shows his defense by refusing to go to school or attend certain classes. His attitude of indifference and his negativistic behaviour are reactions to his feelings of rejection. The truant feels

that his parents and other adults have little regard or sympathy for him, and as a result he manifests ego-defenses of truants are poor students who have achieved little success in their academic work. The beginning of their dislike for the school can usually be traced to the first or second grade where they had difficulty in attaining even a small degree of success. Slow progress in reading, slower progress in arithmetic and inadequate achievement in other subjects and activities is the usual early school history of the truant. The problem of the truancy, like other emotional and personality problems should be the joint concern of the school and the home. A discussion of the problem with the parents by the school guidance counselor or supervisor of child welfare and attendance is the first step. Both parties should work together in an effort to determine the causal factors in the behaviour of the truant. This may mean a change of disciplinary measures at home, an improvement in parental relationships, a less rigid and demanding school programme, a change of classes or teachers, or even a change of school.

Chauhan (1965, pp. 1-5) states that truancy appears to have in itself, on the negative side, a hierarchy of patterns of behaviour that have resulted as outright reactions to role expectations; and on the positive side, it represents breaking away with the old in a revolutionary way. These deviations in the role expectations arise mainly because of the increasing gap, or incompatibility between external objects of orientation, on the one hand, and need dispositions of ego, on the other. The conceptual framework of the truancy is that of disorganization, both of the individual and of the society of which he is a member. Truancy may be taken, both as a Consequence and a cause of disorganization. It is more in line with the individual and consequence and a cause of disorganization. It is more in line with the individual and the society in transition. Abrupt changes that lost the equilibrium between the social expectations and social realities in India have come from the following sources:

1. Transition from rural to urban economy,
2. Transition form handcraft to machine production,
3. Growth of railways and motor transport,
4. Growth of cities and towns, and
5. Slow and gradual adaptation of habits and attitudes of the people.

Shanker (1978) states that there are many children who may be physically quite normal and healthy but who present problems arising from various personality and behaviour disorders. Parents generally feel more concerned when a child is physically ill and take him to the doctor and if he does not show improvement they consult another doctor. But in the case of children who suffer from some mental difficulty or illness, they not only feel less concerned but also consider themselves quite competent to deal with them and even feel ashamed of mentioning to others that their child is having problems of

adjustment. These children from the point of view of mental hygiene are “sick souls” and are termed “problem children”, needing serious attention. The problems of mental illness in children arise due to the errors of parents, guardians or teachers, as no child is born a “problem child”. They do not quite understand the needs of the child and quite often they themselves are the victims of their own personal problems, emotional difficulties and frustrations. So all concerned with the upbringing and well being of children should understand the etiology and psychodynamics of emotional difficulties in children. There are various common problems of children like delinquency, shyness, aggressiveness, stubbornness, certain anxiety states, insomnia, nervousness, stammering and truancy etc.

Teachman (1979, pp. 203-205) opines that a problem that particularly plagues urban high schools is in school truancy. He reports, for example, that absence from classes in which students were enrolled in Detroit Public School during (1977-79) was nearly 20 per cent. But this was only the official rate. Teachers’ attendance figures suggested that the percentage was actually closer to 30 per cent.

Kirk (1970, p.336) states that the concept of discrepancy between the child ability to perform and some of the requirements of the home or the school may be applicable to the situations in experiment with the animals those cited with humans. In some cases where the child is forced to attempt a task which he cannot perform, he becomes tense and excited and may get angry at objects or people. Or he resorts to irrational or silly maneuvers. In many situations he escapes the requirements. For example, truancy from school is more prevalent among slow learners and educationally retarded than among those who are succeeding in school.

Burt (1965, p. 457) points out that truancy, like other offences, may arise from many different causes; and contributory factors at work are much the same here as elsewhere. Bad company, poor home discipline, the attraction of the streets, the desire to earn money, distaste for a particular lesson, or a dislike for a particular teacher — all may play their part. Sometimes the first escape springs from no deep-seated motive, but purely from the temptation of an instant, for example, the child is late for school, and dreads a punishment; or he meets an older companion at the playground gate, and the two dive off together.

Dosajh (1956, pp. 38-39) states that school children some times run away from school without the permission of their teachers or parents. This may be due to different causes, for example:

1. The child may be subnormal and cannot keep pace with his class and so he gets disinterested in his studies. The proper thing would be to put him in a class of children of his caliber.
2. The child may be afraid of punishment from the teachers.

3. Due to some physical defect in the child, the other children might be making a fun of him.
4. Sometimes there is a deep conflict working in the mind of the child, which makes him stay away from the school. In such cases the help of psychologist must be sought.
5. Sometimes some children are very imaginative and they always with to be roaming about. In such cases the children should be made to express their imaginative adventures verbally or in writing. This will go a long way in checking their tendency to roam about.
6. In some cases the circumstances in the home are very uncongenial and so the child tries to escape from those unfavourable circumstances. Such circumstances may be constant quarrels between father and mother or drunkenness, etc.
7. Some children run away and roam about because their emotional needs are not satisfied. For example, after riots in the Punjab there were a number of children who were just roaming about in various cities and towns in search of some one who could own them and give them their due share of love.

The Problem and its Significance -

Rayner and Raiding (1996) investigated the learning style of 17 students (aged 15-17 years) identified as school refusers and compared their style distribution to that of 850 12-16 year olds in regular attendance in mainstream secondary schools. A cognitive styles analysis (R.J. Riding, 1991) was administered individually to subjects in the Refusal group at their centre during the period of one term. Results indicated that the learning style of the school refusers was skewed to the Wholist-end of the Wholist Analytic style dimension. An implication of this research is that a particular learning style was associated with school refusal and research is merited particularly to (a) develop further research into the learning characteristics of students who refuse school and (b) inform a developing school response to refusal.

Smith (1996) conducted a survey on school attendance in 12 secondary schools in England to determine how pupils respond to coming to school, to identify levels of truancy and the reasons for such truancy; and to assist schools in developing appropriate and effective responses. The survey, which was completed by 6,441 students in years 7-11, found that the overwhelming majority of pupils mostly liked school, attended regularly, and were mostly happy with the curriculum. Truancy was confined mainly to years 9, 10, and 11 and involved a difficult lesson and/or a poor relationship with a particular teacher. Post-registration truancy (when the pupil comes to school to miss certain or all lessons) was found to be slightly more prevalent than blanket truancy. Robins and Robertson (1996) reported on the Epidemiologic catchment area (ECA) study

in USA, which examined the adult recall of truancy. Half of the incidents of truancy were before the age of 14 years.

Significance of the study

Statement of the Problem

“Truant behaviour in relation to Self Concept.”

Objectives of the Study -

The following objective was formulated for the present study:-

To compare the truant and non-truant high school students on the following variables:-

1. Self Concept

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated which were tested in the present study:

1. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the physical dimension of the variable of self concept.
2. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the social dimension of the variable of self concept.
3. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the temperamental dimension of the variable of self concept.
4. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the educational dimension of the variable of self concept.
5. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the moral dimension of the variable of self concept.
6. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the intellectual of the variable of self concept.
7. The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the variable of total self concept.

Sample

The sample of the present study was 1000 and drawn from twenty six high school and Senior Secondary School of four districts namely Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Mandi and Kullu of Hiamachal Pradesh. The selection of the districts and schools was made on the basis of convenience and availability.

Tools Used

The following tools were used in the present study for the purpose of collection of data.

1. Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) developed by Saraswati (1984) was used for necessary measuring the level of self concept of the truant and non-truant high school students.

Technique

‘t’ technique (test) was used / applied.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The present study aimed at studying psychological characteristics of truant and non-truant of high school students of Himachal Pradesh. In order to achieve this objectives, a sample of 500 truant and non-truant was drawn from twenty six High and Senior Secondary School students situated in four districts of Himachal Pradesh and the relevant tools were administered to select the sample. The data available on the selected psychological variables was tabulated and analyzed and interpreted using the technique of 't' test as detailed below:

A. Group vs 'Physical Dimension' of Self Concept

The table 2 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to 'Physical Dimension' as measured by Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table 2: t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Physical Dimension of the variable of Self Concept..

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	29.37	4.33	0.19	0.72
Non-Truants	500	29.57	4.20	0.19	

** Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

It is revealed from Table 2 that t-value came out to be 0.72, which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the Physical Dimension of the variable of Self Concept as measured by 'Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that "The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the Physical Dimension of the variable of self concept is rejected. From this, it may be inferred that truant and non-truant groups of high school students exhibits more or less similar level of self concept on the Physical Dimension.

B. Group vs Social Dimension of Self Concept

The table 3 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to 'Social Dimension' as measured by Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table 3: t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Social Dimension of the variable of Self Concept..

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	24.59	6.48	0.29	4.09**
Non-Truants	500	26.24	6.35	0.28	

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence.

It is revealed from Table 3 that t-value came out to be 4.09, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the Social Dimension of the variable of Self Concept as measured by ‘Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that “The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the Social Dimension of the variable of self concept is accepted. The table 3 shows that the mean on social dimension of the variable of self-concept is higher for non-truants (26.24) as compared to the truants (24.59. From this, it may be inferred that non-truant groups of high school students exhibits significantly higher level of self – concept on its social dimension as compared to truant group of high school students.

C. Group vs Temperamental Dimension of Self-Concept

The table 4 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to ‘Temperamental Dimension’ as measured by the variable of self-concept as measured by Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table 4: t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Temperamental Dimension of the variable of Self Concept..

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	31.24	4.00	0.18	0.81
Non-Truants	500	31.45	3.96	0.18	

** Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

It is revealed from Table 4 that t-value came out to be 0.81, which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the temperamental Dimension of the variable of Self Concept as measured by ‘Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that “The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the temperamental dimension of the variable of self concept is rejected. From this, it may be inferred that truant and non-truant groups of high school student more or less similar level of self – concept on the temperamental dimension.

D. Group vs Educational Dimension of Self-Concept

The table 5 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to ‘Educational Dimension’ of the variable of Self-Concept as measured by the Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table 4: t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Educational Dimension of the variable of Self Concept..

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	32.96	4.38	0.20	0.81
Non-Truants	500	33.18	3.93	0.18	

** Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

It is revealed from Table 5 that t-value came out to be 0.81, which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the educational dimension of the variable of Self Concept as measured by ‘Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that “The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the educational dimension of the variable of self concept is rejected. From this, it may be inferred that truant and non-truant groups of high school student exhibit more or less similar level of self – concept on the educational dimension.

E. Group vs Moral Dimension of Self-Concept

The table 6 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to ‘Moral Dimension’ of the variable of self-concept as measured by Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table 6: t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Moral Dimension of the variable of Self Concept.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	25.77	8.21	0.37	2.34*
Non-Truants	500	26.91	7.21	0.32	

** Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

It is revealed from Table 6 that t-value came out to be 2.34, which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the moral dimension of the variable of Self Concept as measured by ‘Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that “The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the moral dimension of the variable of self concept is accepted. The table 6 shows that the mean on moral dimension of the variable of self-concept is higher for non-truants (26.91) as compared to the truants (25.77). From this, it may be inferred that non-truant groups of high school students exhibits significantly higher level of self-concept on its moral dimension in comparison to truant group of high school students.

F. Group vs Intellectual Dimension of Self-Concept

The table 7 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to 'Intellectual Dimension' as measured by the variable of self-concept as measured by Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table: 4

t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Intellectual Dimension of the variable of Self Concept.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	27.29	3.77	0.17	1.63
Non-Truants	500	27.68	3.78	0.17	

*** Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.*

It is revealed from Table 7 that t-value came out to be 1.63, which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the Intellectual Dimension of the variable of Self Concept as measured by 'Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that "The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the intellectual dimension of the variable of self concept is rejected. From this, it may be inferred that truant and non-truant groups of high school student more or less similar level of self – concept on the intellectual dimension.

G. Group vs Total Self-Concept

The table 8 presents the t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to 'Total Self-Concept' as measured by the variable of self-concept as measured by Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.) along with Ns, Means, SDs and standard error of means.

Table: 8

t-value for truant and non-truant groups of high school students with respect to Total Self-Concept to the variable of Self- Concept.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE of Mean	t-value
Truants	500	171.26	19.74	0.88	3.23**
Non-Truants	500	175.10	17.81	0.80	

*** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence.*

It is revealed from Table 8 that t-value came out to be 3.23, which is not significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that truant and non-truant groups of high school students differ significantly on the Total Self-Concept as measured by 'Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Saraswat (n.d.). Hence, the hypotheses that "The truant and non-truant high school students differ significantly on the temperamental dimension of the variable of self concept is accepted. The table 8 shows that the mean on the variable of

total self-concept is higher for non-truant (175.10) as compared to the truants (171.26). From this, it may be inferred that non-truant group of high school students exhibit significantly higher level of total self-concept in comparison to truant group of high school students.

Conclusions –

On the basis of analysis of data, following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The truant and non-truant high school students exhibit more or less similar level of self-concept on the physical dimension.
2. The non-truant high school students exhibit significantly higher level of self-concept on its social dimension in comparison to truant high school students.
3. The truant and non-truant high school students exhibit more or less similar level of self-concept on the temperamental dimension.
4. The truant and non-truant high school students exhibit more or less similar level of self-concept on the educational dimension.
5. The non-truant high school students exhibit significantly higher level of self-concept on its moral dimension in comparison to truant high school students.
6. The truant and non-truant high school students exhibit more or less similar level of self-concept on the intellectual dimension.
7. The non-truant high school students exhibit significantly higher level of total self-concept in comparison to truant high school students.

Educational Implications

The result of the present study indicate that truancy among high school students is significantly related to gender, and creative behaviour, and self-concept. The boys were found more prone to truant behaviour. The non-truants exhibit higher level of self-concept.

The higher level of proneness towards truancy among boys may be explained considering the fact that boys have lesser social inhibitions, more parental freedom and less home responsibilities. However, the tendency is more among the students with lower level of self-concept. Due to the lack of these factors, these students might experience difficulties in classroom. There is a possibility that the methods of teaching, the class and school environment and the curriculum as a whole might not be according to their specific mental level and needs.

Gleeson (1994) states that despite evidence of rising level of truancy, little is known about who persistent truants are and why do they skip schools. While conventional explanations link truancy with schools generated problems, boredom, bullying, and underachievement, few studies have considered issues beyond school that affect the broader picture of non-school attendance. His article draws attention to some of

these issues, in particular those linking family, school, poverty, and public policy. He concluded that the apparent rise in the incidence of truancy may have more to do with government policies, and the effects of poverty and unemployment than with pupils' families and schools who currently bear the brunt of the blame.

Thus it appears that if the problem of truancy in schools is to be solved, there is a need to make the curriculum meaningful. This can be done by making it need-based for those who are not likely to pursue their studies after completing school education. Vocationalisation of education is one of the obvious solutions in this direction. The concept has already been implemented but it needs to be strengthened.

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