# Antecedent and Consequences of Truancy in School Students: An Exploratory Sequential Study

BY

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By

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Candidate of **Doctor of of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **"Antecedent and Consequences of Truancy in School Students: An Exploratory Sequential Study"** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of PhD degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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# ABSTRACT

**Title: Antecedent and Consequences of Truancy in School Students: An Exploratory Sequential Study**

This study explored the antecedents and consequences of school truancy among Pakistani school students. It also developed a novel model and a diagnostic instrument for early screening of truant behavior in middle and high school students. A mixed-methods approach was used for this purpose. This study was divided into two phases: (1) the qualitative phase and (2) the quantitative phase. In the qualitative phase, ten focus group discussions with eighty-one truant students were conducted in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Thematic analysis explored many indigenous psychosocial factors, including personal, school, family, and environmental factors triggering truancy. The study also explored different indigenous psychosocial problems, including school, health concerns, and mental health problems developed by school-truant behaviour in students. Moreover, this study's findings led to the development of a novel duo-dimensional deviance development model that highlighted the interplay between delinquent behaviour and mental health problems in Pakistani high and middle schools. This study concludes that the personal experiences of truant students highlighted multiple indigenous factors that adversely impact or instigate school truancy in school students.

The quantitative study involved nine hundred sixty participants (truant students, $n = 361$; punctual students, $n = 599$) from different public schools, internet cafes, and community parks in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to examine the novel structure of the School Truancy Scale (STS) in school-truant students. EFA analysis explored a distinctive five-factor model, delineating specific factors targeting general school truancy, personal issues-based truancy, teacher-based truancy, social problems-based truancy, and educational or institutional-based truancy. This standard classification enhances the precision of the instrument, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of school truancy in school settings. The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve analysis also

revealed that the STS had strong diagnostic ability to differentiate between punctual and truant students. This study highlighted that STS has good reliability and validity and effectively distinguishes between truant and punctual students.

This study's findings highlighted the dire need to develop early psychosocial proactive measures, preventions, and interventions by school practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to address and tackle the school truancy problem and enhance and spread public awareness of how to resolve this serious problem in Pakistani educational settings.

Keywords; School truancy, Duo-Dimensional deviance development model, exploratory factor analysis

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*AQEEL*

# DEDICATION

My great parents, who never stop giving of themselves in countless ways.

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My friends who encourage and support me in difficult times.

All the people in my life who touch my heart.

**Chapter 1**

# INTRODUCTION

School truancy is a prevailing negative behavior and lifestyle in school-going children and adolescents globally (Nyantakyi et al., 2022; Patton et al., 2017). Many previous studies postulate that victims of school truancy are likely to face severe physical and mental health problems (Nawi et al., 2017; Nyantakyi et al., 2022). School truancy is defined as unexcused absenteeism from school without knowledge of parental and higher school authorities (Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Hassan et al., 2016).While this definition has been argued all over the world, most scholars agree that it is related to many issues, including mental health problems, internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, disruptive behavior, conduct disorder, poor academic performance, teenage pregnancy, risky sexual behavior, or the abuse of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, as well as other substances (Attwood & Croll, 2015; Credé et al., 2010; Filippello et al., 2019; Fornander & Kearney, 2019, 2020; Kearney, 2008; Strand & Granlund, 2014; Tahira & Jami, 2021). Furthermore, adolescents who exhibit chronic absence are at high risk of permanent school refusal behavior and dropout from school in elementary and secondary schools (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Henry & Huizinga, 2007).

There is a consensus across academic scholars that school truancy is an important and common educational problem in secondary and high schools globally (Langford et al., 2015; Seidu et al., 2020). It effects every socio-economic group in human society negatively (Burton et al., 2014; Henry & Huizinga, 2007; Maynard et al., 2015; Seidu et al., 2020). Its deleterious effects are associated with the behavior of school children, including externalizing and internalizing behavior problems, mental health problems, juvenile delinquency, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy,

additional disruptive behavior, conduct disorder,  poor school performance,  school dropout, and the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other substances (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Mazerolle et al., 2018; Rasasingham, 2015; Rocque et al., 2017; Seidu et al., 2020). Similar earlier research revealed  that it is  the deleterious lifestyle and behavior of an adolescent that  lead them to fail in academics, school dropout, school refusal behavior, and involvement in criminal activities (Mazerolle et al., 2018; Rasasingham, 2015; Rocque et al., 2017).

One of the most important determinants of an individual's social and cognitive development is their educational attainment at school during the formative years of their life.  School plays an essential role in enabling the social and cognitive development of adolescents and setting a foundation for developmental trajectories later in life. Ideally, school settings are places where young people feel secure and comfortable while being provided with an environment that induces learning as well as constructive interactions with teachers and friends. Schools are conceived of as institutions imparting knowledge and inculcating civic sense in students, nurturing them into civilized and responsible citizens of the state. However, it is observed that schools sometimes fall short of this desired model and may become a non-optimal or even hostile environment for schoolchildren, which ultimately leads to school refusal. As a result, students increasingly skip classes to the point where educational outcomes have been observed at their worst. This trouble with attending school can result in continuous or intermittent absenteeism or truancy (Calderón et al., 2009; Christle et al., 2007) this  puts the child's academic growth at risk  (Carroll, 2010, 2013; Fornander & Kearney, 2020) and causes socio-emotional disruptions (Malcolm et al., 2016a). Continuous difficulty  in attending schools has  been  linked to a dropout inclination, resulting in  unemployment, marital problems, poor physical,  mental health problems,

juvenile delinquency, and incarceration (Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019; Kearney, 2016).

In view of such consequences, school truancy is a phenomenon that calls for greater attention as this behavior has serious implications for the individual. Truancy has been related to several deficits, especially of the psychosocial, cognitive, and academic nature. Specifically, school truancy problems have been associated with low academic achievement, poor grades in mathematics and reading tests, school dropout, and even the development of psychological problems (Robert et al., 2007; Robert & Byrnes, 2018b; Filippello et al., 2019; Smerillo et al., 2018). Likewise, externalizing and internalizing behavior issues are frequent in school-going adolescents' tendencies to truancy, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, delinquent behavior, and sexual activities (Finning, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez et al., 2018; Kearney et al., 2019). In addition, the results of prior research have also revealed that students who discontinued their studies had higher chances of facing mental health, marital, and occupational problems due to unemployment and low income issues (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Rocque et al., 2017). Thus, school truancy is a very complex and multifaceted problem that exists at all levels of education and is prevalent among children, adolescents, and adults alike.

School truancy constitutes an extremely complex problem globally, which different research scholars from different fields have tried to classify and conceptualize (Fornander & Kearney, 2020d; Heyne et al., 2002b, 2019; Ingul et al., 2019; Kearney et al., 2019). Classification studies have generally differentiated between two main kinds of frameworks: categorical and dimensional. Categorical frameworks have tried to distinguish between different kinds of school truancy problems, promoting homogeneity and discouraging heterogeneity within a category, as well as syncretizing

qualitative differences between categories (De Boeck et al., 2005). In contrast, dimensional frameworks advocate a continuum within school truancy problems and support heterogeneity while discouraging homogeneity, whether it is within a category or relates to figuring out differences between categories of school truancy problems (De Boeck et al., 2005). Heyne et al. (2019) and Kearney et al. (2019) suggest that these aforementioned approaches are complementary and compatible, yielding different but equally beneficial determinations that contribute to understanding and finding out the differences between different categories of school truancy problems in adolescents.

Although the phenomenon under study has been widely examined by researchers, practitioners, educators, and policy-makers (Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019), it still lacks any unanimous definition, perhaps because of the etic nature of the problem. Due to disparate schooling systems with distinctive curricula and idiosyncratic regulatory systems across the globe, researchers have been thwarted in identifying any universality in defining and explaining the concept. While there is no uniform definition of truancy, it is generally defined from a legal perspective as an unauthorized, intentional absence from compulsory schooling. A general definition characterized truancy as "a willful, unexcused refusal of pupils to attend class in defiance of parental authority and in violation of an applicable compulsory school attendance law" (Aqeel et al., 2016; Colorado Department of Education, 2013; Hassan et al., 2016). Truancy is also referred to as unexcused and unlawful absence from school, usually without parental consent or knowledge (Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Hassan et al., 2016).

The lack of a uniform definition for truancy makes research on truancy statistics challenging. However, despite the complications for statistical research, school truancy and dropouts were generally found to be a widespread global problem with

various ratios of incidence in different countries (Maynard et al., 2017a). However, there is still ongoing research to define and the address definition of school truancy around the world. Many previous studies have revealed that school truancy is a very difficult challenge to explain or conceptualize in school-children around the world because definitions vary from culture to culture. Hence, there is more need for agreement among scholars as to how best to describe, define, address, and assess poor school attendance in different levels or grades of school students (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Lyon & Cotler, 2009).

The concept has yet to be defined and explored in the Pakistani context (Aqeel et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2016). Moreover, there is a need for the phenomenon of truancy to be investigated with respect to the psycho-social environments in which it develops. A few cross-sectional studies have been conducted in Pakistani culture on school truancy; their findings reveal that school truancy is associated with poor academic achievement, low self-esteem, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, and school related problems (Aqeel et al., 2016; Aqeel et al., 2017; Hassan et al., 2016). However, these studies have been conducted through a cross-sectional design in Pakistani culture, and up to now, the causes and consequences of school truancy have not been widely investigated. The present study seeks to provide insights about all protective and risk factors related to school truancy that lead to decreased or enhanced truant behavior in Pakistan. However, this present study is help to better comprehend the causes, consequences, and over-looked leading factors of school truancy in the cultural context of Pakistan.

**The Concept of School Truancy**

As previously discussed, school truancy is conceptualized as illegal, unexcused school absenteeism unknown or known to parents or guardians, or simply, the phenomenon of chronic absence in middle, secondary, and high schools (Kearney, 2008; Kearney & Albano, 2018; Mallett, 2016) . In general, the term 'absence' refers both to legal school absences (with the consent of parents or guardians including, excused absences because of physical injury or illness), as well as to illegal absences (unexcused school absences without approval of guardians or parents) (Kearney, 2002; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Kearney et al., 2019).

As the topic of chronic absence rapidly increases around the world, a few individuals are under the fallacious impression that it is only an ethically correct way of reporting school truancy. Policymakers, educators, and research scholars regularly apply the terms interchangeably, explaining the same, old problem and solution with the same terminology (Kearney & Albano, 2018). Actually, both words explain different features of the absenteeism issue as well as the need for different models for bringing schoolchildren back to their schools every day (Mallett, 2016).

Firstly, let's take a look at truancy, a word that is commonly defined as unexcused absences. Many schools have chased the number of school children who have skipped their school and classes, which is delineated as missing 3 days without a legal excuse. However, many other schools have observed habitual or severe school truancy, characterized as missing twenty percent of the school year (Kearney, 2008; Kearney & Albano, 2018). Moreover, truancy is also defined as any intentional unauthorized absence from compulsory schooling. A key aspect of this definition is that truancy implies an active decision on the part of the student to skip a lesson or a day at school, and excludes absences for other reasons that may be an impediment to attending school. School truancy naturally leads to a concentration on obedience to the

rules or regulations. School children are skipping their school or classes without an excuse, and violating compulsory attendance rules (Kearney, 2008; Kearney & Albano, 2018; Mallett, 2016).

on the other hand, chronic absence, includes all absences, whether unexplained, excused, or suspended (Kearney, 2008). It recognizes that schoolchildren skip their school for several reasonable problems, including physical illness, unreliable transportation, or homelessness, wherein a disciplinary response is not valid. Many previous studies explain that both truancy and chronic absenteeism are some of the most crucial problems for the whole community (Kearney, 2002; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Kearney, Gonzálvez, Graczyk, & Fornander, 2019).

Continual absence of the latter kind, differentiated from the former by its lack of justifiable grounds, is termed as truancy. It is considered a serious violation of school norms that leads schoolchildren to different severe crimes such as juvenile delinquency and incarceration. (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Maynard et al., 2018). School truancy laws tend to vary across regions and are also situational in their application. An absolute criterion for denoting truant behavior. An more practicable approach use is a pluralistic concept that incorporates to the differing forms of habitual absences.

Prototypes and forms of habitual absence vary according to demographic variables such as gender, ethnic background, and racial identity (Maynard et al., 2012, 2017b) associated with individual factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems (Berg, 1992; Ek & Eriksson, 2013), and academic problems and school dropout (Ahmad & Miller, 2015a). School truancy is linked to adolescents' behavioral or emotional issues, juvenile delinquency, and criminal activities later in life (Henry, 2007; Henry & Huizinga, 2007b; Katsiyannis et al., 2013; Monahan et al., 2014; Sambe et al., 2015). The prevalence of school truancy has rapidly escalated in

almost all age groups (Johnston et al., 2013; Mallett, 2016). A study reported that the prevalence of school truancy in the last 30 days among adolescents aged 12 to 17 years was as high as 11 percent (Hong et al., 2020; Vaughn et al., 2013; Wanzek et al., 2016). The present study explores the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in secondary school students in Pakistan.

**Causes of School Truancy**

There are a number of causes for school truancy in different cultures. Some of the most common important causes of school truancy are included among personal, social, and contextual factors. Previous studies have broadly explained these factors in various frameworks and under different domains of school truancy globally. Many prior studies revealed that there are a lot of different causal factors for school truancy, including family, negative behavior of children, community, and social deleterious factors, which were crucial in this matter (Lindstadt, 2005). In particular, family and school factors are considered the most crucial causes for development of truancy in secondary schools (Carney, 2015;Carney et al., 1972; Försterling & Binser, 2002; Henry & Huizinga, 2007; Kinder et al., 1995). Similar previous studies reported that there are four considered causes of school truancy, which can be divided into four categories (Barrett et al., 2014). There are four factors considered the behind development of school truancy, including school, personal, family, and economic ones.

Additionally, both schools and families are also considered one of the most important factors for the development of school truancy. Many research scholars revealed that school children must receive support from their teachers and parents in order to improve academic achievement and eliminate school truancy (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Schools are considered responsible for the academic development of

schoolchildren. While parents are assumed as the moral mentors of school students, in previous studies, the contributions of teachers and parents have been widely studied in the moral and educational development of schoolchildren in different fields, including psychology and education. Modern multi-discipline research is conducted to figure out and understand the positive role of teachers and parents in the development of school truancy and dropout phenomena. Actually, school truancy is commonly found to be a deleterious experience in a school context.Furthermore, it contributes significantly to the development of school truancy and leads to school dropout in secondary schools (Lessard et al., 2006)**.**

**Personal Factor and School Truancy**

Several earlier studies found that personal factors are considered one of the most important factors that lead to truant behavior in high and secondary school children. Numerous previous studies also demonstrated that school truancy was associated with physiological and mental health issues such as substance abuse, low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, depression, mood disorders, and parental attachment issues. A few similar studies also explained that mental health problem were considered as precursors to the development of truant behaviour.

According to DeSocio, et al. (2007), Both physiological and mental health problems are well-known as the most important contributing factors to leading school truancy in school students. They also explained that school truancy was found to be associated with physiological issues (e.g., somatic complaints and headaches) mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and substance abuse disorders) in school children (DeSocio et al., 2007). A similar study conducted by Henry (2007) also provided evidence of school truancy and its causes. He illustrated

that school truancy was associated with mental health issues. Moreover, he found that those students who used illegal drugs and skipped their classes in the    last few months had 26.5% more likely to skip their school classes with deviant peers as compared to those students who don't take any illegal drugs or alcohol. Additionally, he described that those students who were drinking with deviant peers,   had a 31.2% higher probability of  skipping school   than   those students who  were not involved in drinking. Furthermore, 33.9 percent of truant students were smoking cigarettes. Furthermore, truant students who had used marijuana in the previous month were 37.2% more likely to develop truancy. Furthermore, truant students who lacked self-awareness and perception of their abilities and skills were more likely to skip school than students who had self-awareness and perception of their abilities and skills. According to both DeSocio et al. (2007) and Henry (2007), students who lacked school commitment and were disengaged from their schools did not achieve high grades and had poor future orientation

### *Family Factors and School Truancy*

Several prior studies explained that   family factors (e.g., parental attachment styles,  parents' education, parental school involvement,  and household income)  play an important role in the   development of truant behavior in school children (Henry, 2007; Zhang et al., 2007).   In a  similar study conducted by Henry (2007), he found that family factors are considered one of the most crucial factor in the development of truant behavior in secondary and high school students.  He also elaborated that   those students who had educated parents had less probability of being  involved in school truancy behavior in comparison to those students who had uneducated parents. Whereas,  similar findings revealed in the above mentioned study revealed that those

students who had educated mothers had higher chances of being involved in school truancy that led to   drop out behavior in high school children.

Moreover, a similar study also illustrated that those  truant' students who had been  involved in  serious   criminal activities and delinquent acts belonged to lower income families or poor families (Zhang et al., 2007). Zhang and his colleagues found that students who belonged to poor families and whose family income was less than $15,000 per year were involved in truant behavior and committed minor crimes.

Moreover, numerous previous studies  have shown that parents are assumed to be responsible for  supporting their children to tackle their personal and  academic problems. However, many scholars describe  how  parental school  involvement may be helpful to get high grades for their children (Cole-Henderson, 2000; Epstein, 2008; Holland & Holahan, 2003; Holloway et al., 2008a;Jeynes, 2011; Jeynes, 2002, 2005). Several prior studies  have revealed that there is a    positive relationship  between parental school  involvement and the  achievement of students  in school (Chardosim et  al., 2020; Carolina Gonzálvez et al., 2018a; Kearney, 2001; McNeal, 1999; Oyserman et al., 2007; Woolley & Bowen, 2007).  Many studies reveal   parental involvement and supervision in school and home activities is considered one of the most crucial factors in academic success and growth of school children. According to Trusty (1999) study,  he found that there is  a positive significant association   among the parents' school or   home  involvement and  academic achievement  in middle and high school children (King, 2009; Trusty, 1999; Watt et al., 2004).

A similar study was conducted by Hayes (2011).  He provided evidence  that parental school involvement  was positively associated with   academic achievement and growth of school  children (Hayes, 2011). The results  of earlier  studies explained that   parental home and school  involvement had an incredible positive   effect on

academic achievement and growth (Bogenschneider, 1997; Broh, 2002; Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Gonzálvez et al., 2019; Kearney & Albano, 2018b; Van Voorhis, 2003), which effectively helps to curtail the negative behavior of students, including dropout rate, truancy, and criminal activities (Carpenter et al., 2011; Carpenter & Ramirez, 2007).

Much earlier evidence examined the contribution of parental school involvement in the academic achievement of school children. It has also led to behavior problems such as school truancy (Cox, 2000; Stempel et al., 2017). Walls (2003) illustrated that school truancy was also linked and developed in school children due to lack of parental guidance and control, parents' unemployment, a lack of knowledge about school policies and attendance rules, and low parental education (Walls, 2003). Many schools offer different interventions and preventions to tackle the emotional and behavior problem of school children and support to increase school attendance. Whereas this study also recommended that family problems should be dealt with parents (Fortin et al., 2006; Lagana, 2004; Lessard et al., 2006; Marcotte et al., 2005), When compared to students who had parental school involvement, students who lacked parental school involvement developed behavior problems such as poor attendance, poor grades in class, and dropping out of school (Gonzálvez et al., 2016; Carolina Gonzálvez et al., 2018a; Kearney & Bates, 2005; Mortimore & Whitty, 2000; Sheppard, 2009).

In the Pakistan context, there have been a few studies on truant behavior. The findings of these studies also explained that family factors play the most important role in the involvement of truant behavior in school children (Aqeel et al., 2016, 2017; Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017; Hassan et al., 2016; Malik & Aqeel, 2017). For example, both father and mother's school involvement is playing a crucial role in the development

and eradication of school truancy in school children (Aqeel et al., 2016, 2017; Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017; Hassan et al., 2016; Malik & Aqeel, 2017). According to a study conducted by Aqeel et al. (2016), they described that those students who had more parental school involvement, had fewer chances to face different school and emotional problems, and they also had a lower probability of developing school truancy in school children. On the other hand, those truant students who had more mother school involvement, they had higher chances to face different school problems and develop school truancy.

*School Truancy, Family Economic Status, and Race*

There is a lot of threatening factors involved in chronic school truancy, including race and family economic status. The results of earlier studies revealed that those students who belonged to poor families exhibited the highest levels of school truancy and were involved in criminal activities. The data illustrated, 86% of truant students belonged to low-income families and were involved in criminal activities (Castellví et al., 2017; Romero & Lee, 2007). Previous studies revealed that American native students have the highest level of school truancy, followed by whites, African Americans, and Hispanics. However, Asian American students have the lowest level of school truancy (Castellví et al., 2017; Romero & Lee, 2007). State and federal data demonstrate that African American and Hispanic students have exhibited more school truancy in comparison to Asian American students.

The results of Texas data for 2010–2011 illustrated that 60,445 students were found as truants; they were also committed to one of three criminal activities. In America, 12.9% of the African American population lived, but 20% of students were found to be truant (Castellví et al., 2017; Romero & Lee, 2007). 50% of the state population is Hispanics, but 60% of the students were found of truant offences from the above mentioned population. The study data revealed that 76% of truants belonged to poor families and lived in poverty (Castellví et al., 2017; Romero & Lee, 2007).

Many previous studies have revealed that economic factors are one of the most important variables that lead to truancy. It involves living situations, financial status of parents and students' employment. According to Henry (2007), he found that 14.4% of secondary school truant students lived with their parents, 33.5% of students did not live with their parents; 27.6% of truant students lived only with single parents, especially their father; and 19.8% of truant students lived with their divorced mother.

Therefore, the findings of the above study revealed that students who lived with their parents, they had a lower probability of committing truant behavior. However, those students who lived with single parents had    Moreover, Henry also reported that those students who work 20 hours or more per week,  had a 23.9%    chances of being involved  in  or committing  truancy behavior. On the other hand, those students who worked five or less hours per week had 13.4% chances of developing truant behaviour.

Many earlier Studies exposed that family negative  factors contributed to the development of  school truancy in elementary and secondary school children (Geier et al., 2007).  The results of prior studies reported that those school children who had faced health issues and belonged to poor families were shown more school truant behaviour as compared to those students who belong rich families. A similar study revealed that those schoolchildren who did not attend their classes and school regularly belonged to  poor families  and  their parents did  not give  much attention to  and value education and school attendance (Geier et al., 2007). Numerous studies revealed that financial  and family status  factors,  including  lack of stable, affordable housing, poor parenting supervision,  limited access to health care,  and poverty,  were found to contribution to  school truancy in school children  (Geier et al., 2007).  A similar  survey report showed  that those  children  who belonged to  poor family had  a  25% higher chances being  absent  3 or more days of their classes or  school per month as compared to  those children who belonged   rich  families (Castellví et al., 2017; Romero & Lee, 2007).  Moreover, many studies demonstrate that both factor such as hunger and poor food has also  been linked to school truancy in children (Geier et al., 2007). Student mobility, homelessness,  housing conditions, and instability are considered some of the most  important  economic variables  associated with  chronic school absences or truancy (Geier et al., 2007). As community expansion changes family transportation,

employment, and child safety, it considered more contributing and complicated to absenteeism or school truancy (Jones & Burnett, 1965;Miller, 1986).

*School Truancy and Gender*

The results of earlier studies reported that there is an inconsistency between male and female school truants on school truancy in middle and high schools around the world. There is a fair amount of previous evidence revealing that girls had a lower probability of exhibiting truant behavior in comparison to boys. In a similar study conducted by Maynard et al. (2012), they found that boys were more likely to engage in truant behavior and juvenile delinquency as compared to females (Maynard et al., 2012; Perlman, 2009), In contrast, a study carried out by the U.S. Department of Education (2016)revealed a different prevalence of truancy between males and females (i.e., 13.8% of girls and 13.6% of boys). Though accurate school truancy prevalence may be difficult to find out across gender for numerous reasons. One of them could be the luck of parents' awareness of the school truancy or absence act or law, as males were always charged with school truancy or absence at a higher prevalence or rate than females (Maynard et al., 2012; Perlman, 2009)**.** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2017) found that 55% of males with school truancy were reported as petition truancy cases, as 45% of females were reported with truancy (Maynard et al., 2012; Perlman, 2009).

Other similar studies have found gender differences in school truancy in school truant children. So far, most studies have failed to report an accurate prevalence of truancy across males and females of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, leaving an obvious gap in the current situation (Perlman, 2009).

*School Truancy and  Grades*

The results of earlier studies revealed that school truancy was almost equally common in female and male students. In America, 50% of truant students belonged to and lived with single parents, and 33% belonged to poor families and lived in poverty. However, school truancy is almost always reported in the 9th grade in elementary and secondary schools (Byrne, 2013; Kronholz, 2011; Olson, 2008;Olson, 2014). Many previous studies suggested that students involved in school truancy in primary school. Primary attendance survey may further explain success and achievements in the 3rd class. Approximately 50% of primary truant students were also found truant in the first class (Castellví et al., 2017; Romero & Lee, 2007). The Barbara Bush Foundation (Byrne, 2013; Pence & Paymar, 1993), reported that school truancy was found in the 9th grade, followed by the elementary level, the 11th grade, and the 12th grade (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020).

Several previous studies have found that personal factors such as low self-esteem, confidence, social skills, lack of academic ability, poor peer relations, special needs, self-management skills, and lack of concentration are associated with child school truancy(Gonzálvez, et al., 2019;Gonzálvez, Kearney, Jiménez-Ayala, et al., 2018; Kearney et al., 2019). Many previous studies investigated the relationship between school truancy and personal characteristics such as personality traits, academic achievement, and self-esteem, as well as school children's coping strategies (Maynard et al., 2018; Rasasingham, 2015; Veenstra et al., 2010). Several similar studies have also explained the contribution of demographic information in the development of school truancy. For example, gender has been shown to play a major influence in predicting truant behavior most consistently, with boys committing truancy earlier and more frequently than girls (Maynard et al., 2018; Rasasingham, 2015; Veenstra et al., 2010). The pattern of findings for socioeconomic status (SES) and immigrant

background is somewhat less conclusive, although most studies seem to indicate that lower SES and an immigrant family background are associated with higher rates of truancy (Considine & Zappalà, 2002; Gonzálvez, Kearney, Jiménez-Ayala, et al., 2018a; Maynard et al., 2017c). Results have not been fully consistent across studies, however, and immigration status is often confounded with student SES, too.

Another important factor that is known to be associated with immigration status and SES and that has been found to predict truancy     is academic achievement, personality traits, and self-esteem. For example, many earlier studies' results   found high academic achievement and  high self-esteem to be related to low truancy rates (Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Hassan et al., 2016; Henry, 2007) whereas, those students who had extrovert traits of personality exhibited more truancy.  A similar study conducted by Veenstra et al. (2010) revealed that both authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were positively associated with school truancy in secondary school students. The studies mentioned above studies also found that many truant students exhibited poor academic achievement (Hassan et al., 2016).

**Institutional/Contextual Factors and School Truancy**

Truancy is a form of individual behavior that is closely tied to the institutional setting. It is therefore surprising that little research has focused on school tracks, schools, and classrooms as contexts of truancy behavior. Generally, there is implicit agreement that truancy rates differ across school classes, but the magnitude of these differences requires closer examination. The social composition of the student class is known to be a key characteristic of the school learning environment (Baker et al., 2020).Several earlier studies recommended that SES be considered one of the most important factors in the development of school truancy as it can be included in both social and personal factors (Baker et al., 2020; Hanushek & Wößmann, 2006). In these studies, it has been suggested that students in classes with a high proportion of lower SES and/or educationally disadvantaged classmates are at higher risk of negative academic outcomes such as truancy and school refusal behavior (Baker et al., 2001;Baker et al., 2020; Hanushek & Wößmann, 2006).

*School Factors and School Truancy*

Many previous studies have found that school is one of the most important factors in the development of truancy in school-aged children (Carney, 2015;Carney et al., 1972; Försterling & Binser, 2002; Henry & Huizinga, 2007; Kinder et al., 1995). Several previous studies have shown that a variety of negative environmental factors, such as peer influence, teacher attitude, class environment, and school administration, contribute to school truancy in schoolchildren (Reyes, 2020; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). According to Kronholz (2011), he described that school truancy can be triggered by negative peer influence, overloaded students, teacher attitude, and school staff in high school children (Kronholz, 2011). According to the expectancy-value theory, emphasized that those students who had healthy relationships with their classmates and

teachers had fewer chances of being  involved in deviant behavior in school. Conversely, those school children who had bad relationships with their friends in school and class were more likely to commit  deviant behavior in school that leads to school truancy. A survey  conducted by the  National Center for Education Statistics (2012–2013) Survey explained  that 41% of public schools who had  taught their students in multiple purpose buildings  and poor ventilation situations that led to deviant behavior and health issues  (Ginder et al., 2016a). In contrast, those schools that provided  facilities and opportunities for  their students in class found that they controlled and  decreased  deviant behavior in schoolchildren (Mendell et al., 2013).

There are enrolled in schools a lot of students who belong to different sects and religions from rural and urban  areas. They had many  financial issues and  managed their school fee issues  with tight  budgets or  resources to get an education (Geier et al., 2007; Reyes & Fowler, 1999). However, many schools had a lot of funds to eradicate financial issues in the  form of scholarships, increase enrolment of students in schools, and decrease involvement in truant behavior in school children. Other important factors include the school environment, which plays a significant role in reducing school truancy in children (Geier et al., 2007). For example, when schools provide a healthy environment for their children, they perform better in their academics. Those schools that had a stressful environment, including strict policies, bullying behavior, poor water facilities, and limited educational opportunities for their school students. Students from  these schools exhibited more psychological and health problems  (Geier et al., 2007). Moreover, demographic variables are considered one of the most important factors in the educational development of children. The role of the above mentioned demographic factors and variation may also create cultural divisions between teachers and students. Cultural  variation  is  extremely  important  in  the

educational development of problematic students (Reyes, 2020; Reyes, 2006). Moreover, language is also considered one of the most important factors in the educational development of students. For example, those students whose mother tongue is English perform well in educational settings (Kim Nauer et al., 2014). Furthermore, strict school policies, roles, and regulations play a significant role in reducing school truancy issues in students (Geier et al., 2007; Kim Nauer et al., 2014; Works, 2014). Punitive discipline strategies excessively expel those students who belong to lower income families and also involve severe truancy (Mapp, 2012). Punitive strategies gradually create a dropping out of school society and a vulnerable culture that promotes low achievement and school truancy among students of colour and those from low-income families (Gonzálvez, Kearney, Jiménez-Ayala, et al., 2018d; Mapp, 2012).

Many prior studies have also revealed that school factors such as, but not limited to, school environment, class size, ability and attitudes to meet every truant student's diverse desires, or the school's truancy policy may trigger and lead to truant behavior.. Wilkins (2008) reported that students who attended large schools with their own friends may feel more alienated or isolated in their school environment, so they preferred truancy to avoid these negative feelings and experiences (Wilkins, 2008). Such students do not feel relaxed, valued, wanted, accepted, or safe at school; they have the good fortune of being associated with a trustworthy person or friends at school. In overloaded classrooms, students have diverse needs and demands, whether they are social, instructional, or have communicated in other ways, and they cannot always be maintain and fulfil the criteria of expectations of teachers and they cannot also develop healthy relationships with their teacher, school staff, and peers in school. They avoid the above mentioned problems related to school climate and attitude that lead to truant

behavior. According to Henry (2007), 23 percent of truant students preferred to skip school and classes because they did not feel conformable and secure with their school staff, teachers, and classmates. Additionally, those students who do not feel secure, safe, comfortable and found their school a boring and painful place, preferred truant behavior over boring and threatening places, and sought to stay in comfortable and secure places such as video games, huts, community park, and washrooms to avoid this painful situation. Tobin (2009) recommended that imposing more severe punishment and plenty of punishment from school teachers and higher authorities could be stimulated and trigger truant behavior in school students. Therefore, impalement punishment from authorities should be counterproductive to preventing and improving truant behavior in school(Henry, 2007; Tobin, 2009).

### *School Instructional Quality and School Truancy*

Students' perception of instructional quality is both an individually and contextually relevant predictor of truancy. Students' perceptions of how "good" a lesson is and whether a teacher does a "good" job are assumed to have important effects on their motivation (Baker et al., 2001; Nolan et al., 2013; Reid, 2013). It seems likely that truancy behavior is also associated with perceived instructional quality (Baker et al., 2001; Baker et al., 2020). Indeed, this idea has been addressed in many empirical and non-empirical articles. However, few studies to date (Gottfried, 2014; Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017; Kearney, 2019) have used convincing methods to examine systematically the association between instructional quality and truancy. Similar previous studies aimed to focus on three aspects of instructional quality that seem highly relevant to truancy: achievement standards, instructional pace, and individual workload. All three aspects are "demand" characteristics of instruction and are thus potentially related to students' being over or under-challenged at school. In both

assessment situations and everyday lessons, teachers define achievement standards that students are required to achieve (Reid, 2005, 2013).

The higher these standards are, and the more students want to do well at school, the more pressure to perform they may perceive. In their panel study, Attwood and Croll (2006, 2015) found that both experience of failure and negative attitudes toward the value of education were important triggers of truancy (Attwood & Croll, 2006, 2015). Balfanz, et al. (2007) followed almost 13,000 students from 1996 to 2004 and found that indicators reflecting poor attendance, misbehavior, and course failures in grade 6 could be used to identify 60% of students who dropped out of high school. According to these authors, failing a course in the middle grades is a strong predictor of truancy because it has lasting effects on adolescents' perceived control and engagement (Balfanz et al., 2007). With the exception of a few studies focusing on gifted truants and their being bored in lessons (Baker et al., 2020; Renzulli & Park, 2000), research on the relationship between achievement standards and truancy has generally found a positive association between failing to meet standards and skipping classes.

The amount of time a student is given to learn a specific content or to solve a given problem is called instructional pace. Not being able to keep up with the teacher's pace in class is frustrating, and research has repeatedly shown repeated relations among students' perceived control beliefs, engagement, and academic performance (Balfanz et al., 2007;Balfanz & Byrnes, 2018b). Instructional pace is therefore the second aspect of instructional quality examined in the aforementioned study. If the pace of instruction is too rapid, students without the necessary prior knowledge are likely to fall behind (Baker et al., 2001;Nafisah et al., 2018; Sugai et al., 2016). In their early observational study of videotaped student behavior, Grobe and Pettibone (1975) found that

instructional pace affected student attentiveness. They did not explicitly measure truancy rates, but a lack of attentiveness during lessons would seem to fit into the above mentioned repeated relations of control beliefs, engagement, and academic performance (Grobe & Pettibone, 1975). School truancy and dropouts were also found as widespread global problems with various ratios in different countries (Maynard et al., 2017a). The interesting and unexplored debate is still continuing and open for further debate   related to use of many different definitions around the world. The different words related to the school truancy have been proposed in different  domains for school children. However, there is  a dire   need  of  mutual consensus  among scholars  related  to  above subject matter as  how best to describe or  define, address, and assess poor   school attendance in different levels or grades  of school students (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Lyon & Cotler, 2009). However, the concept has yet to be contextually defined and further modified in Pakistan. A few  cross-sectional studies carried out  on school truancy and  its causes  in Pakistani culture, revealed that school truancy is associated with   poor  academic achievement,  low self-esteem, personality traits,  permissive and authoritarian parenting styles  in adolescents (Aqeel et al., 2016; Aqeel et al., 2017; Hassan et al., 2016).

***Student and Classroom Perspective***

One central question to be addressed in examining the association between instructional quality and truancy is the level of analysis. Two very different perspectives can be distinguished. The first focuses on the teacher and his or her instruction as a cause of truancy. This approach focuses on the classroom level and on differences across classes; it is also called the between-class perspective. The second perspective shifts the focus to individual students and their experiences in the classroom: to how an individual student's perception of instructional quality relates to

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truancy, or the within-class perspective. Most previous studies have not explicitly distinguished between the two levels, but have either focused exclusively on the within-class level or mixed the two levels together (Attwood & Croll, 2006; Reid, 1999). In our study, we tease apart individual- and class-level explanations and disentangle the structure of triggers relating to truancy behavior. At least three data sources are regularly used in the assessment of instructional quality (Fraser, 1991): student ratings, teacher ratings, and observer ratings. All three perspectives have their own specific strengths and limitations. In the present study, we used student ratings because they best allow the association between instructional quality and truancy to be examined at both the student and the class level. At the student (within-class) level, the association of individual perceptions of achievement standards, pace, and workload with truancy can be examined in a straightforward manner as individual self-reports of each student are available. For analyses at the between-class level, these individual perceptions can be aggregated to class-average scores for each dimension of instructional quality. This score can then be related to the class's overall truancy score. Before student ratings can be used at the classroom level, however, some methodological and conceptual challenges must be addressed (Baker et al., 2020; Lüdtke et al., 2009). Importantly, sufficient homogeneity among students' ratings is necessary to obtain reliable estimates of class-level variables(Baker et al., 2020; Nolan et al., 2013). Recent studies (Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Gonzálvez, Kearney, Jiménez-Ayala, et al., 2018a;Kearney, 2019; Maynard et al., 2018) have demonstrated that class-aggregated ratings provide a reliable indicator of many constructs at the class level.

Theoretical frameworks for problematic school truancy have been proposed from various fields and cultures.. There is  mutual consensus   among scholars and academicians that  they are interested in  developing   new preventions and

interventions to tackle this heterogeneous problem, especially its negative outcomes including mental health issues, internal and external behavior problems (Fornander & Kearney, 2019b, 2020b; Lyon & Cotler, 2009; Maynard et al., 2018). Mental health problems are common in chronic school truancy, including externalizing behaviors such as aggression, noncompliance, and substance use as well as internalizing behavior such as depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, and mood swings (Craun et al., 2017; van der Woude et al., 2017). There are many risky contextual and individual factors associated with school truancy that are classified into school, peer, child, family, and community levels (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Kearney, 2008d). Maynard et al. (2017) developed different preventions and interventions to tackle and deal with school truancy's outcomes, including internal or external behavior issues as well as mental health problems (Maynard et al., 2012, 2013, 2017a).

There were many new approaches and frameworks that provided different explanations for dealing and tackling thecomplexity and heterogeneity of problematic school truancy globally. A multi-tiered systems of support framework was considered one of the most important and useful approaches to better understanding the above subject matter (Fornander & Kearney, 2020a; Kearney, 2019;Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Stephan et al., 2015). Many previous approaches described and explained a systematic examination process to rapidly assess and remediate behavioral and academic problems of truant students. Furthermore, this approach was based on professional decision-making methods related to distinct student needs to deal with problems based on preventions and interventions. (Maynard et al., 2013). A multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) model commonly organizes interventions and preventions into those planned to prevent trouble before starting (Tier 1), tackle and deal rising problems (Tier 2), and broadly treat problematic behavior of truant students (Tier 3)

(Cook et al., 2015). A MTSS approach of problematic school truancy can be mostly helpful to deal with and treat the mental health problems of school student's problems. Furthermore, it may be useful for guiding a wide variety of mental health and educational problems and it can be useful to guide scholars who are searching for new ways to develop new interventions to get rid of this problematic school truancy in youth (Fornander & Kearney, 2020c;Kearney, 2016a).

Furthermore, the MTSS model is used to define and distinguish between problematic and non-problematic behaviors of adolescents that can differentiate betwwn Tier 1 and Tier 2 and to determine moderate to severe problematic behavior that can differentiate between Tier 2 and Tier 3. For example, in Tier 1, school truancy has been commonly referred to as a short-term absence. School officials and parents have consensus on the above mentioned definition that is non-detrimental and legitimate (Kearney, 2008). In Tier 2, truancy is common manifested by the beginning of partial and full absences from school, in which case there is permanent delay or extensive distress prior to or throughout the school day, all of which could reason significant interference in daily life or academic functioning (Inglés et al., 2015). In Tier 3, more chronic or severe absenteeism is usually referred to by absence across multiple years, social disengagement, academic as well as risk of dropout (van der Woude et al., 2017; Van Eck et al., 2017).

On the contrary, several scholars disputed different concepts of the MTSS model, particularly related to the level of school truancy severity, to distinguish between Tier 1 and Tier 2, and from Tier 2 to Tier 3 (Robert et al., 2014). Additionally, there is a lack of clarity on the conceptualization and measurement of school truancy that differed significantly in previous studies; there are no well-set criteria for making the difference from mild to severe absence (Depaoli et al., 2012).

There is also ambiguity related to evaluation and severity impedes that school authorities and professionals who have to choose when or how well to execute alternative mental health, educational, and other services for school truancy in youth (Cabus & De-Witte, 2015).

Many academicians and research scholars are still trying to identify differences between mild and severer levels of school truancy from Tier 1 to Tier 2 in youth. For instance, Egger and colleagues (2003) examined those students who had missed at least 1 half day of school in the last three months(Egger et al., 2003). Those truant students who exhibited anxious, and school refusal behavior were shown to have more mental health issues, negative peer influence, sleep difficulties, and fears (Helen Link Egger et al., 2003). Henry and Huizinga, (2007) examined young people, defining school truancy as having absenteeism in a one month period. School truancy is significantly predicted by low educational aspirations, poor grades, substance use, and unsupervised time after school (Henry & Huizinga, 2007b). Furthermore, similar studies have also investigated youth who had missed as a minimum of 1 school day in the last week, noting that school truancy has been well influenced by risk-taking, substance use, externalizing and internalizing behavior issues, academic engagement, lower grades, and school dropout (Maynard et al., 2012, 2013). Many other scholars have also examined differences in school truancy and provided different explanations related to problematic and non-problematic absence in adolescents (Engelsen et al., 2013; Salminen et al., 2016).

The aforementioned studies are useful in giving broad information about how school truancy severity, referred to particularly as the percentage of days skipped, can be linked to common classes of predictor factors. Nevertheless, the above research has not concurrently examined multiple deleterious factors across various levels of school

truancy severity as well as growth (i.e., high school, middle, elementary) levels in this sample, mainly with a huge population. Such a study would help enlighten possible demarcations between (Tier 1) non-problematic, (Tier 2) problematic, as well as (Tier 3) severe absence by evaluating key timelines and assessment targets for mental health, school officials, and other professionals. The current research thus utilized a MTTS model investigation to recognize subgroups of students most in danger of school truancy at various severity level and growth (high school, middle, and elementary) levels. The primary purpose of the study will be to better understand how demographic and salient academic factors, considered simultaneously, influence levels of school truancy in children and adolescents at different developmental stages. Academic factors will integrate grade level, academic courses, letter grades for specific high school core, individualized education plan (IEP), grade point average (GPA), and eligibility throughout the academic year, as well as participation in school sports in the current academic year. The latter factors will consist of broad proxy determiners of school involvement. Demographic factors will comprise youth gender, ethnicity, and age. The secondary goal of the study is to develop an indigenous Likert type measure for assessing students' attitudes or behaviour toward truancy in school.

Keeping in view the objectives of the study and the aforementioned multi-layered set of risk factors, truant behavior in the present study can be best framed within the context of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological system theory. This theory contends that the psychosocial life of a child comprises a multi-layered set of nested and interrelated ecological systems. All these systems influence child development and adjustment (Berk, 2003). Based on the ecological systems theory, the interrelations among the following systems affect children's developmental outcomes: micro - immediate settings or environment; meso-link between 2 or more microsystems, such

as the home and school; exo-settings not directly affecting the individual but that influence the microsystems; macro - broader society and culture that encompasses the other systems; and chrono-consistency or change over the life course (Hong et al. 2011). Following a thorough analysis of the theory concerned, it emerged that child development and adjustment are neither controlled by environmental circumstances nor driven by inner dispositions alone. Instead, it appears that children are both products and producers of their environments, within the interdependent systems as described above. Therefore, the proposed study assumes that Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is not only an appropriate theoretical framework for the overall understanding of the nature and intensity of learner truant behavior but also proves to be of great value in promoting positive parent-child relationships, secure and supportive home environments for children, and fostering meaningful parent-school cooperation.

**Consequences of School Truancy**

Many earlier studies revealed that school truancy was associated with several negative consequences such as mental health problems, externalizing or internalizing behavior problems, delinquency, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, and the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other substances (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). In addition, those secondary and high school children who skipped their classes were found at a high risk of school dropout and school refusal behavior (Kearney, 2008). Many earlier studies also exhibited that school truancy was associated with deleterious consequences such as physical, mental health issues, marital conflict, financial problems, occupational problems, and social problems in later life (Brandibas et al., 2004; Fornander & Kearney, 2020;

Kearney, 2003, 2007;Kearney & Albano, 2018b;Kearney & Bates, 2005; Kearney, 2001; Kogan et al., 2005; Tramontina et al., 2001). When we look at the above subject matter, it is essential to comprehend the mechanism of deleterious factors for both problematic school truancy (i.e., transitory phases of unexcused, nonexempt, or illegal school absenteeism) and permanent /continuing school dropout tendency.

Additionally, the results of numerous prior studies demonstrated that school truancy had deleterious   effects on the mental and physical health of every person. In particular, it has negative effects on school students and their communities globally (Gonzálvez et al., 2018d; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Maynard et al., 2017b, 2018; Vaughn et al., 2013). There are different kinds of negative outcomes of school truancy. Firstly, the short-term negative  outcomes are defined as  poor school performance, school dropout,  disruptive behavior, conduct disorder,  substance use, criminal, juvenile delinquency, and gang activity (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000;Carney, 2015;Carney et al., 1972; Fortin et al., 2006; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Maynard et al., 2012). Long-term negative consequences include school dropout, poor mental and physical health, job insecurity, marital insecurity, violence, aggression, adult criminality, incarceration, and drug addiction (Försterling & Binser, 2002; Garry & Al., 1996; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a).

Furthermore, school truancy is linked to psychiatric disorders, internalizing (e.g., anxiety, depression, mood disorders), externalizing behavior (e.g., oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and antisocial personality disorder), risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and substance abuse (marijuana, tobacco, and other substance-related behaviors) (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). In addition, those students who were involved in school truancy had  a high risk of  dropping out of  school (Kearney, 2008c), which

may lead to economic deprivation and different mental and social problems in later life (Kearney, 2008c; Kogan et al., 2005; Tramontina et al., 2001).

Many research scholars agree that school truancy is a major educational problem in secondary and elementary schools around the world, with negative consequences for students' mental and physical health (Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Maynard et al., 2013). Its negative consequences are associated with poor school performance, disruptive behavior, juvenile delinquency, school dropout, conduct disorder, substance use, criminal behavior, and incarceration in high school children (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000;Carney, 2015;Carney et al., 1972; Fortin et al., 2006; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Maynard et al., 2012). Many previous studies have found that school truancy has a negative impact on children's lifestyle and behavior, which leads to negative outcomes such as poor academic performance, adjustment problems in social life, and criminal activity (Försterling & Binser, 2002; Garry & Al., 1996; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a).

Based on the aforementioned negative consequences of school truancy in children, these truant students can be distinguished by their lack of interest in school and low motivational level in class when compared to other school children (Dunn et al., 2004; Vallerand et al., 1997). Additionally, these truant school children experience more mental health problems such as social isolation , mood swings, anxiety , depression, and drug addiction (Försterling & Binser, 2002; Fortin et al., 2006; Lessard et al., 2006). These truant children neither obey nor comply with the rules and regulations of the school that lead toward low academic performance (Alexander et al., 1997; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; McGowan, 2014; Sommer et al., 2017). Moreover, school truancy was also associated with negative consequences such as school dropout, bullying behaviour, racial discrimination, school environment and financial

problems  in elementary and secondary schools (Garnier et al., 1997; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a), when they complete their formal primary education, they have developed a habit of truancy, which leads  to school dropout and crime  all over the world (Jimerson et al., 2000; Kilgus et al., 2015).

In a similar study, Henry (2007) discovered that school truancy had negative effects on the mental and physical health of schoolchildren as well as the community level, which led to worse outcomes such as school children engaging in criminal and sexual activities.. These truant students faced more short and long term negative consequences. In the short-term, school truancy has negative effects on school children behavior including poor academic performance, school dropout, maladjustment, juvenile delinquency, teen-age pregnancy, and drug addiction. In the long-term, school truancy has severe negative consequences and is associated with aggression, violence, job instability, marital instability, involvement in criminal activities and imprisonment in school children.  Furthermore, it was also associated with juvenile delinquency, crime, and imprisonment of  school children. These truant school children were more experienced school dropouts and had lower academic performance because of chronic school truancy globally.

*School Truancy and Academic Achievement*

Earlier  studies conducted by Henry and  Huizinga (2007) and  Spencer (2009) found that school truancy had harmful effects on academic performance, mental and physical  health of school children (Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Spencer, 2009).  A similar study illustrated that school truancy had negative  outcomes in school children, which were also  associated  with  academic  performance  and  school problems(Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017). Today, one-half million schoolchildren missed one or more months of classes during the previous academic year for a variety of

unjustified and justifiable reasons (Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017). Moreover, academic performance of school children  is  considered one of the most important  predictors which is linked to school truancy and future negative  consequences in later life of school children all over the world  (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Choi, 2007; Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Gonzálvez et al., 2016; James et al., 1989; Kozlowska et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2012). Furthermore, school truancy has been linked to drug addiction and  poor  academic  performance  among  high  school  students  (DeSimone,  2010; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2010; Halloway et al., 2008; Holloway et al., 2008; James et al., 2011; Yamada et al., 1996). Similar studies  revealed that those  school children  who used to drink  were found to get  low academic  grades  and were  involved in criminal activities and sexual behavior in high schools  ( Johnston et al., 2018;  Johnston et al., 2019; Slade et al., 2009).  A few  prior  studies found  or determined deleterious  ways that effects  on  students' academic success  because of  the consumption  of alcohol or drugs  have been  associated with  lower grades  on their tests or exams, having lower previous or current class' GPAs, or  having more academic problems (Abrams, 2020; Balsa et al., 2011; de Simone, 2010;Jeynes, 2002). In addition, DeSimone (2010) also reported that higher alcohol consumption by adolescent students resulted in lower grades as most students get 0.19 grades points in their overall GPA. Most of this negative or harmful    relationship between GPA and alcohol use could be directly attributed to the students' alcohol consumption and other uses of   substance (Jeynes, 2002).

### School Truancy and Mental Health Problems

There is mutual consensus across research scholars    that school truancy has negative effect on  mental health of school children,  such as  anxiety, depression, mood

disorders, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and antisocial personality disorder, risky sexual behavior, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, marijuana, tobacco, and other substance related behaviors (Lyon & Cotler, 2009; Sartorius, 2015; Weissbourd, 2003). Many similar studies also revealed that school students with mental health problems performed poorly in their academic and extracurricular activities. This could lead to school truancy (Fornander & Kearney, 2020a; Haight et al., 2014; Schulte-Körne, 2016; Shulman & Cauffman, 2006; Vincent et al., 2008). Furthermore, school truancy is linked to psychiatric disorders, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, risky sexual behavior, adolescent pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, marijuana, tobacco, and other substance-related behaviors (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), truant students had almost 2.5 times more probability of exhibiting anxiety disorder and three times more probability of exhibiting depression in comparison to punctual students. Many earlier similar studies described that school truancy was also associated, internalizing behavior (e.g., anxiety, depression, mood disorders), externalizing behavior (e.g., oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and antisocial personality disorder), lack of parental and school involvement, and low academic achievement (Vaughn et al., 2013). The Following psychological problems are mentioned and discussed in detail.

### School Truancy and Anxiety Disorder

Many prior studies have illustrated that school truancy is associated with a higher level of anxiety disorder in school children that leads to many negative consequences such as health problems (Egger et al., 2003; Egger et al., 2012; Elliott &

Place, 2019b; Kearney, 2002b, 2008b; Maynard et al., 2012). There are many different negative factors that lead to escalating anxiety symptoms in school children. These symptoms may occur due to separation from parents/ guardian, social interaction with school faculty or academic and peer stress. All of these factors may lead to avoidance of class or school by many way of harmful reinforcement in secondary schools (Kearney, 2008c). Interesting, somatic signs including stomach aches, fatigue, and headaches are also more common presentation of anxiety in school children (Campo, 2012). It may lead to school truancy, especially if reported by parents/guardians around the children as somatic complaints, as opposed to mental health problems. Moreover, anxiety disorder is normally associated with school refusal behavior, despite other kinds of absenteeism, including school absenteeism or truancy in general (Elliott & Place, 2019a, 2019b; Kearney, 2008c;Kearney, 2001; Pellegrini, 2007). In fact, 'school refusal or withdraw' is a word commonly used to explain absenteeism because of emotional distress or anxiety, in contrast to 'school truancy', which is commonly used to explain absenteeism related to antisocial behavior or traits in school students (King & Bernstein, 2001).

In contrast, the results of previous studies suggested that there is considerable similarity between ' school truancy' and 'school refusal', with several school truant students exposing symptoms of behavioral or emotional disorder, and several truant students facing emotional distress symptoms (Egger et al., 2003). There is a consensus among scholars or academicians to encourage or support the use of broader and appropriate terminologies to define school absenteeism, including 'extended non-attendance' (Pellegrini, 2007) and 'problematic absenteeism' (Kearney, 2008), which is commonly used to avoid unnecessary assumptions related to the underlying etiology or mechanism of the above matter or problem. However, many other scholars believed

that the co-occurrence of school truancy and school refusal is exceptional and that such kinds of subcategories or divisions are important for comprehending or understanding individual or cultural differences in the appearance of attendance issues (Heyne et al., 2019; Maynard et al., 2018). An interesting debate is still continuing and open for further debate related to the use of many different definitions around the world. The diversity of expression utilized across research scholars is an essential challenge to examining school presence or absence for school children. However, there is a need for agreement among scholars related to the above subject matter as how best to describe or define, address and assess, poor school attendance in different levels or grades of school students (Fornander & Kearney, 2020; Kearney, 2008b; Lauchlan, 2003; Maynard et al., 2014; Pellegrini, 2007). This has essential future implications, since previous evidence recommended that anxiety-related school refusal or withdrawal be investigated more compassionately by school faculty as compared to school truancy (Cook et al., 2015; Katie Finning et al., 2019; Lyon & Cotler, 2007; Stecker et al., 2005; Torrens-Armstrong et al., 2011).

Moreover, earlier studies found serious mental health, marital and occupational problems, as well as economic deficiency among truant school children (Brandibas et al., 2004; Fornander & Kearney, 2020; Kearney, 2002b; Rocque et al., 2017). Some other studies have reported externalizing behaviors such as aggression, noncompliance, and substance use as well as internalizing behavior such as depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, and mood swings (Craun et al., 2017; Maynard et al., 2012, 2017c). Furthermore, a similar study discovered that truant students from low-income families were more likely to have physical and mental health problems due to unstable family lives as well as public safety concerns that drew them to school truancy (Finning et al., 2019; Gee & Krausen, 2015; Maynard et al., 2013).

*School Truancy, Emotional and Behavioral Problems*

Several previous studies demonstrated that school truancy was associated with emotional problems (e.g., anxiety, depression, and mood disorders) and behavioural problems (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and antisocial personality disorder) in school children (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). A similar study illustrated that school truancy was positively associated with emotional and behaviour problems such as violence, aggression, bullying, oppositional defiant disorder, (ODD), and antisocial behavior in school children (Green et al., 2010;Reyes, 2020; Reyes & Fowler, 1999). A few previous studies found the association between school truancy and conduct disorder in children (Green et al., 2010; Reyes, 2020; Reyes & Fowler, 1999).

In a study conducted by Rubia, et al. (2009), they reported that school truancy was positively associated with externalizing behavior problems such as bullying, fighting with friends, violence or aggression, ADHD, and conduct disorder. School truancy, on the other hand, has been linked to internalising disorders such as fears and phobias, panic disorder, anxiety, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder(Green et al., 2010; Reyes, 2020;Reyes & Fowler, 1999; Rubia et al., 2009).

*School Truancy and Health Problems*

Numerous studies reveal that health problems of schoolchildren are considered one of the most important factor in development of school truancy in middle and high schools (Kim et al., 2014). According to Henderson et al. (2014), there are numerous negative consequences of school truancy, including physical health issues that lead to absenteeism and low academic achievement.. In contrast, a few studies found school truancy was also associated with health problems such as headaches and somatic pain

(Cole-Henderson, 2000; Geier et al., 2007; Henderson et al., 2014; Holbert et al., 2002) . The most basic physical reasons resulting in school truancy are considered as vision problems, dental health, asthma, diabetes, influenza, and obesity (Geier et al., 2007). Many other studies have found a link between school truancy and diseases such as abdominal pain, sickle cell anemia, chronic pain, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, and musculoskeletal pain (Geier et al., 2007), asthma problems (Basch, 2011; Randolph, 2012), obesity, (Ginder et al., 2016a) and dental disease (Geier et al., 2007). According to one study, students from low-income families are twelve times more likely than students from higher-income families to miss school for health reasons (Reyes & Fowler, 1999; Yoder & Edelstein, 2012). According to Ginder et al. (2018), those school children who were overweight skipped their schools as compared to normal weight students (Ginder et al., 2018).

*School Truancy and Learning Problems*

Many previous studies suggested that those students who skipped their classes exhibited more learning problems and did not perform well in their classes in reading, general knowledge, and math in comparison to regular school students (Romero & Lee, 2007). A similar study also revealed that school truancy was associated with low academic performance in school children. Moreover, the developmental period of adolescent students frequently leads to poor self-control in emotionally charged circumstances. This makes it even more difficult for children to consider the consequences of their behaviour and actions, especially in stressful situations (Romero & Lee, 2007). Adolescent development differs or is more difficult than adult development in ways that ensure differential management in the impartiality system(Romero & Lee, 2007; Somerville et al., 2011; Steinberg, 2009;Steinberg, 2009).

*School Truancy and Bullying Behavior*

Bullying is defined as violent and aggressive behavior in school students that is intentional and repetitive behavior in which a force gap exists between the bully and victim. The harmful influences of bullying behavior on a person's physical and mental health are considerable and aligned with different other important kinds of child abuse (Rettew & Pawlowski, 2016). Bullying victimization has also been recognized and it linked to many externalizing and internalizing behaviors such as school truancy (World Health Organization (WHO), 2019; Romo & Kelvin, 2016), poor hygiene behavior (Murshid, 2017, 2018), physical fight (Hertz et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2017; Muula et al., 2012; Romo & Kelvin, 2016; Ruddle et al., 2017; Siziya et al., 2008; Stewart-Brown et al., 2008), drug use (Brown et al., 2008; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2010; Hong et al., 2018, 2019;Kearney, 2019;Kearney & Albano, 2018b; Li et al., 2020; Rasasingham, 2015; Wiguna et al., 2018), alcohol use (Fleming & Jacobsen, 2010; Romo & Kelvin, 2016; Stewart-Brown et al., 2008; Wiguna et al., 2018), injury (Hertz et al., 2015; Maynard et al., 2014), and tobacco use (Brown & McCullough, 2020; Kearney & Albano, 2018b; Moore et al., 2017; Romo & Kelvin, 2016; Stewart-Brown et al., 2008) in-school adolescents from five of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. Moreover, prior study's' findings illustrated that those students who faced bullying by classmates or schoolmates were found in truant behavior because of their desire to avoid this consistent pain situation in school (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2019b; Romo & Kelvin, 2016; Wu et al., 2009).

*School Truancy, Violence and Aggression*

Education is a very important factors in thwarting mortality and morbidity (Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2006a; Maynard et al., 2013).Many earlier studies reported that school truancy has been recognized as an essential public health problem globally,

whereas school truancy was considered a primary risk factor for violence, verbal and physical aggression, substance misuse, and mental problems globally (Kearney, 2008c; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2019b; Siziya et al., 2007, 2008).

### *School Truancy and Criminal Activities*

There is mutual agreement among research scholars that school truancy is considered a leading factor in the development of criminal activities in school children. Many research scholars have exposed a revitalized interest in what is presently recognized as the concept of the 'school-to-prison-pipeline' (Rocque et al., 2017). According to Rocque et al. (2017), this current phenomenon explains the ways in which educational institutions have developed into a channel to the adolescence or criminal justice systems, by which those students who perform poorly at class or school, who are the absent from school, feel barred from the school or who are expelled from school, or who drop out and fail entirely, will frequently end up entangled in the adult prison system or the juvenile justice system. There are numerous studies on both imprisonment and education; the majority, as they act, comfort themselves by investigating school truancy or later becoming involved in criminal activities. Several research depends on individual-level variables or processes to explain school truancy. Previous studies examined factors that played an important role and contributed to school truancy and crime activities. Students faced many problems in their schools and classes, such as financial issues, which lead to alienation from class or school, and as a result, they commit or involve school truancy, which leads to psychopathology or criminal behaviour (Rocque et al., 2017).

### *Process of Crime Involvement in Truancy*

Previous similar studies conducted by Shaw and McKay (1942), Glueck and Glueck (1950), and Reiss (1951), all found links between school truancy, juvenile

delinquency, criminal activity, and recidivism in adults. Contrary studies found that school truancy and offending were not directly associated with each other's in prompt causal approach, but it could lead indirectly to involvement in criminal activities in later life (Coogan et al., 1951; Shaw & McKay, 2014; Symons, 1951). For example, Garry (1996) explains that school truancy is a 'gate-way' or trigger into later juvenile delinquency for adults. School truant children are more likely to use illegal drugs, drink alcohol and commit violent or aggressive behavior (Garry & Al., 1996; Rocque et al., 2017). It further leads to involvement in sexual behavior and criminal activities (Dryfoos, 1990). Conversely, there is ambiguity related to the causal inferences; school truancy may lead to juvenile delinquency and drug use, while these factors may assist in encouraging, supporting, and strengthening school truancy. As Rocque et al. (2017) found, there is still room for further debate in the above field because there is a scarcity of studies on the topic of school truancy and its link with criminal activities in adults. According to recent studies, school truancy leads to criminal activity via a vicious complex cycle of'stepping-stones'; processes and events that leave those who participate in them more prone to involvement in crimes later in life.

*School Truancy and Alcohol Use*

Several previous studies have shown that alcohol use is one of the most common factors associated with truant students' academic achievement (Henry, 2007). A similar study explained that alcohol consumption can lead to a significantly higher rate of school dropouts or withdrawal (c). As per the study of Yamada and colleagues (1996), they reported that addiction of alcohol use is directly associated with academic achievement performance and dropout behavior in high school children. It also provided clear evidence that those schoolchildren who used to drink were 10% more likely to perform poorly and get low grades in school. On the other hand, lower

academic achievement was also predicted by different levels of various drug use in school, such as   6.5% of students were frequent drinkers and 2.01% of students were found to regularly drink wine and liquor.  Previous research found that those students were more likely to use or consume alcohol; they were more likely to fail academically and later in life; and they were involved in various criminal activities as a result of these fewer or lost future opportunities for improvement (Green et al., 2013; Henry, 2007; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Yamada et al., 1996). Furthermore, two   factors, such as alcohol use or intoxication, were found to be the most vital factors in enhancing  school truancy and dropout rate in school students.  Henry (2007) reported that those school students who were involved in drinking alcohol one or more times in the  last  month were represented by  26.2 percent of   8th graders who were engaged in truant behavior and 26.4 percent of students from 10th grades  who were involved in truant behavior. On the other hand, Henry (2007) found that among those students who were reported once or more times for intoxication  last month, they found 37.2 percent of truant students from 8th grade as well as 31.2 percent of truant students belonged to 10th graders in high school. Basically, alcohol consumption may be directly or indirectly influencing students' academic    performance by escalating school truancy in adolescents.

***School Truancy and Drop Out***

There is a consensus among academicians that school dropout is one of the most important and common problems among   secondary and high school students internationally. A study conducted by Rodriguez and Conchas (2009). They found that school truancy was associated with school dropout, criminal activity and sexual behavior in  high school children.  It has been growing rapidly among  middle and high school children  (Rodríguez & Conchas, 2009). Several prior studies revealed that those

students who had truancy and dropout were more likely to be involved in delinquent activities, criminal activities, and sexual behavior (Johnson & Mueller, 2002; Kramer et al., 2004). This kind of school truancy included gang activity, substance abuse, and later involvement or commitment of adolescents or adults in criminal action, including auto theft, vandalism, and burglary, thus dragging them to imprisonment (Rivers, 2010).

A similar study conducted by Morgan et al. (2013) reported that 10% of school children were found to have dropped out of their schools because of school truancy behavior in the United States (Byer & Kuhn, 2007; Cox & Cox, 2005; Cox, 2000; Dillon, 2009; Morgan et al., 2013;Morgan et al., 2012; Spelman, 2009). A similar observation was reported in a study conducted by Morgan et al. (2013), They found that the majority of school children who skipped their classes had more chances to get involved in criminal activities and sexual behavior in comparison to punctual students.

**School Truancy and Prevalence**

Education is very important for preventing mortality and morbidity (Cutler & Lleras-Muney, 2006). School absence have negative educational consequences; it is a primary vital risk factor for violence, aggression, substance misuse, and mental disorders. It has also been well-known as an important public problem globally (Kearney, 2008a; Siziya et al., 2007). In a similar study conducted by Pengpid and Peltzer (2017) in six Southeast Asian nations, the prevalence of school truancy was found to be different in six nations. For example, in Indonesia, the prevalence rate of school truancy was 24.8% in youth and 32.0% in adolescents. However, in Vietnam, 15.1% of adolescents were found involved in school truancy (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017, 2019b). In the United State of America (USA), the prevalence of school truancy

remained unchanged from 2002 (10.8%) to 2014 (11.1%) in adolescents (Maynard et al., 2017b). A national survey conducted in Southern Africa among adolescents found that the prevalence rate of school truancy was 58.8% in Zambia (Muula et al., 2012) and 21.6% in Swaziland (Seidu, 2019).

Similar previous studies also found that both risk and protective factors were linked to school truancy in adolescents, including lower socioeconomic status, gender, and older age. These previous mentioned factors may lead to school truancy in adolescents (Maynard et al., 2017b; Muula et al., 2012; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017, 2019b; Uppal et al., 2010). Prior research has found a link between school truancy and externalizing behavior problems such as substance use (Alavi-Moghaddam, 2020; Bugbee et al., 2019; Holtes et al., 2015; Maynard et al., 2017a; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017, 2019b; Shah et al., 2012), bullying (Majeed, Aqeel, Shah, & Komal, 2018; Muula et al., 2012; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2019a, 2019b, 2019b; Shah et al., 2012) physical fighting (Maynard et al., 2015, 2017a; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017), sexual risk behavior (Houck et al., 2012), and injury (Holtes et al., 2015; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017, 2019b, 2019b).

Many earlier studies reported that school truancy was also linked to internalizing behavior problems, including mood swings, depressive and anxiety symptoms in adolescents (Finning et al., 2019; Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Lehmkuhl et al., 2004). A similar study performed by Hunt and Hopko (2009) also revealed that emotional and behavior problems are considered as deleterious factors that predispose to anxiety or depressive symptoms. They are also associated with a risk for externalizing behavior problems in adolescents (Hunt & Hopko, 2009) . Behavior theory also helped to figure out or conceptualize phenomena of school truancy in adolescents (Jessor et al., 1995). A few studies, on the other hand, found that there are

many protective factors that help adolescents and adults overcome school truancy, such as parental support (Robert Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Maynard et al., 2017a; Muula et al., 2012; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017, 2019b) and  peer support from class mate (Muula et al., 2012; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2017).

In a recent  study conducted by Seidu et al. (2020), they found that  problematic school truancy  is linked to  several  numerous  life-course issues, including psychiatric disorders,  internalizing or    externalizing behavior, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy,  juvenile delinquency, substance  abuse, marijuana, tobacco,  and other substances-related behaviors (Chou et al., 2006;Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). Moreover, adolescents showing too much absence are at high risk of  permanent  dropout from  secondary and high schools  (Gonzálvez et al., 2018c; Kearney, 2008a).  It  may escort to financial deprivation or many  occupational,  social, physical,   mental health issues, and marital conflict  in later life (Gonzálvez et al., 2018a, 2018d; Gubbels et al., 2019; Kogan et al., 2005; Spitz, 2013; Tramontina et al., 2001). for the  above subject matter, it is necessary to gain an understanding of and insight into risky issues for both problematic school truancy (i.e., transitory phases of unexcused, nonexempt, or illegal school absenteeism) and   permanent/continuing school dropout tendency (Gubbels et al., 2019).

**Theoretical Perspective of School Truancy**

There are several theoretical approaches to school truancy in different cultures. Some of the most important theoretical frameworks for school truancy are discussed in detail below. Several theoretical approaches have broadly explained school truancy in various frameworks and under different domains of school truancy globally.  In the subject matter of school truancy, the topic of interest has not been examined broadly in

Pakistani culture, so it is very difficult to find any studies on the subject matter. The majority of countries have identified school truancy as the first step that leads toward juvenile delinquency and antisocial personality disorder in school children. In a previous theoretical framework, problematic school truancy has broadly been examined to understand its causes or consequences in different disciplines. MTSS, ecological models, expectancy-value theory, risk-need responsivity (RNR) model, strain theory, labelling theory, and push and pull effect theory. These most important theoretical frameworks are discussed in detail below.

### *Multi-Tiered System of Supports Model (MTSS)*

Modern theoretical approaches to school truancy problems have focused on multiple tiers or classes of interlinked risk factors or outcomes and interventions or preventions to fully comprehend the intricacy of this heterogeneous populace (Foote et al., 2015; Gonzálvez et al., 2018; Ingul et al., 2012, 2019; Ingul & Nordahl, 2013;Kearney, 2002; Rasasingham, 2015). Many earlier studies have recognized common categories of these risk factors, including child, school, peer, family, parent, and community factors, that increase the jeopardy for school truancy or absence problems in adolescents and adults (Gonzálvez et al., 2018; Havik et al., 2015; Ingul et al., 2012; Kearney, 2008a; Skedgell & Kearney, 2018). These categories of harmful factors often work in tandem, especially with regard to severe and chronic school absence issues and school dropout or refusal (Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Caldarella, 2016; Freeman et al., 2016; Maxwell, 2016; Ready, 2010).

The family environment is regarded as a major risk factor that influences school truancy and educational achievement in both adolescents and adults(Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill & Taylor, 2004). A similar study conducted by Bernstein and colleagues (1996; 1999) identified many family factors linked to anxiety-based school withdrawal

or refusal. These risk factors comprised in lack of consensus in fifty-two family members with regard to rules or responsibilities, greater communication difficulties, rigidity, disengagement, and inconsistency of family rules (Bernstein et al., 1999; Bernstein & Borchardt, 1996). Lagana (2004) demonstrated that lack of family cohesion or support was more characteristic of adolescent students at moderate to high risk of school truancy and dropout as compared to those students at mild risk (Lagana, 2004). Family environment, culture, and structure are all linked to school absence and dropout (De Witte & Cabus, 2013).

*Ecological Model*

According to the ecological model, school truancy is a form of problematic behavior in school children that is delineated from an ecological perspective on the development of children (Bronfenbrenner, 1986;Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2013; Eddy, 1981; Kearney, 2007, 2008). It assumes that problematic behavior of school children is developed through the complex interaction of the child with different social-ecological systems surrounding the child, such as the family, peers, and the school environment (microsystem), the extended family (exosystem), and the culture, laws, and social-political conditions (macrosystem). In each of these systems, risk factors can be present that increase the risk of negative child development and behavior (including truancy) and protective factors that decrease this risk. Risk factors in more proximal social systems exert more influence on the child's development and behavior than risk factors in more distal social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Therefore, the above mentioned studies aimed at determining risk and protective factors for truancy are mainly focused on child-related factors and factors present in the microsystems directly surrounding the child, such as family-, peer-, and school-related factors (Gubbels et al., 2019).

*Expectancy-Value Theory*

According to the expectancy-value theory, it emphasizes that schoolchildren think about what they do vs. what they lose by attending school. If schoolchildren have good friends and relationships in school and class, they have a higher probability of performing better academic tasks and being involved in social activities, which helps to grow personal and social skills in schools. Family factors, especially parents and siblings, play an important role in enhancing or decreasing the maladjusted behavior of school children in school and home, but maladjustment in the school culture and environment also leads to school truancy (Kronholz, 2011).

*Risk Need Responsivity(RNR) Model*

The Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model is considered one of the most important models to tackle delinquent and problematic behavior for school children in judicial care (Andrews & Bonta, 1990, 2010; Andrews & Dowden, 1999). This model is used in judicial care as a guide for offering effective offender assessment and treatment services, and its effectiveness has been proven in several review studies (Andrews & Bonta, 1990). This model can be used to understand knowledge about risk factors and their effects on the development of school truancy, and it is also very important in the development of prevention and intervention strategies for school truancy in school children (Andrews & Bonta, 1990, 2010; Andrews & Dowden, 1999; Gubbels et al., 2019). In addition, there is an overlap in risk factors for truancy and delinquency, such as antisocial peers, substance abuse, antisocial behavior and antisocial cognitions Gubbels et al. (2019) for an overview of risk factors for school absenteeism and Andrews and Bonta (2010) for an overview of risk factors for delinquency). The RNR-model consists of the following three general principles that are important for effective treatment: (1) the intensity of intervention should be adjusted

to the level of recurrence risk (risk principle); (2) the intervention should focus on dynamic (treatable) recurrence risk factors (need principle); and (3) the intervention should be tailored to the juvenile's motivation, learning style, and skills.

*Strain Theory*

The general strain theory consists of a set of ideas that tend to explain crime as a result of the strain that a person faces in his life. As suggested by general strain theory, juveniles do not have ways to properly "deal" with their low constraint and high negative emotion.  That is why they commit crimes and delinquent acts (Rubington, 1978).  He suggested that those students who had parental and educational strain engaged more in emotional problems, delinquent acts, and crimes as a reaction. The present study's results also supported strain theory. The findings of the present study revealed that most  students had parental conflict and were more engaged in criminal activities.

*Labeling Theory*

According to this theory, deviance is a process constructed by society in which social control agencies assign certain people to be labelled as deviants, and they, sequentially, come to believe the label assigned to them and begin to act accordingly. The sociologist Chambliss, in one of his classic studies (Damico et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2021), identifies how the labelling process works in some high schools when he studied two groups of adolescent boys, the saints, and the roughnecks. Delinquent acts of truancy, drinking, wild parties, petty thefts, vandalism, and other violations were committed by members of both groups.  Even though the saints were involved in more crimes than the roughnecks, the roughnecks were the ones labelled as "troublemakers" and law enforcement agencies promptly arrested them. By contrast, the saints were labelled as being the "most likely to succeed" and none of them are ever arrested.

According to Chambliss, the roughnecks belong to lower income family backgrounds, perform poorly in school, and are usually seen negatively, so they are more liable to be labelled as deviants. Alternatively, the saints came from "good family backgrounds", performed well in school, and were generally viewed as positive by others. Only the roughnecks were labelled as deviant personas even though both groups committed the same offenses.

Many earlier studies have tried to explain the role of psychosocial antecedents and consequences related to school truancy (Aqeel et al., 2016;Hassan et al., 2016). As such, one study on the role of perceived parenting styles and social adjustment suggested that adolescents who were truants had less social adjustment as compared to adolescents who were punctual and high achievers, and truant students perceived their parents as more permissive than punctual and high achievers. Previous studies found the role of parental school involvement and problems faced by students and found a significant link with truancy and punctuality(Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017b). A similar study on truancy revealed that personality traits, parental school involvement. Many previous studies have found that personality and peer influence play a significant role in boys' truancy(Aqeel et al., 2016;Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017b).

On the basis of the evidences on these theories, it is evident that the most probable cause of truancy is related to social and family factors. However, currently, no extensive qualitative work to find the overall antecedents and consequences has yet been conducted in Pakistan and it is a dire need due to the rapidly increasing truancy in Pakistani culture.

**Rationale of the Study**

Many previous studies have revealed that school truancy is a major global problem that undermines efforts in Pakistan to improve literacy, social inclusion,

employability, and delinquent behavior (Finning, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2018d; Kearney et al., 2019). Several previous studies have revealed that several psycho-social interventions have been designed in developing countries to address the aforementioned subject matter (Gonzálvez, et al., 2018d; Kearney et al., 2019). Unfortunately, Pakistan has very few effective intervention strategies to reduce school truancy. A few cross-sectional studies have been conducted in Pakistan to gain insight into the causes and prevalence of school truancy in adolescents students (Aqeel & Jami, 2015; Aqeel et al., 2015; Aqeel et al., 2016; Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017; Hassan et al., 2016; Munawar et al., 2015). Previous studies demonstrate that almost 23 million schoolchildren aged between 5 and 16 years remain out of school. These studies also suggest that Pakistan has an unexpectedly high truancy rate, highlighting the need for an effective intervention to reduce truancy. This study explored the personal experiences of truant students in Pakistan in order to develop a new theoretical model. It also developed a new indigenous school truancy instrument based on the new theoretical model, previous literature review, and input from professionals.

Prior studies revealed that school truancy is a complex problem. Kearney's (2008a) multidisciplinary model of school truancy that is based on a synthesis of research papers identifies six distal and proximal components that contribute to chronic absenteeism and school truancy. These factors include characteristics and situations related to the child, family, parents, classmates, school, and society. Furthermore, other similar research has explored relationships between school truancy and social relationships, home environments, school factors (e.g., disciplinary and safety rules, teaching styles, and student-teacher relationships), and personal characteristics, including students' level of involvement in school (Kearney, 2008a; Kearney &

Graczyk, 2020; Rasasingham, 2015; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). The school context plays an essential role in the psycho-social and cognitive development of adolescents. Numerous factors, including academic, psychosocial, and cognitive ones, have been linked in research to school truancy (Fornander & Kearney, 2020; Kearney, 2002b). Particularly, truancy problem have been directly linked to low academic achievement, poor performance in mathematics and reading tests, and even the development of psychological problems (RobertBalfanz et al., 2007; Robert Balfanz & Byrnes, 2018; Filippello et al., 2019; Smerillo et al., 2018). Similarly, a number of previous studies reported that truancy problems have been linked to both internalizing (such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse) and externalizing (such as delinquent and sexual activity behavior) concerns in schools all over the world (Finning, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, Inglés, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2018d; Kearney et al., 2019).

Prior researches evaluated the causes and consequences of school truancy have largely used cross-sectional methods in Pakistan context (Kearney, 2008b). It has therefore lacked an explicit emphasis on comprehending the perspectives and personal experiences of youngsters, for instance, the myriad factors that influence young people's decisions to miss school, their feelings related to school truancy interventions, or how school truancy behavior develop over time. The qualitative study that has been conducted at this point provides substantial insights on the important role of relationships with peer, teachers, school atmosphere, and community/school partnerships in supporting school truancy (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Lyon & Cotler, 2009).

Unfortunately, the most of these researches has been carried out outside of the Pakistan. A few cross-sectional studies have been conducted in Pakistan to gain insight

into the causes and prevalence of school truancy in adolescents students (Aqeel & Jami, 2015;Aqeel et al., 2015; Aqeel et al., 2016;Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017; Hassan et al., 2016; Munawar, Aqeel, & Husain, 2015). Previous research on Pakistani school adolescents found that school truancy was associated with low academic achievement, introverted-extrovert personality traits, low self-esteem, and a permissive parenting style (Aqeel & Jami, 2015;Aqeel et al., 2015; Aqeel et al., 2016;Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017; Hassan et al., 2016; Munawar, Aqeel, & Husain, 2015). A better comprehension of adolescent's perspectives could contribute in the development and implementation of successful truancy-reduction programs.

With a literacy rate below 58%, and only 31 out of a hundred children complete the first five years in school (Andrade & Hussain, 2018). Pakistan is facing a serious challenge in ensuring the safety of all children. Children from the poorest families are more likely to enrol, stay, attend, and learn in school. Although retention and enrolment rates have steadily been improving over the years, the development has been slow to improve the education system, and the government has been unable to provide basic facilities to improve the education systems all over the country (Farooq, 2013). According to Pakistan Education Statistics (2016-17), a survey conducted by the Pakistani Ministry of Education, an estimated 22.8 million children between the ages of 5 and 16 did not enrol or attend any schools. Currently, Pakistan ranks second in the world with the highest number of schoolchildren who do not attend any school. For example, overall, 44 % of schoolchildren between 5 and 9 years old do not yet go to school because of meagre financial resources. In addition, around 5 million youngsters did not attend or continue school after their primary education. Further, around 11.4 million young adolescents between the ages of 10 and 14 are not getting a proper school education. In this regard, disparities based on socio-economic status, geography, and

gender are noteworthy. In the province of Sindh, 52% of the total population of primary school children (58% of girls) did not enrol in schools. Whereas in Balochistan, 78% of girls did not start formal school. In Pakistan, approximately 8.6 million girls and around 10.7 million boys attended primary schools, but the ratio dropped to 2.8 million girls and 3.6 million boys at the secondary level. Gender-wise, males outnumber females at every phase of education (Andrade & Hussain, 2018; Farooq, 2013).

Despite decades of research to better understand the causes and consequences of school truancy globally, a systematic review study revealed that very little is recognized regarding how to substantially reduce it (Maynard et al., 2013). Unfortunately, several truancy reduction program have been developed without clear and specific feedback from the target sample, and little qualitative research on school truancy has combined efforts to comprehend adolescents' personal experiences and identify possibilities for system reform (Bridgeland et al., 2006). There has not been any study of this kind carried out to design indigenous interventional programmes to effectively reduce school truancy in the Pakistan context. The implementation of policies and programs could be improved by a more in-depth understanding of school adolescent perspectives on how the system functioning and target areas for intervention.

To the best of our knowledge, the current study has the potential to make a significantly contribution to the existing literature because it was found that there has been very little research on school truancy in the Pakistan context. To fill these gaps in the literature review, this study aimed to explore the personal experiences of school students who had a history of school truancy in Pakistani context. This study was guided through different research questions. The main purpose of this study is to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in truant students. This study also explores and culturally defines school truancy in Pakistani culture with truant

students. It further develops a theory of school truancy based on the personal experiences of truant students in a Pakistani context. Moreover, this study included the following sub-questions: (1) how school truancy affects students in Pakistan and compare these findings with secondary and high school truant students. Moreover, this study also highlighted group differences and similarities in school truancy among school-going truant students, park truant students, and internet café truant students in Pakistani culture. Additionally, this study identifies and compares school truancy in male and female truant students in a Pakistani context. Furthermore, it verifies the causes and consequences of school truancy across different grades and ages of truant students. Additionally, the secondary purpose of the present study was to develop the psychometric properties of the School Truancy Scale (STS) to examine the risk and tendency of problematic truant behavior in Pakistani school-going truant students. Furthermore, this study aimed to clarify and determine the diagnostic efficacy of the STS in detecting truant behavior for truant and punctual school-going students. More specifically, this research  was also designed to examine the following hypotheses that were more closely associated with school truancy behavior  and the experiences of truant  school-going  students in Pakistan: Hypothesis 1 (H1): School truancy will be positively associated with school refusal behavior in both truant and punctual school-going students. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Truant school-going students will be  shown a higher level of  school truancy and school refusal behaviour  as compared to punctual school-going students. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Male truant students will display more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to school-going female truant students. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Male and female truant students will exhibit more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to female and male punctual students. Hypothesis 4 (H5): School truancy will positively predict school refusal behavior in

both truant and punctual students. The study not only addressed research gaps, but it also contributed to prior studies' findings.

# Method

**Research Design**

Exploratory sequential research design was used to achieve the desired goal of the study. This mixed-methods research followed the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) (Bradley et al., 2020; Sinclair, 2020) and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines (Graf et al., 2007; Grey et al., 2020).It was also approved by the competent institutional review board of the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan. This research was divided into two studies. Study I: Qualitative research; Study 2: Quantitative research

*Study 1*

Study 1 is the qualitative study. The aim was to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in truant students.

*Study 2*

Study 2, the focus was to develop the psychometric properties of the School Truancy Scale in Pakistani school-going truant and punctual students.

**Figure 1**

*Shows the Broader Research Design of the Present Study*
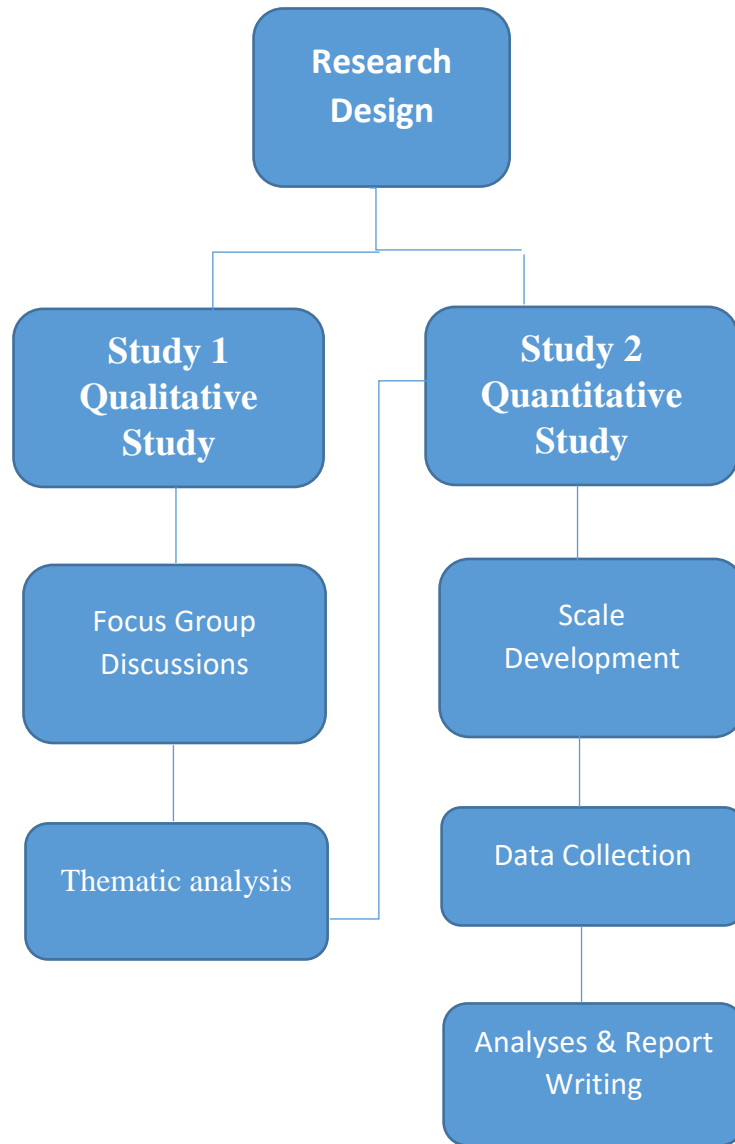
# Study 1 (Qualitative Study)

## Research Design

The qualitative approach aimed to provide a rich description of personal experiences of truant children (Marchetti et al., 2021; Neergaard et al., 2009). Moreover, it was used to explore personal experiences of truant children from different public schools, internet cafes, and community parks currently enrolled in schools. This present research was planned to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy and further to develop an indigenous theory in the Pakistani context.

## Choice of Methodology

This study used grounded theory (GT) methodology, which has been a standard (with many variants) methodology for social sciences research since the 1980s (Cohen et al., 1969; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Mattley et al., 1999, 1999; Shim et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). It is a universal approach, a way of thinking about, gathering, analyzing, as well as conceptualizing information and is helpful in developing and modifying new theories. It applies inductive reasoning, in opposition to hypothetico-deductive approaches, which are also used to develop theories through systematic collection and interpretation of data. Hypothetico-deductive approaches are being used in the next phase of current study. GT also associates subjective and individual personal experience with social processes through concentrating on themes that represent new phenomena, relations, and their antecedents and outcomes. The interview protocol of the present study was developed based on previous literature and recommendations of SEM to explore the personal experiences and opinions of truant children on the subject matter of school truancy. Therefore, the application of GT allows researchers to analyze

and interpret the findings in the light of numerous previous ideas or concepts from different fields of psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

**Research Questions**

The objectives of qualitative research were as follows:

1.     To explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in truant students.

2.     To explore the process through which truant students are involved in school truancy.

3.     To develop a model of school truancy in a Pakistani context?

**Sub-research Questions**

This study included the following sub-questions:

1.     What are the antecedents of school truancy in truant students?

2.     What are the consequences of school truancy for truant students?

3.     What are your thoughts and feelings about school truancy?

4.     What do you think about attending classes?

5.     What is the concept and definition of school truancy in Pakistani culture with truant students?

6.     What are the causes and consequences of school truancy across different grades and ages of truant students?

7.     What are the differences in school truancy between male and female truant students?

**Operational Definition of School Truancy**

*School Truancy*

The present study examined school truancy by different standardized definitions. Many previous researchers proposed various methods for detecting absenteeism both inside and outside of schools. In the present investigation, the criteria for truancy were defined as those school students who remained absent for twenty-one days without the consent of parents, teachers, higher authorities, or any medical reason (Aqeel et al., 2016; Colorado Department of Education, 2013; Hassan et al., 2016). In contrast, new definitions were introduced to find out school truancy in two new different samples of parks and internet cafés after skipping schools. For examples, parks truant students and internet café truant students were identified based on the reports by the management of the parks and internet cafes as well as the general description of the students, such as wearing school uniforms, having school bags, and being present in parks and internet cafes during school timings.

**Sample**

81 truant students (boys, $n = 60$; girls, $n = 21$), age ranged from 11 to 20 years (M=13.90, SD=2.34), were included middle and high schools of public schools from Faisalabad, Pakistan. Participants were identified inside the school settings (i.e., washrooms of schools, gateway-to-schools, walking in grounds etc.) as well as outside the school premises and present in public settings during class time (i.e., internet cafeterias and public parks located in the city etc.). These public settings are ideal for truant students who usually seek entertaining activities in educational institutions and find these outside the schools (Henry, & Huizinga, 2007). In the present study, the sample was split into two different categories, including truant students who were inside the school premises, and those who were outside the school. For those students

who were inside the school premises a cluster sampling technique was used based on the list of schools provided by the directorate of middle and high school administration. Schools were selected randomly based on cluster sampling, which were then visited and the selected schools' administration was asked to identify the truant students (based on the inclusion criteria of the present study) for focus group discussions. Whereas those who were outside the premises of the school and were identified as truant students by the management of both the park and internet cafes. A purposive sampling was also employed for data collection of both park truant and internet cafe truant students respectively [within school truant (boys, $n = 48$; girls, $n = 15$); internet truant students, ($n = 8$); park-going truant students, ($n = 10$)]the age ranged from 11 to 20 ($M = 13.90$, $SD = 2.34$) years. A few truant students who were older than 18 were included in this study because they repeatedly failed and skipped classes along with younger truant students in the 9th and 10th grades.

**Table 1**

*Characteristics of Absentee Students (N=81)*

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Grade first started Truancy** | | |
| Middle (6th – 8th) | 42 | 54.0 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| High (9th – 10th) | 39 | 46.0 |
| **Recruitment location** | | |
| Within school data | 63 | 77.8 |
| Internet based data | 8 | 9.9 |
| Park based data | 10 | 12.3 |
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 54 | 68.0 |
| Female | 27 | 32.0 |
| **Father's Status/Job** | | |
| Government | 7 | 8.6 |
| Private | 67 | 82.7 |
| Father Deceased | 4 | 4.9 |
| Unemployed | 3 | 3.7 |
| **Student's Residential location** | | |
| Urban | 59 | 72.8 |
| Rural | 22 | 27.2 |
| **Age** | | |
| 11.00 | 13 | 16.0 |
| 12.00 | 18 | 22.2 |
| 13.00 | 10 | 12.3 |
| 14.00 | 9 | 11.1 |
| 15.00 | 8 | 9.9 |
| 16.00 | 9 | 11.1 |
| 17.00 | 9 | 11.1 |
| 18.00 | 2 | 2.5 |
| 19.00 | 2 | 2.5 |
| 20.00 | 1 | 1.2 |

*Inclusion Criteria*

Participants were comprised of three heterogeneous sub-groups: (1) within school premises truant students; (2) park going truant students; and (3) internet café truant students. According to the inclusion criteria for the current study, the sample encompassed regular students from two different levels of schooling, i.e., Middle (6th – 8th grades) and secondary (9th- 10th grades) levels. The within-school truant students' inclusion criteria were: 1) screened for truancy on the basis of reporting by teachers or other concerned school authorities. Moreover, those students who remained absent from their classes at school time for the last 21 days of the last academic year without the knowledge and permission of parents, teachers, and authorities of schools or without any health issue were considered truant students (Colorado Department of Education, 2013). 2) Students who used to be present on school grounds, in the school cafeteria, or in the washroom during class time; 3) those identified as truant students based on school administration reporting. Similarly, inclusion criteria set for park-going truant students and internet café truant students included 1) students found wearing school uniforms and present at parks and internet cafes during school hours, 2) students identified as truant students by park and internet cafe management based on their regular presence in parks or internet cafes during school hours; and 3) A few truant students who were older than 18 were included in this study because they repeatedly failed and skipped classes along with younger truant students in the 9th and 10th grades. The criteria for truancy are defined as those school students who remain absent for twenty-one days from their schools without the consent of parents, teachers, or higher authorities (Aqeel et al., 2016; Colorado Department of Education, 2013; Hassan et al., 2016). In contrast, park-going truant students and internet café truant students' definitions were based on the reports by the management of the park and internet cafes

as well as the general description of the students, such as wearing school uniforms, having school bags, and being present in parks and internet cafes during school timings.

*The Exclusion Criteria*

The criteria set for the exclusion of within school truant students included: 1) those students who were absent from school but had medical-related or genuine issues with permission from school were excluded from the present study. Exclusion criteria for park and internet café students were based on 1) students found in such locations after school hours; and 2) students not wearing school uniform.

**Interviews**

In the first phase, face to face interviews were planned to explore the personal experiences of truant school-going students, but during the interviews, it was observed that the students were reluctant and were concealing their personal information related to school truancy. They did not expose and report the involvement of school truancy in front of their parents and teachers because, for this reason, they had fearful and confident issues exposing in front of parents and teachers related to school truancy in face to face interview situations. This compelled us to turn toward the approach of mini focus groups because it best suited the Pakistani context.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

The paucity of literature on school truancy in Pakistani culture led to the decision to conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gain first-hand knowledge relating to antecedents and consequences, leading to generating a theory of truancy in the Pakistani context. Ten FGDs with 81 truant school-going students, whose age ranged from 11 to 20 ($M = 13.90$, $SD = 2.34$) years, were carried out to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy. The purpose of the FGDs was to collect data on truancy from school students until saturation point. FGDs with truant

66

students from school, public parks and internet cafes was to help in the exploration and understanding of the personal experiences of truant students. Face-to-face interaction was beneficial in probing and developing an understanding of school students' truancy experiences. it was also helpful to verify the objectives of the present study about truant students' attitudes, beliefs, thinking, and underlying causal factors that lead toward truancy. All focus groups were carried out in the Urdu language. Most students (81) were recently recruited from different public middle and high schools ($n = 63$), internet cafes ($n = 8$) and public parks ($n = 10$). The majority of students (42) enrolled in middle (6th – 8th) classes and the rest of students (39) participated in High (9th – 10th) classes in the present study. Overall, the participants represented a set of students who skipped their classes or school without permission from their parents and higher authorities for the last few months. Most of the students (59) belonged to urban areas, and the rest of the students (21) belonged to rural areas. Thematic analysis was used to analyse emerging themes of FGDs relating to antecedents and consequences, leading to the generating of a theory of truancy in the Pakistani context.

### FGDs with School Truant Students

Six FGDs with 63 school-truant students (boys, $n = 36$; girls, $n = 27$) were conducted in different public schools in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Five FGDs were composed of 8 students in each group, but six groups were composed of 7 students because one student could not join us due to illness. It was conducted to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in Pakistani culture. Moreover, it was conducted to collect data related to truancy from school students until saturation point. A purposive random sampling technique was applied to include all of the school truant students. Six FGDs were carried out with boys and three with girls (those students who remained absent for twenty-one days from their schools without consent of parents, teachers, and higher authorities). Two FGDs were conducted with high school truant students, and four FGDs were also performed with middle school truant students. The number of truant students in the above FGDs varied from 8-12 participants.

### FGDs with Park Truant Students

Two FGDs with 10 park truant students were conducted in different public parks of Faisalabad, Pakistan. Two FGDs were composed of five students in each group. It was conducted to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in Pakistani culture. A convenient sampling technique was used to include the park truant students. Two FGDs were conducted only with boys (those students who were found to be wearing school uniforms and present at parks during school hours and were identified based on park management reporting). These FGDs were conducted with a mixed sample of high and middle school truant students. Number of truant students in the above FGDs varied from 4-6 participants. Park school students were briefly reported and discussed their personal experiences related to school truancy in a focus group discussion. This group of truant students provided rich detail information related

to truancy because they looked confident and fearless. Moreover, it was conducted to collect data related to school truancy from students' school until saturation point.

*FGDs with Internet Cafes Truant Students*

Two FGDs with eight park truant students were conducted in different public internet cafes in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Five FGDs were composed of 4 students in each group. It was conducted to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in Pakistani culture. A convenient sampling technique was also used to incorporate some of the internet cafe truant students. Two FGDs were only performed with boys (those students who were found to wear school uniform at parks during school timings and identified based on reporting by internet cafe management). These FGDs were conducted with a mixed sample of high and middle school truant students. The number of truant students in the above FGDs varied from 4-4 participants. In focus group discussion, Internet cafe school students discussed their personal experiences related to school truancy. This group of truant students provided less detailed information related to truancy because they had confidence issues during focus group discussion. Moreover, it was conducted to collect data related to school truancy from students' school until saturation point.


*Focus Group Guide*

A 'topic guide' was prepared on the basis of a literature review that included 24 questions. For instance, what do you think about school truancy? What are the antecedents of school truancy? What are the consequences of school truancy? However, probing questions about school truancy were developed in order to elicit a wide range of responses. The new questions were generated to explore any new issues and personal experiences related to school truancy that raised by the respondents after each focus

group discussion. Those questions that appeared to be relevant to the present study aims were revised, modified and new categories were also developed. Those questions that did not seem appropriate in nature were deleted or discarded from the focus group guide/Interview protocol (See Appendix A).

**Figure 2**

*Characteristics of Truant School-Going Students in Mini-Focus Group Discussions (MFGDs) (N=81)*
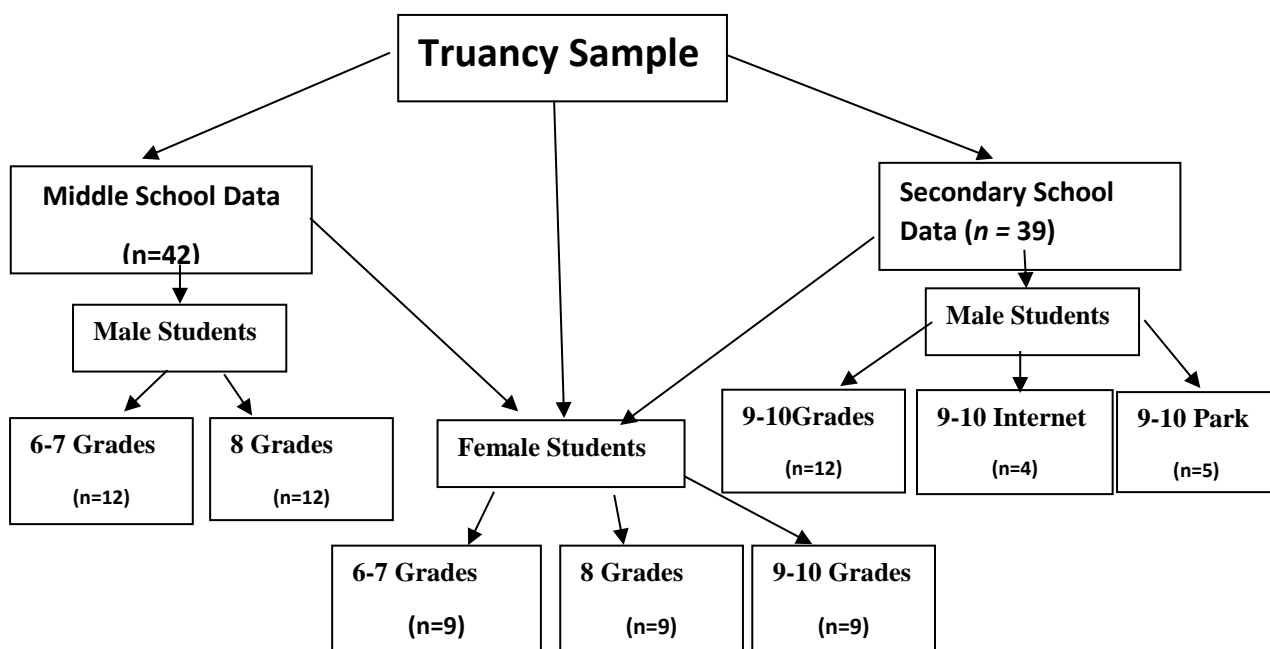
**Procedure**

This present study was carried out in agreement with the ethical instructions of the American Psychological Association. Additionally, it was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the National University of Modern Languages and Islamabad, Pakistan. Participants were approached for FGDs from different public schools, internet cafes, and community parks, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Approval to conduct the current study was obtained from the District Education Officer (DEO), the higher executive authority of public schools, after explaining the purpose of the study and ensuring that all information of school-age students would be kept confidential. All focus groups were carried out in the Urdu language. All research participants were involved in focused group discussions (FGDs) by one of two research assistants. Ten FGDs were audio-recorded and transcribed. Pseudonyms were applied when required. Verbal and written informed consent was obtained by all volunteer study participants for audio tape-recording. An interview protocol and guidelines for FGDs were established, which comprised of open-ended questions to explore personal experience related to school truancy, which were raised by the respondents after each focus group discussion. The FGDs sought to get a detailed and rich understanding of the abovementioned subject. The truant students' real life experiences were probed deeply to recognize and understand the underlying school truancy concept that the researcher studied and analyzed to develop a new indigenous theory in the Pakistani context. In FGDs, a small (4-12) group of participants are allowed to communicate much more openly and freely to provide more comprehensive information related to relevant topics. The detailed information of the study questions was not exposed in the focus group discussion because they had confidence issues that could interrupt the real information of participants. Instead, the generic information on the topic was described to the study's participants, and the focus group discussion was directed and guided further

discussion based on their detailed responses. As per the inductive methodology of grounded theory (GT), the preliminary open-ended questions, used in the focus group discussion were developed on the basis of theoretical and empirical literature. New questions were further developed and old questions were modified in light of the focus group discussion, as they were reported and analyzed. The focus group discussion was directed and guided, which included questions such as: "What does' 'school truancy' mean to you?" and "What we think about the antecedents and consequences of school truancy?" "As needed by grounded theory (GT), focus group discussion was conducted with three different groups of park truant, school truant, and internet cafe truant students for theoretical development continued simultaneously until saturation was obtained along with developing a new indigenous theory of truancy (Shim et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). All focus group discussions were voice recorded, analyzed, categorized, and reported in different steps of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an important and common kind of analysis in qualitative studies. It focuses on identifying, analyzing and interpreting meanings or themes in qualitative data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze emerging themes of mini focus group discussions relating to antecedents and consequences, leading to the generating of a theory of truancy in the Pakistani context.

**The Research Team**

The coding process was carried out by a total of 10 study participants, all of whom were associated with clinical psychology training programmes. Four researchers served as both mini-focus group facilitators and coders (2 doctoral students and 2 M.Phil. students); three team members participated in coding (1 doctoral student and 2 M.Phil. students); and three additional team members attended consensus coding meetings (3 faculty members from the Department of Psychology, Foundation University of Islamabad).An explanation of the study's team members is required to understand and recognise potential areas of researcher bias, social or interpersonal

power, and potential influence on the data analysis. For this purpose, the consensus qualitative research method of analysis was used in this study (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997).

**Data Management and Analysis Plan**

Two researchers independently reviewed and transcribed the whole audio-recorded mini focus groups verbatim, identifying and describing relevant statements and developing the ideas that emerged. A research team of psychologists discussed and resolved conflicting views on the content of a theme. After that, subject matter experts (SMEs) were requested to refine and further improve the initial draft. Furthermore, the researcher used approaches such as active listening, unconditional acceptance, and clarification to support the validity of the findings and prevent bias. Moreover, in accordance with the qualitative descriptive approach, the researcher and the supervisor conducted a two-phase analysis of the data in the current study to prevent bias. A bottom-up inductive coding method was employed to extract codes and themes from the factual information in order to understand   participant perspectives related to the study. The present study was conducted with the help of two researchers who were involved in conducting mini focus groups and data analysis. Firstly, one permanent member of the current research team (who was assisted in conducting the mini focus groups) read and wrote each mini focus group as well as used relative coding in assigning unique descriptive codes that help to comprehend the participants' worldview and language (e.g., "no one loved me in class," "teacher insulted and said to get out of my class for minor mistakes") to small segments of the focus group discussion transcript. The team members and researchers of the study took turns separately applying this method to batches of 3 texts, which had been previously reviewed, reconciled differences, and revised by the subject experts.  After  analysis of the first five  mini focus groups (once codes have been  addressed saturation point), two

members of this study were assigned to code review or discussion, applying pattern coding process to change the similar codes into novel themes based on associations between code content (for example, codes of "peer influence," "gang involvement," "bullying," "conflict with teachers," and "conflict with peers" have been gathered into a single separate theme as "school problems"). The two team members worked collectively to develop, modify, and reconcile a draught report for each unique code in the present study (which defined the code and theme provided illustrations of its usage for educational settings) or a graphical model (which is reported in Figure 6, 7) to explain the inter-connection among all the themes to comprehend this study's new model. The whole team of study and subject matter experts (SME) further refined, provided remarks and feedback on revised draughts for further improvement of themes and the new model. In phase 2, the two independent analysis team members as M.Phil and PhD scholars used the list of well-described, reported, and thematically arranged coding schemes to code the other five mini focus groups as well as iteratively modify or revise the themes through the constant comparison technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser et al., 1967). Furthermore, the aforementioned team members used a close-coding approach to analyze each mini focus group from a holistic view to explore and identify causes and consequences of school truancy in school-going students (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Mattley et al., 1999; R. Miller & Brewer, 2015). Each team member individually read the whole focus group or transcribed an analytical memo, which described (a) the key psycho-social and academic factors that inclined the youth's school truancy behaviors, and (b) what is the consequence of school truancy? All team members shared their complete summary and description of their memos (for every focus group) or refined and modified them by proper discussion. Additionally, for the draught of a short narrative description and summary

reported in the result table, the research team accessed close codes, themes, analytic memos, full summaries, and research notes.

Moreover, subject matter expert (SME) discussions were incorporated with feedback from different research assistants as M.Phil and PhD scholars in the study meeting after all focus groups had been done. But earlier, to complete analysis of the study, to review, organize, and global themes, they noted and reported from the focus group participants in the focus group discussion. The author of the study summarized and reviewed the findings of the committee approach in an analytic memo, wherein it has been applied in the data analysis procedure. Secondly, the team provided a revised and refined draught of the study's findings to the study assistants for their feedback and input for improvement on this draft. In the second committee approach, research assistants delivered their feedback and input for improvement of a revised draught that facilitated the study team's clarification and interpretation of the results. Inter-rater reliability was achieved through two different committee approaches to reduce bias of researchers and other members.

# Results

The analysis of the FGDs data revealed a number of themes and subthemes, indicating the antecedents in Table 2 and the consequences of those antecedents in Table 3, relating to truancy in children, which are from social, biological, and cultural factors. There were 9  global themes extracted out of the FGDs as antecedents, which included peer influence, impact of schools, personal characteristics, entertaining activities, family problems, media influence, self-esteem, morality, group adherence, and self-concept. Whereas the list of global themes discovered as consequences comprised of six themes in total, including the impact of schools, personal characteristics, entertainment activities, drug usage, sexual activities, and psychological problems. All of these global themes, are followed by several organized themes, which are further followed by their basic themes, respectively. The themes gathered are based on the mini-focus group discussions from a total of 81 participants, including males and females, with an age range of  5 to 20 ($M = 13.90$, $SD = 2.34$) years, and classes ranging from class 6 to class 10. These themes are elaborated on detail in later sections of the study.

**Table 2**

*Thematic Analysis of Truant School-Going Students' Perspectives on the Antecedents Underlying School Truancy in the Pakistan Context (N = 81)*

| Global Themes | Organize Themes | Categories | School-going male truants | | | | | Internet cafe | Internet cafe | Park | Park | School-going female truants | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6-7 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | |
| 1-Peer influence | 1-Friend company | Enjoyment with group/separate friends | * | * | | * | *** | ** | ** | **** | ** | | * | * | 21.18% |
| | | Travailing with friends on other cities | | | | | * | | * | * | ** | | | | 5.88% |
| | | For eating purposes | | | | | * | | | ** | | * | | | 4.70% |
| | | Involvement in Sports activities (football, cricket, kabaddi) | | | | ** | ** | ** | * | * | * | * | | *** | 15.29% |
| | | Gratification from sexual activities with friends | | | | | * | * | | *** | | | | | 5.88% |
| 2- Academic or School Problems | 1-Physical Punishment | Excessive Physical Punishment with sticks and slaps | ** | *** | *** | **** | **** * | ** | * | ***** | ** | *** | *** | ** | 41.18% |
| | 2-Psychological Punishment | Apprehension or phobias about punishment from teachers | * | * | | | ** | | * | | * | | ** | *** | 12.94% |
| | 3-School Practices | Punishment on favouritism/Discrimination basis e.g. tuition students, elite class students | | | * | * | | | | * | | * | | * | 5.88% |
| | | Lenient attendance policies for favoured students. | | | * | | * | | | * | | | | | 3.52% |
| | 4- Relationship between teachers | Cruel and harsh behaviour from Male, Female teachers and Physical trainer (P.T) against dull/ un-intellectual students | * | ** | ** | **** | ** | ** | * | **** | *** | * | *** | ** | 31.76% |
| | | Homosexual behaviour of male Teachers towards students | | * | | | | | * | ** | | | | | 4.70% |
| | | Teacher stereotypic behaviour against insensate students | | * | * | * | | | * | * | * | | ** | * | 10.58% |
| | | Confusing teaching methodology/styles | | * | * | | | | | * | ** | | | * | 7.05% |

| Global Themes | Organize Themes | Categories | School-going male truants | | | | | Internet cafe 9-10 | Internet cafe 9-10 | Park 9-10 | Park 9-10 | School-going female truants | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6-7 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | |
| | 5-Classroom problems, climate and structures | Poor instructional quality of teachers | * | * | * | * | | | * | | * | | * | | 8.23% |
| | | difficult classroom schedule | * | | ** | * | | | * | | * | | ** | | 9.41% |
| | | Issues regarding class room premises | | ** | **** | ** | | | * | | | | * | | 11.76% |
| | 6- School instructional and curriculum style | Syllabus shifting language comprehension barrier (conversion from first language to secondary language) | ** | | * | ** | | | * | ** | ** | ** | ** | *** | 20% |
| | | Fixed criteria of subjects to select e.g. (Science Math and Arabic), which is most difficult and boring subjects | | *** | * | **** | * | | ** | *** | *** | **** | **** | ** | 31.76% |
| | | Fix system in language selection of syllabus especially Urdu and English language | * | | * | ** | | | * | ** | **** | ** | **** | *** | 23.52% |
| | 7-Poor academic achievement | flunked in previous grades e.g. supplies in Math and other subject | | | **** | * | * | ** | | *** | * | ** | ** | ** | 21.18% |
| | | Incomplete home assignments | | ** | ** | * | * | | * | *** | * | ** | ** | ** | 20% |
| | 8-Violation of school rules and policies | Administrative issues (Fee problems/books problems/proper uniform problems) | ** | * | ** | * | * | | * | *** | * | * | | * | 16.47% |
| | | Excessive Violation of the school laws by teachers and students | * | | | * | * | | * | * | | | | | 5.88% |
| | | Hygienic problems | | | | | | | | | * | | | | 1.18% |
| | | Lack of teacher and parent coordination about problematic issues of the students | ** | | *** | | * | | | **** | ** | * | | | 15.29% |
| | 9-Inadequate screening/assessment for admission arts and science | In appropriate Enrolment of hafiz Quran students in 8th grade after completion of Hafiz e Quran degree without proper screening of his/her academic level | | | | | | * | * | *** | * | * | | | 7.05% |

| Global Themes | Organize Themes | Categories | School-going male truants | | | | | Internet cafe | Internet cafe | Park | Park | School-going female truants | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6-7 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | |
| 3 Personal/ individual factors | 1-Aggression | Fight with friends, bullying other school mates | | | | | * | | * | ** | | * | | * | 7.06% |
| | | inconsiderate behaviour against Teachers | * | * | * | * | * | * | | ** | * | | | | 10.59% |
| | | Fight with another group | | | | * | * | ** | | *** | | | | | 8.23% |
| | 2-Future orientation | No Future orientation | | | | * | | * | * | **** | *** | * | ** | *** | 18.82% |
| | 3-Motivation and interest | Lack of interest and motivation for study | | | ** | *** | * | ** | ** | ** | *** | ** | ** | * | 23.52% |
| | 4-Procrastination | Extreme delay of school assignments | | | * | ** | * | * | * | ** | ** | ** | * | * | 16.47% |
| | 5-Careless | Incompetency about school activities | | | | | ** | ** | * | *** | *** | * | * | ** | 17.65% |
| 4-Engaging activities | 1- Internet addiction | Excessive use of Cell phones for adult themed movies, Songs, and conversing to girls | | | | | *** | * | * | | | | | | 5.88% |
| | 2-Re-creational activities | Games (fighting games) | | | * | ** | * | | * | | | | | | 5.88% |
| | | Affiliation with political parties | | | | | | | | * | | | | | 1.18% |
| | | Excessive Internet usage | | ** | *** | ** | | ** | * | *** | | | | | 15.29% |
| 5-Family problems | 1- Financial problems | Fee and travelling cost issue (Urban students) | | * | ** | *** | * | | ** | **** | ** | ** | *** | *** | 27.06% |
| | 2-Parental Problems | Divorce/ separation of parents | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | 2.35% |
| | | Death of parents | | * | | | * | | | | | | * | * | 4.70% |
| | | Authoritative parenting style | * | | * | | * | | | * | * | | | | 5.88% |
| | | Illiterate parents | **** | **** | ****** | *** | *** | * | | *** | ** | **** | **** | *** | 43.52% |
| | | Over pampered/neglected child | | | * | * | ** | | | * | * | | | | 7.05% |
| | | Lack of travelling opportunities in village | | | | | | | | ** | ** | | | | 4.70% |
| | | Car, Motor bike (Urban students) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Excessive chores of home (Urban students) | | | | | * | | | *** | | | **** | *** | 12.94% |

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| Global Themes | Organize Themes | Categories | School-going male truants | | | | | Internet cafe | Internet cafe | Park | Park | School-going female truants | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6-7 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | |
| | | Lack of Parental control & monitoring | | | | | * | ** | ** | **** | ** | | | | 12.94% |
| | | First born | | | * | | * | | | | | | | * | 3.52% |
| | | last born | | | | | | | | | | | | * | 1.18% |
| | | Harsh attitude of older siblings | | | * | | * | | * | *** | * | * | *** | * | 14.11% |
| 6-Electronic Media influence | Media influence | Aggressive English films on HBO and STAR Movie Channels | * | | | | * | | * | ** | | | | * | 7.06% |
| | | Stage drama with Abusive language | | | | | | | | * | | | | | 1.18% |
| | | romantic songs | | | | | * | | | *** | | | | | 4.70% |
| | | Aggressive cartoon | ** | | | | | | | | | | ** | | 4.70% |
| 7-Self Esteem | 1- Self-confidence due to deindividuation | High Self-Esteem in dull students | | | ** | * | ** | * | | ** | * | | | | 10.59% |
| | | No remorse | | | | | | * | | **** | | | | | 5.88% |
| | 2- Self confidence level in internal self | Low Self-Esteem in dull students | | * | * | * | * | | * | | ** | ** | ** | *** | 16.47% |
| | 1- Self- Concept level in Group Truancy | High Self- Concept in dull students | | | * | * | ** | ** | * | ** | * | | | | 11.76% |
| | 2- Self- Concept level in Separate Truancy | Low Self- Concept in dull students | | | * | * | * | | * | | * | * | * | ** | 10.59% |
| 8- Ethical and moral values | Lack of religious awareness | Lack of religion knowledge | | | * | | | | * | *** | | | | | 5.88% |
| | | Violation of moral values | | | * | * | ** | ** | | **** | | | | | 11.76% |
| 9-Group Conformity | 1-Group/Gang Pressure | Adherence towards group/gang for deviant acts | | | | ** | * | ** | | **** | ** | | | | 12.94% |
| | 2-Group facilitation | Group members resolve fiscal problems | | | | * | * | | | ** | | | | | 4.70% |
| | | Group compliance | | | | * | * | * | * | *** | | | | | 8.23% |

| Global Themes | Organize Themes | Categories | School-going male truants | | | | | Internet cafe | Internet cafe | Park | Park | School-going female truants | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6-7 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | |
| | 3-Fear of group rejection | Lose of support from the group | | | | | | | | ** | * | | | | 3.52% |
| | | Loss of monetary support | | | | | | | | * | * | | | | 2.35% |
| | | Loss of group identity | | | | | | | | * | * | | | | 2.35% |

*Note*. * is showing prevalence rate of each antecedent's category in different level of male and female truant school-going students. Column represents three types of themes and classes of truant students.

**Main Antecedents of School Truancy**

School factors include instructional and curriculum style, friend company, physically and psychological punishment, frozen minds and negative thinking patterns about teachers, violations of school rules and policies, classroom problems, poor academic achievement, inadequate screening/assessment for admission to arts and science, classroom problems, climate and structures). Personal factors (aggression, future orientation, motivation and interest, procrastination, and carelessness), Engaging activities (internet addiction and re-creational activities), Family problems (financial problems and parental problems), Truant students most frequently reported electronic media influence (media influence), ethical and moral values (lack of religious awareness), and group conformity (group/gang pressure, group facilitation, and fear of group rejection) (Table 2)

In Table 2, the results of the study broadly explain the antecedents extracted from focus group discussions conducted with three different school-going truant students. Throughout the discussion generated in the focus group, the truant students, both males and females, identified a number of antecedents relating to their truancy, from personal factors to familial and peer factors to social factors included. Other factors which the students discussed included teachers' attitude and biasness to the difficulty of the subject as well as the media's influence on their truancy. In regards to schools and teachers the students hinted mainly towards the attitude and biasness of some teachers, and also how the difficulty of a particular subject can contribute towards truancy. Other themes which were found relating to school and teachers included punishment, classroom problems, and inappropriate selection of subjects or curriculum. As for the factors relating to personal characteristics, the students pointed out themes such as carelessness, low level of motivation, issues regarding self-concept and self-

esteem, lack of morality, procrastination, and aggression towards others or themselves. Whereas themes associated with familial and peer influence included a lack of parental supervision or support, or strictness at home as a result of a broken family system, as well as financial issues. Other issues which were pointed out were siblings' rivalry, cruel treatment by elder siblings, and the birth order of the truant student. As for the identified themes defining the role of peer influence in truancy, they are comprised of influence of other truant peers, group adherence and pressure of rejection or desire of acceptance, sexual activities, sources of enjoyment and drug addiction with peers. The social influences that many students described during their interviews and group discussions included negative media influence, and truancy as a source of social entertainment. Several of the discussed themes correlate with the previous research as well as many of those which can be considered as new or for Pakistani culture in particular, discussed in the detail in next section.

Nine global themes of antecedents emerged using thematic analysis, including peer influence, impact of school, personal characteristics, entertaining activities, family problem, media influence, self-esteem, morality and group adherence. These global themes consisted of organized themes and basic themes, and their thematic structure is reported in Table 2.

In Table 2, the results broadly explain the antecedents extracted from focus group discussions conducted with three different school-going truant students. Many different reasons for truancy have been reported throughout 10 focus group discussions from female and male school-going truant students. One of the most prevalent reasons for truancy is reported to include physically punishment of teachers (41.18%%), relationship with teachers (31.76%), school instructional and curriculum style (20%), future orientation (18.82%), financial problems (27.06%), lack of motivation and

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interest (23.52%), and illiterate parents (43.52%). However, lower frequencies of truancy themes are also reported in Table 2. Overall, the extracted different themes explain antecedents from multiple fields such as personal characteristics, social, family, peers, school, and environment.

**Peer Influence**

The process explains participants' experiences of why and how truant students perceive truancy phenomena in their day-to-day lives. In the primary theme, the truant students reported the peer influence in truancy.

*Friends Company*

The students spoke about the context and causal factors that might have formed their tendency or attribute leading towards truancy. The quotes in the paragraphs are illustrated from the focus group transcripts. Every extract theme comprises focus group text page numbers.

Participants of the focus group reported "*I bunked off from school for enjoyment with friends*: Enjoyment Context". This statement was made by middle school students who spoke of their enjoyment context for peer influence as being a significant cause of truancy in their lives. Many of the participants stated that they received support from their peers to skip their classes. Most of the participants reported that they skipped their classes for eating purposes with friends. They stated statements such as; *"We skip classes to go to different restaurants to eat food," "We enjoy going out for lunch outside of school and for this reason, we usually skip our classes"* etc.

Participants of the focus group reported "*I bunked off from school to travel and visit different places in cities with friends*: travelling Context". This statement was stated by middle school students who reported their travel experiences with their friends as being a significant reason for truancy in their lives. Most of the students revealed

that they received support from their group leader to skip their classes from school to travel places. Most of the participants reported that they skipped their classes to visit new places with friends. They stated statements such as; *"We skip classes to go to different new places within or out of the city for adventure," "We enjoy going out for fun and recreation by visiting new cities and mountain sides with our group"* etc.

Other environmental factors that the students reported for skipping classes included sports activities, "*We bunk off classes to play different sports such as football, cricket, and kabadi*: sports context". This statement was stated by middle school students that reported their sports experiences with their friends as being an important cause of truancy in their lives. Most of the students revealed that they like to bunk off their classes to take part in different games and sports activities. Most of the participants reported that they skipped their classes to play sports with friends without any official event organized by school authorities. They stated statements such as; *"We skip classes to join different sports activities like playing cricket with friends," "We enjoy playing football and Kabadi outside on the ground, for which we usually skip classes,"* etc.

One important theme that was present in multiple reports of the students was "*to have casual physical sex with one another*: Sexual Gratification Context". Most of the junior truant students in groups stated that the seniors often made them bunk off class to have sexual intercourse with them. After a few times, they face embarrassment in front of the other classmates in school and start skipping classes due to that, and later they become addicted to having sex and involve other students in such activities. Some other students also explained that this often leads such groups to visit brothels to satisfy their sexual urges and desires. Common statements include, "*We go in groups after bunking off classes to have sexual intercourse with one another," "We usually visit*

*brothels to have sexual relations with prostitutes and the group members help each other in paying for the sex,*" etc.

**School Problems**

In the second theme, the truant students reported the school problems leading to truancy.

*Punishment*

The students stated issues related to school, which often enhance their propensity towards truancy; Participants of the focus group reported "*I bunked off from school because of excessive physical punishment with sticks and slaps by the teachers*: corporal punishment in school context". This statement was made by school-going park truant students who spoke of their physical punishment by the school teachers on several occasions, either by sticks or by slapping them. Many of the participants stated that they received physical punishment by the teachers without any probable cause, which led them to bunk off their classes from school. Most of the participants reported skipping their classes to save themselves from harsh punishment and the phobias associated with getting physical punishment. They said things like, "*We skip classes so the teacher can't beat us up with sticks or slaps,*" "*We run away from school just to protect ourselves from being physically tortured by our school teachers,*" and so on.

Participants of the focus group testimonial statements included statements like; "*I bunked off from school because of the fear of being punished by the teachers or getting embarrassed by them at school*: psychological punishment in a school context". This statement was stated by middle and high school students that spoke of their psychological phobias, which were associated with the previous theme or past experiences of getting physical punishment by the teachers. Many of the participants stated that the thought of receiving physical punishment by the teachers without any

probable cause was reason enough for them to bunk off from school. Most of the participants reported that they skipped their classes to save themselves from the embarrassment and negative comments that were passed on to them by the teachers at school. They stated things like, "*We skip classes because we always had the fear that the teacher would beat us if we went to school,*" "*We skip classes so the teacher won't embarrass us or pass derogatory negative comments about us in front of the entire class,*" and so on.

Another cause of truancy, which the students explained, was school practices "*I usually don't go to class because unfair punishment there is given on the basis of favoritism, and discrimination is common among teachers regarding students because we do not take private tuition from them. They only use harsh words and punishments on us while they are lenient in their behavior towards students who go to private tuition with them*: Favoritism and Discrimination in a school Context". Their usual statements included comments such as, "*The teachers at school have a lot of favoritism for those students who go to their tuition centers while they give harsh punishment to us,*" "*The teachers are very discriminate towards us and mostly use bad words and harsh punishment for us while are very nice towards students who go to their private tuition centers,*" etc.

Moreover, the reasons for truancy on which the participants elaborated were the teacher's attitude "*I usually don't go to class as male teachers have harsh negative attitudes toward us and derogatory remarks for us in comparison to female teachers who are more polite*: "teachers attitude in school Context".. A few students included comments such as, "*The male teachers at school have homosexual behavior with students,*" While others reported that, "*The teachers have a negative and cruel attitude*

*towards us and they stereotype us in class," "They have confusing teaching methodology and for this reason we often miss  classes"* etc.

One additional reason which students pointed out during the focus group was obstacles in classrooms during the lectures. It included themes such as "*lack of guidance and instructions from the teachers and difficult schedules of the classrooms, as well as issues regarding classroom premises such as overcrowding, lack of electricity facilities etc*.: Classroom Problems in  a school context". Students reported that one reason "*we often skipped classes was due to the tough schedule of classes as well as not having any electricity during hot summer days*", "*the rooms were small and overcrowded, which made us feel nauseated and we could not properly focus on what was being taught, which resulted in us bunking off class,*" etc.

Inappropriate curriculum was another reason which the students shed light on as the cause of their truancy. "*The curriculum was in English when we wanted it to be in our primary language Urdu, which led us to not properly understanding what was being taught to us which led us, towards skipping classes. Also, the options for selecting subjects were very fixed*: Academic Curriculum problems in school context". Students elaborated on their issues regarding the difficulty of language as one major barrier for them and an important cause of bunking off classes with statements such as "*We could hardly understand anything which was taught to us as all of it was in English, a language foreign to us, which made it difficult to understand and we bunked off the class,*" "*There were very rigid criteria and choices when it came to selection of subjects to study and we often end up studying a subject which we were not interested in or too difficult to begin with and running off from school seemed the best solution to us*" etc.

Flunking in previous classes, not completing assignments or difficulty in subjects such as math, Arabic, English and science subjects were also reported as causes

of truancy by several students. The general statement was, "*We already had flunked in subjects like math, Arabic, English, etc., and even the new homework assignments were full of difficulty for which we barely completed any of it which became the reason for us to bunk off*: academic problems in class as context." Many students reported their experiences of getting failed in previous classes in particular subjects and being again forced to study the same subjects like, "*We all got flunked in math's and English and yet gain we had to study it and which resulted in making it more difficult with each grade,*" "*The assignments for home which we get are difficult with no proper guidance as to how to do them, and the best option seemed for such situations to be bunking off from classes*" etc.

Another cause of truancy mentioned by students was "*we did not have proper uniform or books, and the fees were frequently late paid, which resulted in us staying out of the class or school: violations of school norms and policies context.*" Students reported issues such as lack of coordination between the parents and teachers about their students' performance in school as well as hygienic issues. The statements included "*There was not much of coordination between our parents and the school teachers which resulted in teacher abusing us without the knowledge of our parents*", "*the hygiene was really disturbing at school our clothes were often dirty, the food we received was no fresh all made it more of a reason to go out and enjoy rather than staying at school*" etc.

Another problem with reference to Pakistani culture was the inappropriate enrollment of Hafiz-e-Quran students in 8th grade without proper assessment. The students said that, " *Here many students are Hafiz-e-Quran and are not properly equipped with the knowledge of other subjects, and when such students get enrolled in a classes, it becomes difficult for them and they start bunking off from school*:

Inappropriate Screening and Enrollment in school context." The students reported that the students who were Hafiz-e-Quran got admission in subjects like sciences and arts, both of which were irrelevant to their previous knowledge. "*How is a Hafiz-e-Quran with no knowledge or skills for math can be given admission in the 8th standard without assessing his abilities. When this burden rises, they mostly start skipping their classes,*" "*There should be some proper screening to know which student should study what, but here we are just thrown randomly in either science group or art, whether we like it or not, which makes it difficult and we just stop going to school*" etc.

**Individual/Personal Factors**

In the third theme, the truant students reported on their personal or individual factors that became an antecedent leading to truancy.

*Aggression.*

The students stated their personal aggression towards others, which often boosts their propensity towards truancy;

Participants of the focus group reported "*I bunked off from school because of daily fights with other classmates, bullying behaviors of other students as well as clashes with teachers*: aggression in the school context". This statement was made by school-going park truant students, who mentioned fights with one another as a reason for truancy on several occasions.. Many of the participants stated that they fight to gain respect even when they don't want to, which leads them to bunk off their classes from school. Most of the participants reported skipping their classes because of constantly getting bullied by other students or their personal clashes with teachers. They stated statements such as; "*Fighting with one another is common in school and not everyone has the courage to do so. The best way to not get into a fight is to not come to school in the first place,*" "*The teachers here are mostly hard headed and so are we and*

*arguments with them are common occurrences, resulting in us bunking off from school"* etc.

There is no future orientation as to what job they will get in the future, which was also another reason which truant students reported during focus group discussion. They stated things such as: "*We cannot get a good job with our level of education, so what is the purpose of going to school in the first place? All we see is darkness in our future, so it's better to enjoy this time instead of going to school*: future orientation and paranoia perception in a school context." This also leads to a lack of motivation and interest in students, as they report, "What is the purpose of coming to school? I cannot join the military, so I find no motivation in learning anything," "There is nothing interesting in learning any of this as you can't really get a good job with such things; you don't really get a good job with such knowledge, so what is the use of coming each day to school at all?" etc.A different reason was procrastination, which several students displayed during their focus group discussions. They stated, "*We are always worried in our mind that we have a lot of things to do, yet we often try to complete them at the end due to other several activities at home like farming, cutting grass, etc.*: procrastination in a school context." A few students reported a lot of home chores delaying their school assignments, whereas others always wait until the last minute to start their work, often resulting in not being able to complete it on time, with statements such as, "*We keep waiting and wasting our time until the last moment to start our work, and when we do start, there is hardly any time left to complete it, so we skip classes instead of giving incomplete work*," etc.

**Deleterious Recreational Activities**

Another reason why students became truants was their participation in harmful recreational activities such as excessive mobile phone usage to watch porn movies and listen to romantic songs; conversing with girlfriends. Other reasons they mentioned for skipping classes were to have recreational fun activities like playing video games and internet clubs, or involvement in political parties. Statements such as, "*It*'s *more fun going to internet clubs or playing games or being part of an influential political party or simply talking to girls on phones or watching porn movies than sitting in a class and studying*: recreational activities outside the school context." Students generally reported things such as "*Why would I waste my time in a boring classroom when I can talk with girls on the phone or watch some romantic porn movie, which is more pleasurable than any class,*" "*It's better to join some political party and attend their meeting and meet influential people then staying stuck in a class room with no benefit,*" etc.

**Family Problems**

In the fifth global theme, the truant students elaborated on  the family economical constrains leading to truancy.

*Economic Constrains*

The students stated issues related to family financial problems which often augment their inclination towards truancy;

Participants of the focus group reported that "*Our parents don't pay fees on time, which makes us feel embarrassed in front of teachers and students, and that is why we prefer bunking off*: financial constrains in the school context." This statement was made by both middle and high school students that spoke of their embarrassment due to their parents' being poor or not being able to pay fees on time. Many of the participants stated that they are ridiculed by the teacher and other students make fun of them because of their financial position, which led them to bunk off their classes from

school. They stated statements such as; *"We skipped classes so that the teacher could not embarrass us for not paying fees or pointing us out as being poor," "We bunked off from school just to save ourselves from being made fun of by the students for being poor"* etc.

Participants of the focus group testimonial statements included statements as; *"We have a broken family system, or the death of a parent, or the authoritative parenting style, or simply being uneducated to begin with, other causes included being over pampered or being neglected, or lack of resources*: parental issues in a home context". This statement was made by high school students that students spoke of their homes as a cause of distress and truancy. They explained broken homes or single parents with a lack of resources. Many of the participants stated that the parents had very strict behavior towards them or some were totally pampered to the point where it was hard to get adjusted in school environment, which was reason enough for them to bunk off from school. Most of the participants reported skipping their classes to blow off steam and anger or helplessness, which was a result of the discussed causes above. They stated statements such as; *"Our parents are harsh and very authoritative, which leads us to skip classes just so we can have some time where we are not nagged about the way we are," "Some of us have a family that is totally not functional, or in some cases, we have those who have either one parent, or there is a deceased parent to begin with, which all somehow ends up as a cause for our school bunking off,"* etc.

### Electric Media Influence

The influence of the media on their minds was another major global theme that was found during the focus group discussions.

### *Media Influence*

A secondary reason due to which some students became truants was their addiction to aggressive Hollywood movies, stage dramas, and aggressive cartoons. Statements such as, " *It's more fun watching movies with action on H.B.O and star movies or watching stage dramas than being in a class which is plain boring with un-comprehendible topics*: Media Addiction as context." Students generally reported things such as "*Why waste time in a mind-numbing classroom when I can watch an action packed movie which is more satisfying than any class,*" "*It's better to go and watch a stage drama or some action cartoons rather than spending precious time in school*" etc.

**Self Esteem**

The global theme number seven is about the issues that several students suffered from, which were related to self-esteem.

***Self Confidence in De-Individualization Perspective***

It was observed from the statements of the students how they perceived themselves when being part of the group as well as outside of that group. It included statements such as, "*Being part of a group gives us the confidence to stand up to anyone as we are aware that we have people on our back to protect us. However, when we are alone in such situations, we often feel scared and so it is necessary to remain a part of the group even if it leads us to truancy*: Negative group influence in a perceived self-esteem context". Many students reported the issues of the pressure and needs of being a member of the group, and how this burdens them with dependency, which can clearly be seen from statements such as, "*It is o utmost necessity to be part of a group in school. Without it, you are nothing and anyone can take advantage of you.*"; "*If you are single and not part of any group, what are you?*"; *If you are single and not part of any group,*

*what are you?"; "Even if the demands at certain times are too high, you have to manage with it . etc.*

A similar idea was their academic self-concept, with which students identified themselves. It was clear from their statements that they identified themselves more with their affiliations with certain groups than with their individual selves. Statements such as "*Alone we are just random students and no one really knows us, but when you are affiliated with a certain group, everyone respects you,*" "*The school environment requires a person to have support and identification with a certain group, otherwise you are the target of getting bullied*" etc.

**Ethical and Religious Values**

Another global theme of truancy precursors was a lack of knowledge of religion or ethical considerations. Students reported having little to no knowledge of what their religion suggests about their conduct or what is right or wrong ethically, as for many, their behavior is not wrong but an important part of survival. It was found in their explanations, such as, "*I am not much of a religious person, so i am not sure what Islam says about my acts or the things I do. No one taught me what is right or wrong. Even the teachers themselves are no better here.*" Other statements included, "*Ethically wrong? How? Our teachers here oftentimes sexually harass students, so if we do that consensually, how does that make it wrong?*etc.

**Group Conformity**

The last of the global themes that were found as an antecedent for making students truant was their conformity and allegiance to groups.

*Gang Pressure*

The pressure from the group the truant students were a part of, as well as the associated demands and expectations, was one factor for truancy reported by students.

Students reported things like "*If you are part of a group and they support you, then you have to support them back, even if it means fighting for them, stealing for them, etc., so bunking off a class is the least of our concerns:* group pressure in a school context*".* While the other students stated statements like, "Sometimes *to gain the affiliation of a group you do things you generally would never do, but when you know there are certain expectations of you, then you have to do them no matter the consequences,* etc.

### *Gang Facilitation*

An additional aspect of truancy reported by students was the facilitation of the group the truant students were a part of. Students reported things such "*Groups are like family; they help you with your monitory problems, fights, and similar things and you do the same for them when they need you:* group compliance in a school context*".* While the other students stated statements like, "*Think of it as a command or order, which is the same for every member of the group. It's a simple give and take, and sometimes this give and take requires stealing for them, fighting for them, lying for them,*" etc.

### *Fear of Group Rejection*

The most common fear, above all else, was the fear that several students had regarding losing their group affiliation or being rejected by the group. Most of the students said "What is more fearful than losing your support from the group as you know the things you have done will all come back to haunt you if you are alone or rejected by the group itself: Fear of Group Rejection in a school context,".. Many of the students elaborated on statements such as, "Your identification is with the group you are part of and if you lose your identification you have nothing, no power, no support, you are totally alone," "*The fear of losing or being rejected by the group sometimes makes me worry way too much as I know I have done many things, which were not appreciated by many people and if*

*I lose the group for which I did those things I will be in a lot of trouble, so losing this support is something I cannot afford*" etc.

**Table 3**

*Thematic analysis of truant school-going students' perspectives on the consequences underlying school truancy in the Pakistan context (N = 81).*

| Global Themes | Organize Themes | Basic Themes | School-going male truant | | | | | Internet cafe | Internet cafe | Park | Park | School-going female truant | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 6 | 6-7 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 9-10 | 6-7 | 8 | 9-10 | |
| Psychopathology | Symptoms of Anxiety / Depression disorders | I bunk off from school because I fear that my teacher will physically punish me<br>Context: Apprehension about physical punishment | * | * | | | ** | | * | | * | | ** | *** | 12.94% |
| | | The teacher don't understand us and throws us out of school for minor mistakes, so I am bunking out of school in advance.<br>Context: Apprehension about making mistakes | | | | | * | * | * | * | | * | | | 4.70% |
| | | Other students and teachers verbally abuse us so we often bunk off school<br>Context: apprehension about verbal abuse | | | * | * | * | | * | ** | | * | ** | ** | 12.94% |
| | | There is tension and worry about again going to school and the burden of assignments.<br>Context: School phobias | ** | * | | | ** | * | ** | ** | ** | *** | *** | ** | 23.52% |
| | | I am never satisfied with anything that I do.<br>Context: Personal distress | | | | | | * | * | * | ** | * | ** | *** | 12.94% |
| | | There is no benefit in studying as no matter what we study, we are not going to get a good job at the end.<br>Context: hopeless (pessimistic approach) | | | ** | * | | *** | | ** | * | * | ** | *** | 17.65% |
| | Symptoms of Oppositional | Most of the time, we get into arguments with the teachers and | | | | | | * | * | ** | * | | | | 5.88% |

| Category | Quote | Ratings | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Defiant disorder | school staff, so we choose to bunk off from school. Context: dispute with authority figures | | |
| | Teachers are all very unforgiving, and most of the time when we skip class, it is because of them and not our fault in the first place. Context: Resentfulness towards teachers | * * * * * * ** * | 10.58% |
| | I often get into arguments against teachers and family members (parents and siblings) because they always push me to do so. Context: Blaming others for personal mistakes | * * ** ** * ** ** ** ** *** | 21.18% |
| | The school is a rundown building where the management is pathetic, including the staff as well as the equipment and other things. Context: Blaming school authorities and facilities | * | 1.18% |
| Symptoms of Conduct disorder | Because the teachers are strict, we bunk off, and as a consequence of that, we fail our subjects. Context: failure in school | ** *** ** ** * ** ** ** *** ***\* *** | 30.58% |
| | It's really fun to bully other students into submission. Context: School Bulling | * * * * * ** * | 9.41% |
| | We often steal the cycles and tiffins of other students. Context: Theft and deception | * * * * * * * * * * | 11.76% |
| | I like making bets on games, sports, and other activities. Context: Gambling | * ** * * | 5.88% |

| Category | Statement / Context | | | | | | | | | | | | | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I have no regret for my actions, nor do I feel ashamed of the things I have done.<br>Context: Absence of remorse and guilt | | | | ** | | ** | | | | | | | | 4.70% |
| Symptoms of Attention-Deficient Hyperactive Disorder | It is difficult to stay with the rest of the class and focus on everything that is taught.<br>Context: Slow comprehension in study tasks. | | ** | * | ** | * | | | * | ** | ** | ** | *** | * | 20% |
| | I have trouble controlling my impulses, and I believe I am always full of energy, so I can do anything without regard for anyone.<br>Context: Impulsivity and hyperactivity | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | 1.18% |
| Symptoms of Intermittent Explosive Disorder or Conduct Disorder (Co morbidity) | Most of the times, I cannot control my aggression and may react very violently to small things with other classmates.<br>Context: un-proportional aggressive outburst | | | * | * | * | * | * | *** | | | | | * | 10.59% |
| | I am usually very abusive and have a low temper and like to scare others.<br>Context: Instilling fear in others | ** | ** | * | | | * | | ** | | | * | | | 10.59 |
| Symptoms of Oppositional Defiant Disorder/ Conduct Disorder (Co morbidity) | I do not like listening to or following orders from proctors or teachers.<br>Context: Opposition to an authority figure | * | | * | ** | ** | * | * | *** | | | | | * | 14.11% |
| | Whenever in trouble, it's better to lie to people to get out of difficult situations.<br>Context: Lying Behavior | | ** | * | *** | * | * | *** | ** | ** | * | ** | | | 21.18% |
| Symptoms of Frotteuristic Disorder | It's fun to the go to market and touch beautiful, non-suspicious girls and rub their bodies.<br>Context: Rubbing and Touching Non-Consensually | | | * | | * | * | ** | ** | | | | | | 8.23% |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Symptoms of Substance Abuse Disorder | Smoking is a casual activity we do in our free time.<br>Context: Cigarette | * | * | * | * | * | * | 7.05% |
| | | Sniff is really good to freshen our minds, weather in class or at home, where noon can suspect us.<br>Context: Sniff | | | | | | * | 1.18% |
| | | When we want to involve girls in sexual activities, we hook them up to heroine and other drugs. For us, it is something we use commonly.<br>Context: Heroin | | | | * | | | 1.18% |
| | Symptoms of Conduct Disorder/Antisocial Personality Disorder/ Psychopathic Personality Disorder (Co morbidity) | Often times, we like to play it rough, so we forcefully like to have sex with younger boys in school.<br>Context: Forceful Homosexual Activity | * | | * | ** | | ** | 7.06% |
| | | Many times, we go to brothels to have sex with different prostitutes.<br>Context: Sexual Intercourse with Prostitutes | | | | | | * | 1.18% |
| | | When we watch porn, it makes us want to go and have sex with anyone, no matter what the gender is. We like having sex with both of them.<br>Context: Bisexual Activities | | | | | | * | 1.18% |
| | | Not all the times we can get our hands on someone to have sex with, so masturbation is something we do multiple times a day.<br>Context: Compulsive Masturbation | | | * | ** | | ** | 5.88% |
| | | I was arrested on the charges of fighting with others and stalking a girl.<br>Context: A police record | | | | | | * | 1.18% |
| | | Who cares what society or the law tells us to do? We are masters of our own desires and enjoy doing whatever we want..<br>Context: Failure to follow moral law | * | * | ** | ** | | **** | 11.76% |

| Category | Subcategory | Statement | | | | | | | | | | | | | | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | We often steal the cycles and tiffins of other students. Context: Theft and Deceitfulness | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | | * | * | * | | 11.76% |
| | | I like making bets on games, sports and other activities. Context: Gambling | | * | ** | | * | | * | | | | | | | 5.88% |
| | | I have no regret for my actions, nor do I feel ashamed of the things I have done. Context: Lack of remorse and guilt | | | | | ** | | ** | | | | | | | 4.70% |
| Health Issues | Physical symptoms | We experience headaches, fever, stomach pain, vomiting, blood pressure symptoms, etc. Because of our fear of the teacher once we have bunked off classes or school. Context: Physical ailment | ** | *** | ** | | | * | | | * | ** | ** | ** | | 15% |
| Academic outcomes | School refusal/withdraw | I bunk off from school because I feel that my school is boring and useless. Studying is also a waste of time in the long run. Context: school refusal intentions | * | * | | | ** | | *** | ** | * | | ** | **** | | 19.75% |
| | School dropout | Most of the students drop out of schools. Because of no interest in studying or because there is a lot of strictness in schools Context: school dropout behavior | | * | | ** | * | ** | *** | **** | *** | * | * | * | | 23.45% |
| | Learning issues | I bunk off from school because I find my books very difficult, especially science, English, and math. Context: Facing difficulties in learning | * | * | * | * | * | | * | ** | | * | ** | ** | | 16.04% |
| | Academic failure | I failed in Math and English subjects in my last class because i bunk off from school and didn't know what was taught. Context: Failure in the classroom | ** | * | | ** | *** | ** | *** | ** | *** | *** | ** | | | 28.39% |
| | Bullying behavior | I threaten and irritate students who complain about my truancy and report me to my teachers.. Context: Bullying behavior | | * | * | | * | | * | ** | * | ** | *** | | | 13.58% |

**The Main Consequences of School Truancy**

Psychopathology (symptoms of anxiety, depression, oppositional defiance attention deficient hyperactive disorder, intermittent explosive disorder/ conduct disorder (co morbidity), oppositional defiant disorder / conduct disorder, (co morbidity), frotteuristic disorder, substance abuse disorder, conduct disorder / antisocial personality disorder (co morbidity), and psychopath personality disorder, conduct disorder) and academic outcomes (school refusal/withdraw, school dropout, learning issues, academic failure, bulling behaviour, and aggression against teachers) were the most frequently reported consequences from truant's students (Table 3).

In Table 3, the study's findings explain the consequences related to the causes extracted in Table 2. In focused group discussions of female and male school-going students, a number of different consequences or outcomes as a result of school truancy have been revealed. This study's findings explain that the most prevalent consequences of school truancy are reported as terms of psychopathology, which are comprised of school phobia (23.52%), development of lying habits (21.18%), frozen mind or negative thinking pattern about family members or teachers (21.18%), and aggression towards other students and teachers (20%). Furthermore, hopelessness (17.65%), introversion (14.11%), personal distress (12.94%), tension about punishment (12.94%), fear of excessive insult in front of others (12.94%), threatening or bullying other students (14.11%), stealing habits (11.76%), neuroticism (11.76%), school refusal/withdraw (19.75%), school dropout (23.45%), learning issues (16.04%), academic failure (28.45%), frozen mind and negative thinking pattern about teachers (18.51%) also other prominent consequences that occurred at moderate frequencies as a result of truancy. whereas at the lower end of the spectrum with the lowest frequency

of consequences, which includes other themes shown in Table 3, Overall, the extracted themes elaborate on consequences from multiple domains, including social, biological, and personal characteristics as well as familial, peer, and environmental ones. In Table 3, findings of the study broadly reveal the consequences related to psychopathology as a result of truancy from FGD carried out with the truant students. All through the discussion produced in FGD, the truant students, both males and females, identified several psychopathological consequences. Thematic analysis is classified around eight broader clusters of global themes: neuro-developmental disorders; disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders; depressive disorders; anxiety disorders; paraphelic disorders; substance-related disorders; other addictive disorders; and antisocial and psychopath personality disorders.. Each of these global themes consisted of organized themes and basic themes, and their thematic structure is reported in Table 3. These clusters of disorders were further divided into different disorders as suggested in the DSM-V. For example, Cluster 1- Neuro-developmental disorder includes attention deficient hyperactivity disorder. Similarly, cluster 2- Disruptive, Impulse-Control and Conduct Disorder consists of oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder and intermittent explosive disorder. Furthermore, cluster 3- Depressive Disorder consists of Major Depressive Disorder, as for cluster 4-Anxiety Disorder which includes Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Also, cluster 5- Substance Related and Addictive Disorders, is comprised of Tobacco Related Disorder and Amphetamine or other stimulants. Finally, cluster 6- Personality Disorder and cluster 7- Paraphelic Disorder consists of Anti-social personality disorder and frotteuristic disorders respectively, as a result of their truancy.

The process explains participants' experiences as a result of consequences of truancy and how truant activities lead towards the developmental pathways of different psychopathological symptoms, which are discussed below;

**Neuro-Developmental Disorder**

These disorders are a cluster of conditions with an onset in the development phase. The disorder is characteristically manifest in the early developmental phase, often before the child enters grade school, and is exemplified by the developmental deficits that create impairment in  personal, social,  academic or occupational functioning.

*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*

One highlighted disorder that was evident from the discussions was ADHD, which is a constant pattern of lack of concentration or hyper impulsivity that obstructs the role of development. It is distinguished by the hyperactivity type, inattention type, or combined presentation of both disorders' symptoms. The Quotes in the paragraphs are illustrated from the focus group transcripts. Every extract comprises focus group text and page numbers.

Participants of the focus group reported, "*It is difficult to stay with the rest of the class and focus on everything that is taught*; Context: slow comprehension in study tasks." This statement was made by middle class school students that spoke of their issues regarding attention towards lectures or hyperactivity as a consequence of truancy. They stated statements such as; "*I have trouble controlling my impulses and I think I am full of energy all the time and I can do anything without consideration to anyone;* Context: impulsive and hyperactivity".

**Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorder**

It includes conditions concerning issues related to self-control of behaviors and emotions. While many other disorders in the DSM-V may also involve the problem in the behavior and emotions regulations, disorders in this cluster are distinct in that they are manifested in behaviours that violate the rights of others, such as property destruction or aggression that brings the person into significant conflict with authority figures or community rules. The primary causes of problems with self-control of behaviors and emotions can vary greatly across disorders and between people within a given diagnostic group.

*Oppositional Defiance Disorder*

It is a characterized by vindictiveness, argumentative behavior, and an irritable mood of the individual. Students have reported statements such as, "*Most of the time we get into arguments with the teachers and school staff, so we choose to bunk off from school*; Context: Argument with authority figures," "*Teachers are all very non understanding and most of the time when we bunk off, it is because of them and is not our fault to begin with*; Context: Resentfulness towards teachers." Similarly, other things which students during focus group discussion elaborated on included, "*I often get into arguments against teachers and family members (parents and siblings) because they always push me in doing so*; context: blaming others for personal mistakes" and "*The school is a rundown building where the management is pathetic, including the staff as well as the equipment and other things*; context: blaming school authority and facilities. "all of which indicated a high level of oppositional defiant disorder symptoms in truant students fulfilling the criteria of oppositional defiant disorder.

*Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED)*

*The pattern of repeated behavioural outbursts on behalf of a failure to control violent impulses as manifested by verbal aggression (for example: verbal arguments or fights, tantrums, and temperament). The second criterion to check the manifestation of IED involves verbal outburst concerning destruction or damage to belongings, physical attack involving physical damage against individuals or animals. The statements which indicated symptoms of IED in truant students included statements such as, "Most of the time I cannot control my aggression and may react very violently to small things with other classmates; context: un-proportional aggressive outburst." While some other students reported statements like, "I usually am very abusive and have a low temperament and like to scare others; context: intimidate others," all of which are indicators of IED.*

### Conduct Disorder

It is explained as a repeated and constant pattern of behavior in which the basic privileges of others or most suitable societal rules or norms are violated. The statements above highlight the issues as a result of truancy that students explained were, "*Because the teachers are strict, we bunk off and, as a consequence, we fail our subjects*; context: academic failure.""*It's really fun to bully other students into submission*; context: school bulling" and "*We often steal cycles and tiffin of other students*; context: theft and deceitfulness". Several other contexts that were driven out as a consequence of truancy from the transcripts comprised of statements such as, "*I like making bets on games or sports and other activities*; context: gambling" and "*I have no regret for my actions nor do I feel ashamed for the things I have done*; context: lack of remorse and guilt".


### Intermittent Explosive Disorder/ Conduct Disorder (Co Morbidity)

*As conduct disorder has already been explained, it was found to be further co-morbid with Intermittent Explosive Disorder, which is referred to as recurring behavioral eruptions representing a malfunction to manage aggressive urges. The statements which depict the issue of such co-morbidity in truant students were such as, "Most of the time I cannot control my aggression and may react very violently to small things with other classmates; context: un-proportional aggressive outburst." Other statements which represent similar co-morbid issues include, "I am usuallyvery abusive and have a low temperament and like to scare others; context: intimidating others." This co-morbidity occurred in primary students, which then increased as the age increased to other classes.*

### Oppositional Defiant Disorder / Conduct Disorder (Co Morbidity)

Similar to previous co-morbidity, similar co-morbidity was found with oppositional defiant disorder, which is explained as a pattern of irritable mood, argumentative behaviour, and vindictiveness in young children. Statements which represent such co-morbid behaviour include, "*I do not like listening to or following orders of proctors or teachers; context: defiance of the authority figure.*" Other statements which display a similar pattern of behaviour were, "*Whenever in trouble, it's better to lie to people to get out of difficult situations; context: lying behaviour.*" Similar to previous com-morbid symptoms, these will also increase with age into conduct disorder.

### Frotteuristic Disorder

It is defined under sexual disorders as recurrent and sexual arousal from the touching and rubbing of a non-consenting person. Truant students during their focus group explained statements such as, "It's fun to the go to market and touch beautiful

non-suspicious girls and rub their bodies; context: rubbing and touching non-consensually", describing their tendency towards frotteuristic disorder.

### *Attention-Deficient Hyperactive Disorder*

It is a neuro-developmental disorder explained by a persistent pattern of hyper-activities and inattention that interrupts the development or functioning of children and adolescents. The statements which highlights ADHD symptoms in truant students were such as, "It is difficult to stay with the rest of the class and focus on everything that is taught; Context: Slow comprehension in study tasks." Other statements included during focus groups were, "I have trouble controlling my impulses and I think I am full of energy all the time and I can do anything without consideration to anyone; context: impulsive and hyperactivity."

### Substance Abuse Disorder

Different substances were used by truant students on a daily or casual basis, which included the use of smoking, heroin (*Opioid*), and one indigenous drug of Pakistan called "sniff" (*Niswar*). Tobacco Use Disorder is a problematic pattern of tobacco use leading to clinical significant impairment or distress, which was explained by statements of truant students such as, "Smoking is a casual activity we do in our free time; Context: Cigarette" and other statements such as, "Sniff is really good to freshen our minds; Context: Sniff"

Other substance abuse disorders which were found in truant students included opioid intoxication, which is explained by problematic behaviour and psychological changes such as euphoria followed by psychomotor agitation, dysphoria, apathy, impaired judgement, and retardation that are developed after the use of opioids. The truant students accepted the usage in their statement, such as, "When we want to involve

girls in sexual activities, we hook them up to heroine and other drugs. For us, it is something we use commonly; context: heroin."

**Conduct Disorder / Antisocial and Psychopath Personality Disorder (Co morbidity)**

As previously explained, the co-morbidity of conduct disorder with other disorders' symptoms is common. Often times, conduct disorder is found in co-morbidity with antisocial and psychopath personality disorders, which is explained as a pervasive pattern of the disregard for and violation of rights of others. The statement which explained such co-morbidity included, "Often times we like to play it rough, so we forcefully like to have sex with younger boys in  school; Context: Forceful Homosexual Activity." Other similar statements describing similar symptoms included," Many times we go to brothels to have sex with different prostitutes; Context: Sexual Intercourse with Prostitutes" and "When we watch porn, it makes us  go and have sex; no matter what the gender is; Context: Bisexual Activities." The students also elaborated on statements such as, "Not all the time we can gets our hands on someone to have sex with, so masturbation is something we do multiple times  a day; context: compulsive masturbation". The students' further statements which depicted symptoms of this included, "I was arrested on the charge of fighting with others and once for stalking a girl; Context: Police Record" and other statements were such as, "Who cares what society tells us or the law abides us to do; we are master of our own desires and like doing what we feel like doing; Context: Failure to confirm to moral law".

**Academic Outcomes**

Most of the truant's students were reported and facing consequences related to academics, including school refusal/withdrawal, school dropout, learning issues, academic failure, and bullying behavior. The quotes in the paragraphs are illustrated

from the focus group transcripts. Every extract comprises focus group text page numbers.

Participants of the focus group reported, "*I bunk off from school because I feel that my school is boring and useless.*" *Studying is a waste of future time; context: school refusal intentions.*" This statement was stated by both middle- and high-class school students that spoke of their issues regarding school refusal/withdrawal as a consequence of school truancy. They also stated statements such as; "*Most of the students drop out of school because of no interest in studying or because there is a lot of strictness in schools*; context: school dropout behaviors". This statement was made by both middle- and high-class school students that spoke of their issues regarding school dropouts as a consequence of school truancy. On the other hand, most students also reported statements such as; "*I bunk off from school because I find my books very difficult, especially science, English, and Math*; context: I face difficulties in learning." This statement was also reported by all levels of school students that spoke of their issues regarding learning issues as a consequence of school truancy. Furthermore, most students also reported statements such as; "*I failed in Math and English subjects in my last class because I bunk off from school and didn't know what was taught*; context: academic failure." This statement was also reported by all levels of school students that spoke of their issues regarding academic failure as a consequence of school truancy. Additionally, many students also reported statements such as; "*I threaten and irritate those school students who complain and report to my teachers about my truancy behaviour;* context: Bullying behaviour". This statement was also reported by all levels of school students that spoke of their issues regarding bullying behaviour as a consequence of school truancy. This statement was also reported by all levels of school

students that spoke of their issues regarding academic failure as a consequence of school truancy.

**Figure 3**

*Thematic Analysis of Truant School-Going Students' Perceptions on the Antecedents of School Truancy in Pakistan.*

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┌─────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Electronic Media   │──────────│        Media influence          │
│     influence       │          │                                 │
└─────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────────┘

                                 ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                                 │ Self-confidence due to deindividuation │
                                 └─────────────────────────────────┘
                                 ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                              ┌──│ Self- Concept level in Group Truancy │
┌─────────────────────┐       │  └─────────────────────────────────┘
│                     │───────┤  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│     Self Esteem     │───────┼──│ Self confidence level in internal self │
│                     │       │  └─────────────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────┘       └──┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                                 │ Self- Concept level in Separate Truancy │
                                 └─────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Ethical and moral values │─────│    Lack of religious awareness   │
└─────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────────┘
                                 ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                              ┌──│       Group/Gang Pressure        │
┌─────────────────────┐       │  └─────────────────────────────────┘
│                     │       │  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Group Conformity   │───────┼──│      Fear of group rejection     │
│                     │       │  └─────────────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────┘       └──┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                                 │        Group facilitation        │
                                 └─────────────────────────────────┘
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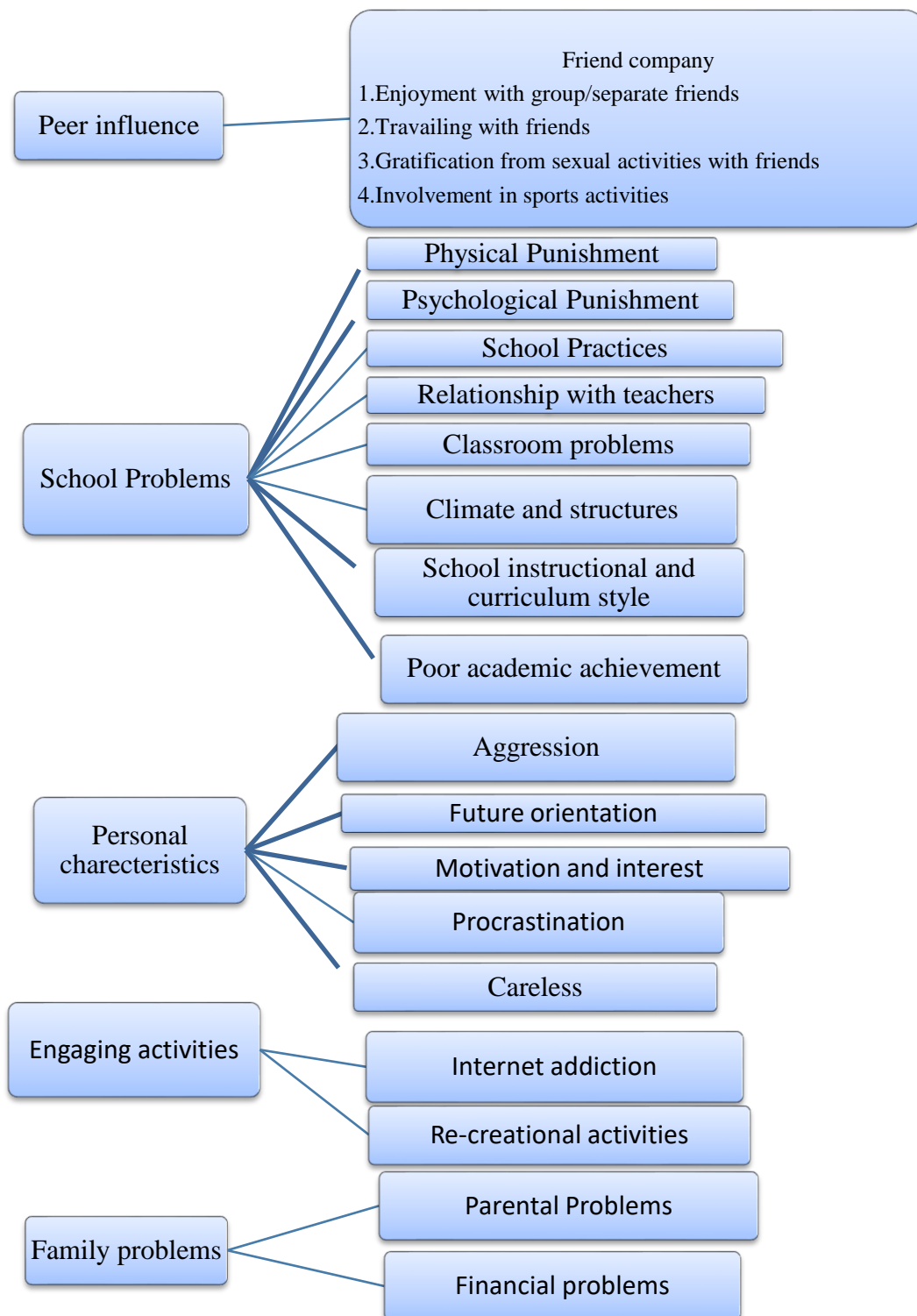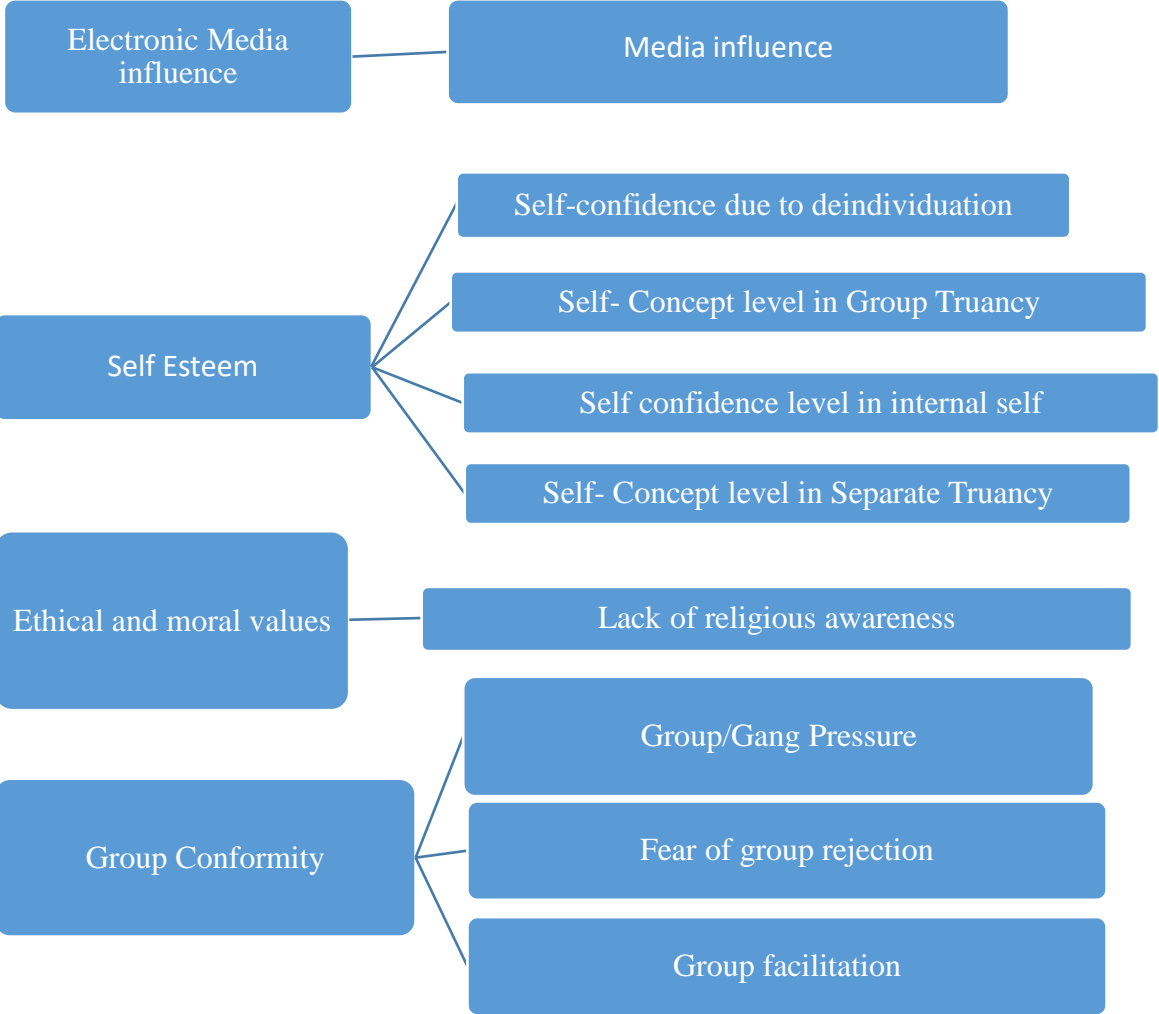
**Figure 4**

*Thematic Analysis of Truant School-Going Students' Perceptions on the Consequences of School Truancy in Pakistan.*

**Figure 5**

*Group's Trajectories of Mental Health Problems and Delinquent Behaviour: Comparison of Academic, and Psycho-Social Characteristics of School going Male and Female Truant Students on Internalizing and Externalizing Paths*

**Development Model with Duo-Dimensional Deviance**

Age of onset, Grades wise differences, Group wise differences

(Late onset) 20 years, 9th 10th grades, school part truant students,(severe truancy), Male

**Academic Problems**
School dropout , School refusal & academic failure

**Criminal activities**
Theft, burglary, Physical Fighting with teachers and peers, homosexual hereto-sexual & bi-sexual behavior. involvement in political parties, violence, rape , Police case, group deviance , drug user(sniff, cigarette, Marijuana)

**Psychosomatic Complains**
severe headache, tension

**Development of Psychopathology**
ADHD, personality disorder, Depression, anxiety and learning problems

**Academic Problems**
School dropout, School refusal & academic failure

**Development of Psychopathology**
ODD, CD, ADHD, Anti-social personality / Psychopath

**Deviant activities**
Physical Fighting with teachers and peers, watching sexual movies, homosexual behavior Moderate theft(Money from home)

**Somatic Complains**
Headache, fever, tension

Severe types of Lying & manipulated behavior and theft (bicycle of students money of parents & students

Bullying behavior, annoying parents, teachers, siblings and classmates

**Development of Psychopathology**
ADHD, Depression, anxiety and learning problems

**Academic Problems**
School dropout, School refusal & academic failure

**Development of Psychopathology**
ODD & CD

Internalizing Pathway of park school going-truant

Externalizing Pathway of park school going-truant

**Development of Psychopathology**
ADHD, Anxiety & learning problems

**Development of Psychopathology**
ODD & CD

Lying & manipulation behavior & moderate level theft

Bullying behavior, annoying teachers, and classmates

**Somatic Complains**
Stomach pain, headache, vomiting, fever, High blood pressure

**Deviant activities**
Negative arguments with teachers, peers and parents Minor theft(lunch, sharpener, pen etc) peers

Truancy levels:
○ School(minor)
□ Park(moderate)
■ Internet cafes(Severe)

Internalizing Pathway of internet cafes school going-truant

Externalizing Pathway of internet cafes school going-truant

Anxious, annoying classmates

Psycho-social Problems
1.School problems
2.Personal issues
3.Family issues
4. Environmental issues

Bullying behavior, Lying habbits, running away from classes, verbal aggression,

Internalizing Pathway of School going-truant

Externalizing Pathway of School going-truant

Conflict with authority (Parents, Teachers, admin staff & older siblings)

Defiance/ Disobedience

stubborn behavior

Excessive chores of home (Rural) lack of opportunity such as financial issues(fee issues) and traveling issues(car, bus motorbike)

Age of onset, Grades wise differences, Gender, Group wise differences

(Early onset) 11 years, 6th grade, school going truant students (Mild Truancy), Male & female

This study presents an indigenously developed Duo-Dimensional deviance development model which explains the interaction between the development of delinquency and mental health issues across three different groups of truant school-going students in the Pakistan context. This model also explains the shared psycho-social and academic risk factors of school truancy for delinquency and mental health issues in truant school-going students.

This model was developed according to the different age groups, grades, and genders of school going students. Moreover, this model explains the truancy of school-going students towards deviant behavior. Additionally, this study explains the evaluation of delinquency and mental health issues across different samples of school going truant students over a period of time. This study will help in the explanation of mental health issues and delinquent behavior that further lead to criminal behavior. This model has mostly focused on the antecedents and consequences of school truancy. This explains the gradual evolution of truancy in children over time, which was previously overlooked in the literature..

Figure 5 of this study explains the evaluation of truancy across school going students in the Pakistani context. These trajectories are developed on the basis of heterogeneous samples of school-going truant students. This model differentiates between these evolutionary stages of truancy based on the individual differences using the antecedents and consequences as explained by the school going truant students. The significant novelty of the present model is that, unlike previous models, which viewed truancy as a single phenomenon, the present model has divided it into three different forms of truancy based on similarities and differences between each group, signified by different

colors. Additionally, the model also incorporated general issues that lead to the development of truancy in students, in the first place. The current model integrates the general and the three identified groups together, displaying them using a bottom-up trajectory according to students' age, gender, and level of truancy in each group (See Figure 5).

**The General Trajectory of School Truancy.** This trajectory (the blue triangle in Figure 5) consists of the antecedents which generally lead to basic truancy in students and includes factors such as excessive chores at home, financial difficulties, and a lack of opportunities for rural-based students. For urban students, antecedents included truancy due to company influence, frustration or boredom, and acts of rebellion. Such acts are often responsible for leading students towards defiant and stubborn behavior, causing conflict with family members, school administration, etc. All such issues become the gateway for the development of psycho-social problems in students (like teachers giving punishment for not complying, parents ignoring or punishing them by not giving them money or ridiculing them), which in turn forms the basis for truancy, as explained in the model.

**The Minor Trajectory of School Truancy.** This step (colored green in Figure 5) explains the more specific form of truancy as it was discovered in 6th to 8th grade students. These truant students tend to spend their time inside the school during school hours, but not inside the class. The results indicated that such students had internalizing (ADHD, anxiety, learning difficulties, having a negative attitude towards teachers, etc.) and externalizing (lying habits, bunking from classes, verbal aggression, bullying, and annoyance-based behaviors) behavior problems along with health issues like stomach pain, headache, vomiting, fever, high blood pressure, etc. This level of truancy has no major

effect on the family and school life of these students. These students were observed to behave rather normally in their homes and hardly misbehave with teachers or school faculty overtly. Due to their constant skipping of classes, they do become a bit dull in class activities and develop a negative reputation among other students of the class. These students, due to their younger age, don't have much knowledge of the outside world, so they tend to stay within school bounds. Likewise, this form of truancy can be found in both male and female students, since there is less risk involved. Hence, they are considered and added in the present model as a minor type of school truancy. Such students, if provided with an appropriate primary level of intervention at this stage, can easily be reverted back to such truant behavior. This can include teacher-parents' awareness programs, counselling facilities, and seminars targeted at truancy and its negative effects.

**The Moderate Trajectory of School Truancy.** The trajectory (shown in yellow in figure 5) explains truancy in students in grades 6 through 10. These students tend to spend their time outside the school during regular class times. These students displayed internalizing (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), anxiety, depression, and learning problems) and externalizing (Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), conduct disorder (CD), lying, manipulative behavior, stealing from shops and homes, etc.) behavior problems along with health issues like headaches, fever, and tension. Additionally, it was identified that these internet going truant students consisted of two forms of students: 1) who went to internet clubs alone and 2) who went to internet clubs in groups. Those students who tend to hang out at internet cafes and act as lone truant students have deviant behavior and performs act of theft from homes and friends. Those who skipped school for going to internet cafes in groups mostly had externalizing behaviors such as physical

fighting with peers and teachers, watching porn, forcing homosexual behaviors with younger children, etc.

Truancy in this trajectory affects school and social life issues in such students, but the family life was more or less good as the family is often not aware of their activities. Therefore, this kind of truancy is considered moderate as per this study. This level of truancy, like previous minor trajectories, may diminish as their age increases or lead to the formation of more severe forms of deviance, which can be considered criminal activities as explained in the last fourth triangle of the model (see Figure 5). Another interesting factor in relation to gender was that it included mostly male students, which could be due to the cultural differences. Such students require an imminent secondary level of intervention, as if left unchecked, this can become the basis of full-blown criminal behavior. This level of intervention may include the formation of weekly or monthly interaction between schools and families; law-enforcement aid in identifying such internet cafes and fining them for permitting students during school time.

**The Severe Trajectory of School Truancy.** The final type of trajectory (colure red in Figure 5) explains truancy in students in grades 6 through 10. These students also spend their truancy time outside of school during the school hours. This final trajectory may consist of the most severe form of truancy, characterized in the present study as "park truant students." This trajectory of students included a mixed group of students from different schools, grades, age groups and areas. This group tends to display more externalizing behavior in comparison to internalized behaviors. Nevertheless, the most commonly exhibited issues included internalizing (anxiety, depression and learning problems, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) and externalizing (compulsive lying, manipulation, criminal theft, conduct disorder (CD), antisocial behavior (ASB), psychopathic symptoms like lack of empathy, callous behavior, disturbed emotional behavior, etc.) behaviors. Though these students hardly had any somatic complaints like the previous levels of truant students, younger students who were brought by the more matured students did display somatic complaints like bodily pain, vomiting, etc. Such students were found to be involved in serious kinds of criminal activities (physical fights, rape of girls and younger boys, police cases, drug abuse, burglary and thefts, etc.).

These criminal activities affect their social, academic, personal, and family lives. Like moderate trajectory truant students, the gender of these students was also mostly male. Which again can be attributed to the cultural settings of the present study. Another interesting finding was that previous studies indicate such criminal activities are mostly committed by students above the age of 18 years. The present study identified that the formation of such criminal activities may be at a much younger age of students with lower

or moderate deviant acts, which further strengthens over time, leading to severe criminal behaviors.

Moreover, these students tend to drift away towards a criminal path because of psycho-social factors and mental health issues. Additionally, this severe trajectory of truant students was also affecting the lives of others around them, including friends, family members, and other schoolchildren. Some of these students were also identified as having spent time in juvenile detention centers because of their criminal behavior. These students are the closest to the formation of complete criminal behavior and require the utmost attention not only by the schools but by the families and law enforcement agencies as well. Proper tertiary level intervention programmes focusing on reforming such students should be developed, which could include separate focused classes for them, reforming strategies used on minor criminals in jails, psycho-social education, and constant counselling and behaviour observation.

The findings of the present study model in Figure 5 explain that the upward progression of the truant students increases the severity of criminal behavior and mental health issues. The study has found that the male group of truant students displays more deviant behavior in comparison to female students across all trajectories. This study model shows the complex interaction between delinquent behavior and mental health problems, which represents a perplexing area for practitioners and policy makers. The exact association between delinquency and mental health issues is still not clear. This model illustrates that there are shared psycho-social and academic risk factors for school truancy, delinquency, and mental health issues in truant school-going students. However, this study is less conclusive about whether psychological problems enhance the odds of truant school-

going students' involvement in  delinquent behavior or whether delinquent behavior enhances truant school-going students' psychological problems. It reveals that a few externalizing disorders such as oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, substance use disorder, antisocial personality, and psychosis behavior do enhance the probability of violence, aggression, and delinquent behavior in park and internet truant school-going students. However, it also demonstrates that internalizing disorders including depression and anxiety disorders, are associated with delinquency in truant school-going students in Pakistan's context.

The current model in Figure explains the level of truancy at various levels depending on the location where truancy occurs.  Pathway of truancy is related to school-related truancy in which the student remains inside engaged in truant activities such as bullying others in the canteen, hiding in washrooms, playing in the school sports ground etc.  Pathways 2 and 3 represent truant students who, after skipping classes, go outside of school grounds to places such as internet cafes and parks. As for those who go to internet cafes, they perform truant activities such as watching porn, hiding from people, and homosexual activities. While those in parks engage themselves in drug abuse, gang related violence, prostitution etc.

**The Severity Level of Truancy.**    The level of truancy as represented in the present model in Figure 5 is shown to be varied between different levels, including mild, moderate, and severe. Mild truancy refers to those who remain on school grounds (bullying others in the canteen, hiding in washrooms, playing on school sports grounds, etc.), while moderate truancy refers to those who visit internet cafes (watching porn, hiding from people, homosexual activities, etc.), and severe truancy refers to those who visit parks (drug

abuse, gang related violence, prostitution, etc.).  These various levels of truancy as discussed are based on the truant activities and the respective ages of the students and their educational levels.

   ***Addressing Diversity can assist in determining the level of truancy among Pakistani school-age students.*** Though truancy itself is a singular concept with defined criteria set, there is a difference within the levels of truancy depending upon a multitude of factors as discussed in the present study. The present study aimed at finding and setting these different levels with defined criteria in order to establish an appropriate interventional strategy by identifying the appropriate class or domain to which a particular truant student belongs. The aforementioned model has tried to establish these different diversified levels of truancy within the student population. The suggested model has  primarily two different levels or categories of truant students, i.e., 1) truant school adolescents from inside of school; and 2) truant school-adolescents from outside of school. The 'truant park going-adolescents from outside of school', was then further extended  to two additional categories, i.e., 1) school going internet students; and 2) school going park students. This further categorization was based on the observed variations in the different samples in relation to the locations where they were discovered, as well as what previous research literature indicates. Though these variations have been previously suggested in literature, none have been empirically identified or classified  into different groups. The novelty of the present study is based on its sample from the Pakistani student population, which is comprised of a diverse population with no checks and balances by the authorities or parents, leading to a more enhanced state of truancy, which made it clearer for the identification of the variation in different categories of truant students.

***Differences between Truant School-Going Students from Inside and Outside of Schools.*** This study found clear differences between the situations recounted by the participants in truant school-adolescents from inside and outside of schools in the present duo-dimensional framework of truancy. Several factors might explain this contrast between the two primary groups, as discussed as follows.

### *The Duo-Dimensional Framework of Truancy*

The uniqueness of the present models lies within their differences based on the variations and similarities assessed between the two groups. The duo-dimensional model reflects the differences and likenesses based on level of severity, cultural differences, gender differences, grades of the students, age, location, and place of activity of the truant students.

The first is that in the context of the level of severity as those students who remain within the bounds of school even though they skip class, there is a sense of fear of being caught by the authorities,  leading them to have a reduced level of truant activities such as bullying, verbal aggression, stealing, procrastination, etc. Whereas, in contrast to  those truant students who go out of school bounds to various other places such as parks or internet cafes, they displays moderate to severe levels of truancy in them, consisting of acts of physical aggression, watching movies in cinemas, using drugs, sexual activities, etc. More elaborately, these outgoing truant students, based on their overt and covert types of characteristics, could be divided into two major categories, including park-going truant students and internet café-going truant students. Those students who went to internet cafes displayed more of a moderate level of truancy and covert types of behavioral activities as they tried to hide their identities as well as indicated a fearful demeanour throughout their interviews and included activities such as watching porn movies and performing homo-

sexual activities with their junior school fellows. Conversely, those truant students who were found in parks displayed a more severe level of truancy, and their behavioral pattern was overt in nature. These students' activities included acts such as physical and verbal abuse, gang and political involvement, sexual activities, drug usage and theft, etc.

The second diversity found among the groups of truant students was based on cultural differences. Cultural differences suggest the cultural practices regarding school truancy as a phenomenon and how it is viewed in a Pakistani context, along with the laws and regulations regarding truancy. Unlike in many well-established first-world countries, where students are valued and special checks and balances are placed on their education and attendance in class. In Pakistan, there are no such laws and restrictions imposed on truant students or their parents. As in the USA, any student who is absent from class for more than 16 days is subjected to a fine and explanation is imposed by law on the parents of the child (Reed, 2003). However, in the Pakistani context, there are no laws regarding the truancy of students and even during school times, students who were found in parks and internet cafes confessed to  not experiencing any checks or interrogations by the park or internet café authorities for not being present in their classes during school hours. Similarly, if a student is absent from the class, several rural area schools as well as some urban city schools don't call or report it complaint to parents; neither do the parents themselves keep track of the students' progress

Furthermore, diversity was also found in truancy levels based on the gender of the students. In other cultures, truancy is perceived differently depending on gender, according to research, with some researchers claiming a higher level of truancy in females but mostly agreeing that truancy is more prevalent in the male gender.  As in foreign studies, mostly female truant students become drug addicts, get pregnant or join cults or groups. However,

in the Pakistani cultural context, where females are considered and given more respect due to religious implications, female truancy was also affected. Though there were truant female students, their level of severity was mild in comparison to male students. The truant behavior of females in Pakistan is usually restricted to inside school truancy, where females bunk classes to rest, have lunch, etc. As for the few who do actually go out of school, they mostly go to a friend's house or to a restaurant. However, unlike in other countries, cases of teen pregnancy, and drug addiction as a result of truancy were not found in Pakistani female truant students. Moreover, in boys, as discussed earlier, the severity level can be found to vary depending upon their location where they go after skipping classes.

Another variation found in truancy severity was based on the level of education and grades in their respective classes. Though literature suggests that most truancy begins in sixth grade and ends in high school as students become more future-oriented, dull students are more likely to engage in truancy. In relation to the Pakistani context, truancy was observed to increase with each grade. Truancy increases at peak levels, as it does during matriculation, when gangs and groups with political affiliations form. Likewise, as in previous studies, dull students or students with low grades are found to be more prone to truancy and can fall into any of the categories as discussed. Furthermore, age is a significant factor in the variation in categories. Previous research has shown that truancy is nearly the same across all classes and age groups. In contrast, the current study discovered that younger students were more involved in either inside school truancy or internet café truancy. However, the more adult truant students were the ones in parks and were involved in more severe levels of truant activities. Most of these truant students are in gangs and are mostly led by the most adult student. Another important finding was that the more diverse the gang was, the more severe acts of truant behavior were found in them.

Lastly, the factor on which variation was dependent  was their locality or where they lived (city or village). It has been found that students who are from villages mostly display truancy due to the limited facilities they have, such as transportation issues, lack of money and resources, less restrictions and attention by parents on their studies, etc. Those students who reside in cities display truancy due to either company influence, frustration, or boredom, an act of rebellion. However, the interesting thing found in them was that those truant students who resides in villages showed a more overt type of truancy by going into parks and associating themselves with other truant students in groups conducting physical and verbal acts of aggression, sexual activities and drug usage. In contrast, those truant students who are from cities show more covert kinds of truancy and either have inside-school truancy or go to internet cafes due to the fear of getting caught and are involved in activities such as watching porn, homo-sexual activities etc.

**Discussion (Study 1)**

Youths' experiences assist elucidate the intricate array of psycho-social factors and their consequences that contribute to middle and high school truancy as well as the essential role that  school instructional and curriculum style,  negative peer influence , physical and psychological punishment, relationships with teachers, violations of school rules and

policies, classroom problems, poor academic achievement, inadequate screening/assessment for admission to arts and science, climate and structures, aggression, future orientation, motivation and interest, procrastination, carelessness, internet addiction, re-creational activities, financial problems, parental problems, media influence, lack of religious awareness, group/gang pressure, group facilitation, fear of group rejection, school instructional style, student/staff relationships, student services, and school climate have in swaying school truancy. Its effects appear in Youths decision-making processes, emotional and behavioral responses, and, academic problems; it also helps development of the psychopathology in school-going students. As envisioned by truant students, the aforementioned school problems should be addressed and tackled in a positive way that contributes to youth's feeling care for, safe for, and educationally involved, thus preventing further development of school truancy before its commencement. The family influence and the school's response and structures to school truancy set strong prospects related to school truancy that provide a foundation to develop a culture wherein school truancy is considered an inappropriate act and way for youth. Youths get meaningful and clear outcomes for school truancy as well as are facilitated by a proper school and family system that helps to address their personal, academic, family, and mental health needs or involve their parents as part of the recommendations.

Many researchers have defined truancy as a concept in accordance to their culture. However the most appropriate definition of truancy is by Abraham and Ramsey, who defined it as "a willful unexcused refusal of a pupil to attend class in defiance of parental authority and in violation of an applicable compulsory school attendance law" (Aqeel et al., 2016; Colorado Department of Education, 2013; Hassan et al., 2016). In Pakistan in

current times, the level of truancy has increased significantly day by day (Aqeel et al., 2016). The purpose of the current research was to identify the antecedents involved in truancy as well as their consequences for the student as well as their family and society as a whole. The students identified antecedents from several domains, such as school settings, familial and peer-related issues, personal characteristics, the media and social influences.

The present study was able to extract data regarding several psycho-social aspects of truancy, including the causes that lead to truancy and its several consequences. Additionally, the study was successful in dividing the category of truancy into three separate classifications based on the level of severity, age groups, class, and other similar factors. In view of the antecedents relating to truancy in the current study, several global themes were found, including: school problems, peer influence, personal characteristics, family problems, and group confirmatory behavior. Whereas, in a similar way, these antecedents lead to a multitude of consequences including: psychopathology including anxiety, depression, oppositional defiance attention deficient hyperactive disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, conduct disorder, frotteuristic disorder, learning disorder, substance abuse disorder, antisocial personality disorder, and co-morbidities between oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, frotteuristic disorder, substance abuse disorder, antisocial personality disorder, as well as academic outcomes like school refusal behaviour, school dropout, learning issues, academic failure, bullying behaviour etc. The uniqueness of the present study is that it has tried to study several different psycho-social aspects of truant behaviour together whereas in previous studies these have been studied separately in European countries (Brandibas et al., 2004; Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Gonzálvez, et al., 2018d; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Kaess et al., 2019;Kearney, 2008a;

Lyon & Cotler, 2009; Maynard et al., 2012, 2013, 2017a; Qualls et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2019).In the Pakistani cultural context, only a few studies have tried to study the subject matter but none in such detail (Aqeel et al., 2015; Aqeel et al., 2016; Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Munawar, 2015). The findings of the present study are thoroughly discussed in the below discussion portion.

**Antecedents of School Truancy**

According to multiple earlier research, school truancy is not a unidimensional concept and is based on a variety of diverse variables and domains that may lead a student towards truant activities. The current study, like earlier ones, was able to identify a number of antecedents that may encourage Pakistani students to skip class, which are covered in more depth below.

*School Problems*

This is considered to be one of the most common yet highly significant causes of truancy. Studies suggest that the school environment, along with the course structure, teacher's behavior, and  student's behavior, are all possible predictors of truancy (Fornander & Kearney, 2019a; Kearney, 2008b, 2019; Kearney & Albano, 2015; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Maynard et al., 2017b, 2018; Rasasingham, 2015). The current study's findings are consistent with previous studies' findings, indicating that school instructional and curriculum style is a common issue found in the majority of Pakistani schools that can lead to truancy. Students here face an inadequate curriculum that is unsuitable for their respective classes, particularly in English, Math, and Science. Additionally, the training of parents and teachers to comprehend and further educate and help the students is also not in according with the benchmark of the educational policies. Such as the policy suggested by

Higher Education of Pakistan (HEC) suggests of the grooming and improvement of students with a teacher's knowledge level capable for the delivery of the respective subject. However, due to the reference system, the teachers mostly selected to teach students are not qualified enough and have a lack of skill and training (Khushik, 2018).

This is because inadequate training and skills often lead to disruptive relationships with teachers, as was observed in the present study. Without a healthy teacher-student relationship, the passage of knowledge always remains undermined. Furthermore, the study discovered that this extremely disruptive behaviour frequently results in physical and psychological punishment on students, leading them to engage in truancy. Moreover, due to this issue, violations of school rules and policies, classroom problems, and poor academic achievement all become common issues in the school environment, which further pushes students towards the path of truancy. In addition to these issues, a very interesting finding was the inappropriate sexual behaviour that many teachers do with students, such as kissing, sexual acts, etc., which can be due to the lack of check and balance on the part of the authorities on teachers' behaviour in school. Findings of the current study have highlighted the sexual abuse of male truant students by male peers and male teachers within the homosexual relationship in the Pakistani context. It has rarely been explored whether homosexual-related violence in truant samples. Previous studies found that many female and male students reported being sexually harassed by male teachers and male peers as well as being exposed to inadequate touching and rubbing by male peers and teachers, such as on the breasts, buttocks, or kissing (Dembo, 2015; Hagborg et al., 2018; Region, 1999). It is well recognized that risky sexual acts and other mental health problems, including substance use and delinquency, coexist in school-going adolescents (Fornander

& Kearney, 2020c; Hipwell et al., 2012; Koch-Stoecker, 2010; Lauer et al., 2020; Malow et al., 2006; Maynard et al., 2017b; Schofield et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2010). Many previous studies have demonstrated that there is a positive relationship among truancy, risky sexual behavior, conduct disorder, attention difficulties, self-reported delinquency, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and substance use in adolescents (Wu et al., 2010). Importantly for the current investigation, this study's findings are considered one of the unique study results to precisely explain the linkage between sexual risk behaviors and school truancy. Many prior studies also highlighted that academic performance was considered one of the key protective variables to prevent and tackle development of psychiatric problems for adolescents who experienced trauma and maltreatment (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Hipwell et al., 2012). However, there is a scarcity of evidence of the harmful effect of child maltreatment on academic achievement (Romano et al., 2015; Slade & Wissow, 2007).

The most prevailing and common cause, which was identified by many of the students, was "excessive punishment at schools" which included both psychological and physiological punishment. It is a concept unique to mostly Asian countries, as punishing students in a way that can affect them physically or psychologically in Western countries is prohibited. It was identified as one of the leading cause of truancy due to which most students prefer to turn towards truancy. Previous research has also suggested that excessive punishment can often lead students to feel targeted, and causing them to adopt defensive strategies such as avoiding classes or school as a whole thus resulting in truant behaviour (Ahmad & Miller, 2015b; Gastic, 2008).

The other cause identified by students in regards to schools was the attitude and biasness of teachers towards them, which became a driving factor for their truant behavior. Studies have pointed out that teacher biasness and negative attitudes towards students can lead them to get demotivated and result in truancy in such students (Baker et al., 2001; Ginder et al., 2016; Reid, 2006). The consequences found in relation to the negative attitude of teachers included effects like conflicts and hatred towards teachers in general and stereotyping of other teachers towards the students as truant, which is even indicated in labelling theory, which states that a process constructed by society in which certain people are assigned and labelled as deviants by social control agencies and they, sequentially, come to believe the label assigned to them and begin to act accordingly (Baker et al., 2001).

Students also talked about how the curriculum and the various other rules and policies, along with improper selection of subjects, also contribute to truancy. Burley and Harding (1998) reported similar findings in their research, suggesting the curriculum and inadequate or difficult policies made by schools also lead to truancy (Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Burley & Harding, 1998). The consequences that were extracted as a result of the inappropriate rules and policies from the interviews were failure in academic achievement or difficulty in completing school assignments or particular subjects as a cause for truancy. As observed by Sambe et al. (2015), this study indicated that the tendency of failing in exams or the difficulty a subject holds can lead to early dropouts or truant behavior (Brandibas et al., 2004; Maynard et al., 2018; Sambe et al., 2015)

However, not all the fault lies within the relationship between the teacher and students, and some is related to the screening procedure and the structural environment of the school itself. According to the current findings, there are no career educational

counsellors to assist students during admission and subject selection, resulting in inadequate screening and assessment for admission to arts and science.. Similarly, the number of students that a school keeps is also unstructured, and most schools have small classrooms with a student's population above the criteria. Moreover, the schools in Pakistan, especially government schools, suffer from a lack of basic facilities like filtered water coolers and clean food at canteens, all of which are possible causes for students to perform truant activities (Gul & Shah, 2019).Results of the present study highlight that the physical environment of a school, school location, school building conditions or structure, and community factors are linked to academic performance and school truancy among middle and high school-going adolescents in Pakistan .Previous studies also reported that a healthy school structure and climate play a basic role in reducing school truancy and attracting students to attend their classes in schools (Sobsey, 2010). The safe and healthy school climate has a noteworthy key role in educational development(Langford et al., 2015; WHO, 2003, 2018). Physical school climates such as sanitation, classrooms, clean drinking water as well as hand-washing toilet services, playgrounds, boundary walls, furniture, and thermal situations (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Lyon & Cotler, 2007; Marx & Wooley, 1998; Maynard et al., 2014). The school climate variables affect the educational development of primary, secondary, and high school students, faculty, as well as the complete educational process globally(Gul & Shah, 2019; Higgins et al., 2005; Kearney & Graczyk, 2020).

### *Personal Characteristics*

Another aspect relating to school truancy consists of the students themselves, consisting of personal characteristics. Scholars and educators have suggested that personal

characteristics such as negative peer influence are one major factor which can lead students towards truancy. Negative peer influence has been discussed by many researchers and found to be a very crucial reason for truancy in students. The indigenous findings are interesting in the sense that they have sorted out and classified the effects of different negative peer groups on students. According to the study, there are peers who truancy within the school boundaries. But it is not only limited to this and there are two more kinds of peer groups which affect the students negatively, leading them to more severe types of truancy. One being those groups of students who bunk classes to go to internet cafes and perform activities such as homosexual sex with younger children, whereas the most severe ones are truant student groups who hang out in parks and are involved in various criminal activities such as sexual solicitation, gang fights, political violence, drug abuse etc. These negative peer groups often result in issues like aggression, negative future orientation, negative motivation and interest, and procrastination in students.

Earlier studies reported that there were a lot of reasons behind truant behavior (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Havik et al., 2015b; Strand & Lovrich, 2014; Wu et al., 2010). Many study findings suggest that both individual and contextual risk factors of school truancy have been associated with mental health problems, high-risk life situations, being bullied in school, learning disabilities, living in a single household, negative relationships with teachers, and a school environment that does not meet the students' needs (Havik et al., 2015b; Ingul et al., 2019). Numerous studies have investigated the association between school truancy and various individual characteristics of truant students, including socio-economics status (SES), aggression, bullying, lying habits, gender, coping strategies, as well as personality traits. Many studies have focused on the role of gender in the

development of truancy, such as how males were more likely to and experienced truancy than females (Attwood & Croll, 2006, 2015; Muehlenkamp et al., 2012; Schulte-Körne, 2016). Furthermore, previous research has shown that SES and immigration background play an important role in the development of truancy, but this has been understudied. Moreover, most studies' findings indicated that those students who belonged to lower income and immigrant family backgrounds were more involved in truancy behaviour as compared to other classes and non- immigrant family backgrounds (Reid, 2013; Rubin et al., 2009; Veenstra et al., 2010). Results have not been fully consistent across studies, however, and immigration status is often confounded with student SES.

Furthermore, several similar prior studies revealed characteristics that have been found to be associated with school truancy in adolescents. At the personal level, male students were more likely found as truant in school as compared to female (Garry & Al., 1996; McCray, 2006). Male students are also more likely to hate with their schools (Attwood & Croll, 2006, 2015) and to get low education (Besemer et al., 2017; Farrington, 1980; Vaughn et al., 2013). Those students who had low non-verbal or performance-based Intelligence levels had 'daring' attitudes. Those who had troublesome or difficulties in getting an education were also more likely to be truant or absentees in school (Farrington, 1980; Vaughn et al., 2013). Previous prior studies found that familiar processes have also been considered to be linked to school truancy; those students who belong to lower income groups were found to be associated with truancy (Attwood & Croll, 2006, 2015), those parents who had less attention on their children's behavior (Farrington, 1980), those parents who have conflictive or problematic relationship; those students who are not interested in their formal education (Farrington, 1980), those parents

who reside in deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to be truant students rather than normal students. Additionally, having a brother or sister who had emotional or behavioral issues and separation or divorce from a parent (father or mother) was further linked truant behavior (Elliott & Menard, 1996; Farrington, 1980). A few school factors were also found to be associated with truant behaviour. School truancy is more likely in schools with a negative school climate, large or small class sizes, poor attendance policies, and a failure to motivate students(Strand & Lovrich, 2014) .

*Family Problems*

Family problems were observed during the study and factors such as broken families, death of parents, lack of resources from parents, lack of parental control and monitoring, harsh attitude of other siblings all can possibly lead a student towards truancy. Also, in Pakistan the student population is divided by rural and urban characteristics and has great impact on truancy of students. As this gap of rural and urban life comes along with economic depravity in most of the rural based students which creates a sense of inferiority complex in them leading to truancy. Whereas, those living in urban settings though have sufficient money to provide their children with the basic necessities of good schooling and academies, however due to the busy nature of their work routine causes lack of involvement with their children again leading to a possible cause of truancy in students. Previous study's results are also consistent with current investigation findings.

Several prior studies highlighted the parents' education, job status, and gender as being some of the most important factors in the student's academic achievement (Fornander & Kearney, 2019b; Kearney & Albano, 2015; Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2009;

Rasasingham, 2015). Further, findings of study showed that those students who had highly qualified or educated parents performed well in their classes and got high positions in schools but were not involved in truancy(Fornander & Kearney, 2019b; Kearney & Albano, 2015; Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2009; Rasasingham, 2015). A similar study found that parents' supervision is one of the important family factors that affect students' academic and professional life. Several guardians/parents with low income and lower SES perform poorly academically and engage in truancy. Many parents may also work multiple jobs or work the late night shift because of their hectic work nature and less economical sources. They can't pay proper attention to their children's supervision. Parental supervision can also affect the school performance of children because of parents' mental health problems or biological changes such as an imbalance in the secretion of hormones in their brain due to the stressful nature of their jobs. These above-mentioned issues create different mental and health problems for school students. For example, parents' supervision is one of the most important factors considered in students' lives as they require parents' guidance in their educational chores, including homework and availability of food at home. All these chores are considered mandatory to assist the children in thriving at school activities and achieving high positions in class (Henry, 2007; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a). Harsh attitudes and permissive parenting styles of parents have been linked with school truancy and delinquent activities and the later development of psychopathology in middle and high school students (Brandibas et al., 2004; Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Kearney & Albano, 2015;Kearney & Bates, 2005; Lyon & Cotler, 2007; Maynard et al., 2013, 2014; Rasasingham, 2015).

**Consequences of Truancy**

Similar to several antecedents of truancy, there are several kinds of consequences related to truancy as well, ranging from the development of psychological issues to academic-based issues, all of which are discussed in detail below.

*Psychopathological Consequences*

It is no surprise that with so many different incidents there would be some related psychological issues, which can be short-term or long-term depending upon the severity of exposure to negative stimuli and their own personal characteristics. Previous studies have suggested that truant students mostly suffer from anxiety, depression, substance abuse disorders, sexual disorders, antisocial and psychopath behavior, etc. These psychopathological issues, such as sexual disorders, neurotic disorders, as well as health issues, can both be the antecedent and consequence of truancy. There is evidence which does suggest such psychopathological issues may be the antecedent which may lead to truancy (Henry & Thornberry, 2010; Maynard et al., 2017c; Nolan et al., 2013) whereas there are several studies that do suggest them as a consequence of truancy (Gonzálvez, et al., 2018d; Higa et al., 2002b;Kearney, 2019). In the present study, though there was some evidence of these issues to be antecedent, the larger amount of evidence suggested by participants' perceived psychopathological issues as a consequence of truancy. These study results are also in line with previous studies' findings. Previous studies highlighted school absenteeism was associated with higher levels of mental health issues such as conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), antisocial personality disorder, depression disorder, anxiety disorder, sexual disorder, juvenile delinquency, adult criminal offending, and substance addition in middle school students (Henry & Thornberry, 2010; Maynard et al., 2017c; Nolan et al., 2013). Furthermore, truancy is also associated with

many problems, such as mental health problems, externalizing problem behavior, delinquency, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, and the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, other substances; being bullied in school; negative relationships with teachers; high-risk life situations; living in a single household; learning disabilities; and a school climate that does not fulfil the students' desires for a positive educational experience (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). In addition, youth showing excessive absenteeism are at high risk of permanent dropout from school (Kearney, 2008c), which may lead to economic deprivation and different mental and social problems in adulthood (Kearney, 2008c; Kogan et al., 2005; Tramontina et al., 2001). Interestingly, the bidirectional or reciprocal influences of school truancy and psychiatric issues have been demonstrated in prior studies. For instance, a similar study illustrated that school truancy dragged toward a higher-level risk of mental health issues including depression, anxiety, and conduct problems in middle-school students (Fornander & Kearney, 2020d). In contrast, a few studies provided the opposite evidence of effects having been found in high and middle school-going students. However, school truancy, according to mental health theories, should be regarded as a risk factor for the development of psychopathology as well as a sign of underlying mental health issues. Furthermore, psychiatrist problems associated with school truancy in middle and high school classes, according to the Swedish National Agency for Education (2008), have been shown to persist into adult students (Maynard et al., 2015, 2018). The findings of the present study not only complimented the findings of the previous literature but have also added to it by adding classifications of neurotic and psychotic disorders based on their age groups and

their location of truancy (i.e., school-based truancy, internet café truancy, and park-based truancy), all elaborated in detail in further sub-headings (Hong et al., 2020).

Furthermore, results of the current study found that truant students reported health issues such as headaches, fever, stomach pain, vomiting, blood pressure etc., all of which are common consequences of anxiety and fear of physical and psychological punishment by teachers. Our present study's results are supported by previous studies' findings. Previous research has shown that children's physical and mental health is one of the most important risk factors for truancy around the world (Nauer et al., 2014). The most primary physical causes that are considered as school truancy include seizure disorders, vision problems, dental health, asthma, diabetes, influenza, obesity, headaches, abdominal pain, sickle cell anaemia Chronic pain, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, and musculoskeletal pain (Geier et al., 2007). According to one study, students from low-income families are twelve times more likely than students from higher-income families to miss school for health reasons (Reyes & Fowler, 1999; Yoder & Edelstein, 2012).

**Criminal Activities**

Another important consequence of truancy in the Pakistani context is the development and progression of truancy into criminal activities. As observed from the findings, most of the truant students had symptoms of conduct disorder at a younger age, which progresses into anti-social behavior and further manifests into criminal activities in later years of their life. Common findings suggest that in the younger years of life, these students constantly have arguments with teachers and parents, which often leads them to truancy and joining gangs composed of other truant students. This association with truant groups often involves them in stealing, physical violence, sexual solicitation, and becoming

part of political parties, all of which are indicators of anti-social and psychopath behavior. Once adjusted in such an environment and in-group culture, antisocial behaviour progresses to more serious criminal activities, as described by truant participants over the age of 18. However, this manifestation from conduct disorder to criminal activity was only observed in male students and not in female students. It is interesting that there are gender differences in the prevalence of school truancy in Pakistan. One probable reason for this is due to the Pakistani religious and cultural implications, where female students are not given as much freedom as male students. Since becoming a protective factor for them. Moreover, findings of present study also revealed truant park school-going students displayed traits of both antisocial and psychopath personalities, such as lying, impulsive, reckless behavior, stealing, lack of empathy, remorse and guilt, irresponsibility, parasitic lifestyle (manipulative), low tolerance for frustration, release aggression against their classmates and teachers, and involvement in criminal activities as well as sexual risk behavior. The current study's findings are not consistent with literature highlighting. For example, previous studies highlighted that there were inconsistent findings on sexual risk behavior and criminal activities in male and female school-going adolescents(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Moreover, both male and female students were more involved in sexual and criminal activities in European countries. In contrast, this present study demonstrated that male truant students were more involved in sexual risky behavior and criminal activities in the Pakistan context. The findings of previous studies are in line with the present study's findings. Previous studies highlighted that school truancy was associated with the growth of deviant and criminal behaviour such as juvenile delinquency (Gerth, 2020; Henry & Huizinga, 2007b; Loeber & Farrington, 2000) substance use

(Dembo, 2015; Dembo et al., 2013), as well as adult criminal offending (Loeber & Farrington, 2000). Furthermore, truancy was also linked to psychopathology and criminal activities including psychiatric problems, externalizing problem behavior, delinquency, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, and alcohol addiction, tobacco or cigarette use, marijuana, and other substances (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). Interestingly, there is well established evidence that risky deviant, criminal, sexual acts and psychiatric issues such as delinquency and substance use coexist in middle and high school-going truant adolescents and adults (Hipwell et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2000; Malow et al., 2006; Schofield et al., 2008). Several prior investigations have highlighted that school truancy is positively associated with risky sexual behavior, self-reported delinquency, attention difficulties, conduct disorder, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and substance addition in school-going adolescents (Fornander & Kearney, 2019a). Importantly for the current investigation, this investigation is among one of the few to precisely establish a linkage among school truancy, oppositional deficient disorder, learning problems, conduct disorder, delinquent activities, sexual risk behaviors, antisocial personality, psychopath personality, and psychopathology (Wu et al., 2010). Previous studies also supported our study's findings related to antisocial and psychopath personality. As per previous studies, school truancy is considered a major developmental milestone of antisocial and psychopath behaviour all over the world (Henry & Huizinga, 2007b). Most experts in the field of antisocial and psychopath personality disorders believe that both personality traits start to develop at an early age when children get involved in aggressive and violent behavior against other people, animals, and objects (Dembo et al., 2013; Egger et al., 2003), After that, they gradually start to develop conduct disorder symptoms and,

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after 18 years, they have fully developed symptoms of antisocial and psychopath personality disorders (Gerth, 2020; Gonzálvez et al., 2018; Henry & Huizinga, 2007b).

*Academic Consequences*

The effect of truancy was not just limited to psychological issues but also had deleterious effects on the overall academic performance of the students and consisted of issues such as repeated academic failure, chances of dropout, conflicts with teachers and other students, punishment, and regular suspension from school. This also leads their families to believe in the incapability of their children to learn, often causing them to leave their schools in the middle of their studies. This current study's findings are consistent with the previous study's findings. An earlier study revealed that school truancy is linked to negative educational consequences, such as low academic achievement and a high prevalence of school dropout or refusal behavior in middle and high school students (Attwood & Croll, 2006, 2015; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Neild et al., 2008), which may lead to poverty and financial issues (Attwood & Croll, 2006, 2015). It has also been associated with discrimination, bias issues, and the favourites of students in related activities such as mark distribution and physical and physical punishment of middle and high school students. Moreover, many previous studies explain that school truancy is related to problematic behavior at school, including vandalism, bullying, and truancy. These problematic behaviors are further associated with several factors related to truant students' homes, schools, friends, physical and mental health (Reid, 2008; Utley & Obiakor, 2015). Additionally, school truant behavior has been related to negative teachers' perceptions of the psychosocial climate in class and school, including verbal or non-verbal insults on behalf of truant students, have been linked to higher inequality of efforts or rewards as well

as self-rated physical and mental ill-health of their teachers.(Attwood & Croll, 2015;Kearney & Silverman, 1996).

**Novel Contribution**

1.  The most novel finding of the present study lies in the classification of truancy itself. Previous studies mostly viewed truancy in one context and assessed people on the basis of a single classification system. However, the present study has divided this truancy into three categories (school truant student, park truant student, and internet truant student), based on various levels of severity. The level of truancy varies between different levels, including mild, moderate, and severe. Mild truancy refers to those who remain on school grounds (bullying others in the canteen, hiding in washrooms, playing on school sports grounds, etc.), while moderate truancy refers to those who visit internet cafes (watching porn, hiding from people, homosexual activities, etc.), and severe truancy refers to those who visit parks (drug abuse, gang related violence, prostitution, etc.). These various levels of truancy as discussed are based on the truant activities and the respective ages of the students and their educational levels.

2.  Another interesting finding relating to the Pakistani context was related to gender. As in the Pakistani context, males were observed to be more prone to truancy in comparison to female students. This could be due to the religious and social implications on female students, which act as a deterrent to turning them in as truants. And the few students who did report acts of truancy were within a mild level of truancy. Additionally, contrary to previous European research which has suggested sexual activities involving male and female teachers with opposite-gender students, in the Pakistani context, again due to the social implications, it

was not possible and the reported sexual harassment by teachers was of the same gender, i.e., male teachers to male students and female teachers to female students.

3.  Thirdly, the variation found in truancy severity was based on a person's level of education and grades in their respective classes. Though literature suggests that most truancy begins in sixth grade and ends in high school as students become more future-oriented, dull students are more likely to engage in truancy. In relation to the Pakistani context, truancy was observed to increase with each grade. As in matriculation, truancy increases at peak levels where there is the formation of gangs and groups with political affiliations. Likewise, as in previous studies, dull students or students with low grades are found to be more prone to truancy and can fall into any of the categories as discussed.

4.  Additionally, age is also an important factor for the variation in categories. Previous research has shown that truancy is nearly the same across all classes and age groups. In contrast, the current study discovered that younger students were more involved in either inside school truancy or internet café truancy. However, the more severe truant students were the ones in parks and were involved in more severe levels of truant activities. Most of these truant students are in gangs and are mostly led by the most mature students. Another important finding was that the more diverse the gang was, the more severe acts of truant behaviour were found in them.

5.  One more interesting finding was the psychopathological issues with which students suffered as a consequence of truancy, which were based on age and truancy group category. Younger students who were more involved in school

truancy and internet café truancy had mild to moderate psychological issues such as anxiety, frotteuristic disorder, depression, and homosexual behaviors. whereas more mature student groups who belonged to the park truancy category displayed more severe levels of psychopathological issues such as anxiety, depression, drug addiction, sexual behaviors, criminal activities, antisocial and psychopath personality disorders etc.

6. Moreover, another new variation was dependent upon their locality or where they lived (city or village). It has been found that students who are from villages mostly display truancy due to the limited facilities they have, such as transportation issues, lack of money and resources, less restrictions and attention by parents on their studies, etc. Those students who reside in cities display truancy due to either company influence, frustration, or boredom, an act of rebellion. However, the interesting thing found in them was that those truant students who reside in villages showed a more overt type of truancy by going into parks and associating themselves with other truant students in groups conducting physical and verbal acts of aggression, sexual activities, and drug usage. In contrast, those truant students who are from cities show more covert kinds of truancy and either have inside-school truancy or go to internet cafes due to the fear of getting caught and are involved in activities such as watching porn, homo-sexual activities etc.

7. Lastly, the most important matter of discussion was regarding defining truancy as a concept, which had been a topic of debate for years as there were several variances within a single explanation of truancy. And in several contexts, such as the Pakistani context, the current truancy based on absenteeism of 21 days was not applicable because schools can

identify truant students who are absent from school, but students found in parks or internet cafes could not be identified as truant based on the criteria of 21 days because there was no immediate method of confirmation and answers were subjective and self-reported, which could lead to social desirability. For this reason, the present study, by classifying different severity levels into three groups, was able to define truancy more precisely according to the respective severity of truancy rather than the criteria of absenteeism of 21 days from school. Additionally, this has led to the development of a more appropriate measure of truancy based on severity levels of truancy.

## Major Contribution Related to Severity Level of School Truancy

### *School Truancy Severity*

School truancy issues are a global phenomenon associated with a plethora of social, academic, physical, and mental health issues in school-going adolescents (Fornander & Kearney, 2019a, 2020b). Negative factors that enhance the threat of school truancy issues are myriad too, as they are often categorised into school, peer, family, parent, child, or community-based factors (Havik et al., 2015b). Adolescents' based threating variables of school truancy issues consist of low school involvement and commitment; problematic interpersonal relationships; grade retention; extensive work load outside and inside of school; office disciplinary referrals; poor academic aptitude; substance use; involvement in criminal activities; sexual risky behavior; physical or mental health problems; and underdeveloped academic and social skills, among other groups (Ekstrand, 2015; Gubbels et al., 2019; Kearney, 2008d). Many other adolescents, based on threating factors of school truancy and academic success issues, and later school refusal or dropout, have included

different psychopathological symptoms and conditions (Cuevas-Parra & Stephano, 2020; Kearney, 2016a).

School truancy issues have been associated historically with a variety of overt (externalizing) and covert (internalizing) behavior problems, disorders, and crimes in adolescents and adult school-going students, most notably psychopathology (anxiety, depression, and mood disorders), disruptive behavior disorders (oppositional defiant disorder, and conduct disorder (Fornander & Kearney, 2020a; Holland & Holahan, 2003; Kearney, 2016a; Kronholz, 2011). Internalizing (covert) issues such as social, separation, or general anxiety and worry, phobia, fatigue, somatic complaints, depression, social withdrawal, self-consciousness, and sleep problems are common in these adolescents (Egger et al., 2003; Egger et al., 2012; Gonzálvez et al., 2018a; Kuan et al., 2019; Maynard et al., 2015). Physical and verbal aggression, temper tantrums, non-compliance, defiance, school refusal, home or school truancy, disruptive and antisocial behaviour in class, school, home, or elsewhere are common externalising problems in the school-going adolescent population (Ingul et al., 2012; Kearney, 2019). Furthermore, both overt and covert issues are extremely comorbid between and within each group of middle and high school adolescents (Finning et al., 2019; Maynard et al., 2018).

Many scholars have tried to move toward brief details, distinctions, and prepared sophisticated outlines of mental health issues in school-going adolescents, specifically related to overt or covert behaviours and their outcomes as well as intervention development (Ek & Eriksson, 2013; Maynard et al., 2018). Many previous studies have demonstrated that less prosocial behaviors and depression are often basic signs of anxious adolescents with school truancy issues (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b).

In recent years, many scholars have further endeavoured to explore the explicit association of mental health problems with different levels of school truancy severity in the school-going population. For example, Keppens and Spruyt (2020) illustrated that those students who had a mental disorder were exposed to more school truancy issues as compared to those students who did not have a mental disorder (Keppens & Spruyt, 2020). Additionally, Skedgell and Kearney (2018) also distinguished those students who skipped 0–14% of their classes in years, they were involved in minor pro-social activities as compared to those students who skipped 15–100% of their classes in years; they were involved in severe criminal activities and sexual risky behaviors. Moreover, a similar study further revealed that those students who had skipped 20–39% of their classes displayed minor general anxiety and depression (Fornander & Kearney, 2020a). Furthermore, Stempel et al. (2017) observed that there were significant differences between those students who had skipped less and more than fifteen days of classes. They found that more severe school truancy was associated with more negative childhood experiences, including parental incarceration or divorce, family psychopathology or substance use, financial hardship, and neighbourhood and domestic violence. Results of previous studies explained that school truancy had a positive association with verbal or physical aggression, drug use, delinquency, and sexual risk behaviour (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Maynard et al., 2013, 2018; Stempel et al., 2017). Problem Behavior Theory has also explained that problematic behaviors including marijuana use, drinking, sexual intercourse, and delinquent behaviours cluster to establish a pattern of problem behaviour in school-going adolescence globally (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b). Most previous studies tried to explore and make a distinction within and across groups, culture and severity level. For example,

results explained that truant students were more involved in criminal and sexual risky behaviour as compared to punctual students. Furthermore, findings revealed that more frequent truant students demonstrated consistent forms of higher possibility as well as greater severity within and across multiple groups of problematic risk behaviours when compared to truant adolescents who reported mild to moderate school truancy. As per previous theories, school truancy is part and parcel of deviant behaviour and activities (Inglés et al., 2015b; Kearney, 2008d; Maynard et al., 2015, 2018).

An established link among physical or mental health problems, delinquency activities, and other important risk variables with different levels of school truancy severity has major possible implications beyond primary study and classification in middle and high school students. Certainly, this study's results may recommend educators, medical, mental health, and forensic experts who are working with truant populations to address and resolve school truancy in adolescents. It may helpful to make an assessment of truancy and develop new intervention and prevention protocols that can be diversely adapted and improved for cases of mild to moderate and chronic to severe school truancy (Gonzálvez, Inglés, et al., 2019; Heyne et al., 2002). Many educators and other mental health experts also clearly distinguish among school-going truant students with mild to severe based on social, academic, physical, and mental health problems as they resolve and improve truant behaviour with limited intervention facilities (Kutcher et al., 2013; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020). Certainly, several schools were forced to get the services of mental health professionals to resolve and improve truant behavior. Mantel health services were also used to screen for different psychiatrists' problems and deviant behavior (Brandibas et al., 2004; Walker et al., 2005). Many scholars provide recommendations for improvement in mental

health features and deviant behavior, which are related to different levels of school truancy severity (Wroblewski et al., 2019).

Many prior studies defined and set different criteria to find truant students as well as the severity level of truancy in middle and high school students(Egger et al., 2003; Egger et al., 2003; Hansen, 2003; Henry & Huizinga, 2007b; Ingul et al., 2012, 2019). Several scholars believe that school truancy severity can be defined based on set definitions (Egger et al., 2003; Ginder et al., 2016; Henry & Huizinga, 2007b; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001). In contrast, many others explain that school truancy severity can clearly be addressed and explained through problematic behaviour and activities that are performed within and outside schools. A study conducted by Ingul et al. (2012) has contributed to explaining school truancy severity based on different definitions wherein the percentage of days absent has been evaluated dimensionally (0–100%) as well as categorically addressed and explained levels of school truancy in school students. First of all, categorically explained levels of school truancy have been built on a set definition of "severe absenteeism or school truancy" such as equal to or more than a fifteen percent percentage of days missed (Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Ingul et al., 2012, 2019). Moreover, the moderate to severe categorically defined levels of school truancy have been created based on equal sample size distributions (54-100%, 20-53%, and 0-19%) (Ingul et al., 2012). None of the above studies did not find a proper solution or set proper criteria to define the level of truancy in school students. Vaughn et al. (2013) explain that new studies need to take a close look at the link between school truancy in association with different levels of school truancy to better update policy as well as practise in middle and high schools (Vaughn et al., 2013). Although this interesting topic is controversial and open for further debate, this present

study was conducted to explore the definition and level of school truancy above mentioned subject matter. This present study contributes and adds new information to the abovementioned subject to comprehend and address the school truancy concept and school truancy severity. Our study's findings provided a novel way to define and categorise school truancy severity in school students. This study introduced three unique levels of school truancy to define truancy, which is discussed below (See figure 5).

Furthermore, a noteworthy difference between the current investigation and earlier research is the exploratory or qualitative approach used to explore school truancy severity in school-going truant students. Many of the aforementioned studies examined school truancy severity on a dimensional or definitional basis, as well as this hotly debated phenomenon in European countries through cross-sectional and experimental research. (Bernstein & Borchardt, 1996; Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Hansen, 2003; Henry & Huizinga, 2007b). Whereas the current study did not evaluate the relationship between school truancy severity and most clinical symptoms examined dimensionally or did not use the old set of criteria for definitions. The current investigation explored and set criteria for school truancy severity on the basis of a new group's categorization of school-going-truant adolescents that were first reported and formed different groups of truant students. The significant novelty of the present study's model is that, unlike previous models which viewed this truancy as a single phenomenon, the present model has divided it into three different forms of truancy consisting of similarities and differences between them, which are explained in the triangles above in Figure 1 and further elaborated based on symptoms and characteristics in Figure 5 (Duo-Dimensional Model of Truancy). This new proposed model was developed to understand the level of school truancy severity and

its links to psychopathology and different deviant activities. Further, it is also useful to screen out or evaluate truant behaviour and further classify the nature of truant behaviour into mild, moderate, and severe based on psychopathological symptoms, involvement in criminal activities, and sexual risky behaviour in middle and high school-going students.

**School-Based Truancy.** This type of truancy is most commonly associated with students of the youngest ages and is often associated with minor symptoms of various disorders such as learning disorders, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), conduct disorders, general anxiety, and somatic complaints. They also display verbal aggression against their classmates as a form of bullying behavior. They are involved in minor types of criminal acts. These students present the lowest form of truancy, which is divided into covert and overt pathways. Most of the behaviour at this level is covert in nature and consists of lying habits, bunking from classes, verbal aggression, having a negative attitude towards teachers etc., whereas overt behaviour mostly consists of bullying and annoyance-based behaviours (see figure 5). The age group associated with this group consists of students between the age range of 11 and 15 and in classes 6$^{th}$ to 8$^{th}$. These students display clear signs of defiant behaviour against authority figures such as teachers, parents, class representatives, etc. Additionally, symptoms of anxiety and learning disorders such as dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) were commonly found at mild levels, disrupting only their educational lives. Other physical conditions which were reported as a result of psychological issues included: headaches, fever, stomach pain, vomiting, blood pressure, etc., all of which are common consequences of fear of the teacher and anxiety. As per previous theories, school truancy is part and parcel

of mental health problems and delinquent activities (Henry & Huizinga, 2007b; Maynard et al., 2018).

This current study's findings are consistent and add new contributions to the school truancy level in middle and high school studies. Findings from existing studies provide support or a foundation for current studies. Previous studies highlighted that school truancy was significantly associated with mental health issues, including depression and general anxiety, as well as prosocial behaviours in school-going adolescents (Fornander & Kearney, 2019b, 2020b, 2020c). Many researchers, however, discovered a link between mental health issues and various levels of school truancy severity. For example, Fornander and Kearney (2020) illustrated that those students who had a mental disorder were exposed to more school truancy issues as compared to those students who did not have a mental disorder (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Gonzálvez et al., 2016). Additionally, Skedgell and Kearney (2018) also distinguished those students who skipped 0–14% of their classes in years; they were involved in minor prosocial activities as compared to those students who skipped 15–100% of their classes in years; they were involved in severe criminal activities and sexual risky behaviors. Moreover, a similar study further revealed that those students who had skipped 20–39% of their classes displayed minor general anxiety and depression (Fornander & Kearney, 2020a). Furthermore, Stempel et al. (2017) observed that there were significant differences between those students who had skipped less and more than fifteen days of classes. They found that more severe school truancy was associated with more negative childhood experiences, including parental incarceration or divorce, family psychopathology or substance use, financial hardship, neighbourhood and domestic violence(Stempel et al., 2017). A previous similar study found that the minimum

level of school truancy has been linked with deleterious outcomes, including low class performance, low educational aspirations, poor grades, and bullying behavior (Henry & Huizinga, 2007b). Many other similar studies also reported that there existed an association between school truancy and mental or physical health issues such as anxiety, learning difficulties, headaches, fever, stomach pain (Egger et al., 2003;Egger et al., 2012). Furthermore, several other similar studies provided supporting evidence that different severity levels of school truancy were found to be related to age, gender, lower levels of the phobia of physical and physical punishment, as well as lower participation in recreational activities with friends in middle and high school-going adolescents (Ingul et al., 2012). This current study is in line with the previous study's findings. According to previous research, there is a positive relationship between school truancy and internalising symptomatology in middle and high school students who missed at least 15% of their school days (Ingul et al., 2019).

**Internet Café Truancy.** The second classification of the psychopathology of students was based on their age range between 16 and 18, in classes 9$^{th}$ and 10$^{th}$. These students display moderate levels of symptoms of disorders such as: learning disorders, conduct disorders, anti-social disorders, anxiety disorders, and depression disorders. These disorders often force these truant students into criminal activities such as stealing, bullying, destroying property, etc. These students can be in groups or individuals and were mostly found in internet cafes where they displayed symptoms of porn addiction and had sexual tendencies, including homosexual intercourse. Other physical conditions which were reported as a result of psychological issues included: headaches, fever, high blood pressure, etc., all of which are common consequences of fear of teachers. Findings from existing

literature provide support for our study data. For example, Skedgell and Kearney (2018) classified different categories of truant students based on school absenteeism as those students who missed 0–14% of classes in a year because they were involved in minor deviant activities or mental health issues. On the other hand, those students who skipped 15–100% of their classes in a year are involved in severe criminal activities and sexual risky behaviors. Whereas a similar study also supported our current classification of truant groups as those students who had skipped 20–39% of their classes, they displayed moderate general anxiety and depression and were involved in moderate criminal activities and sexual risky behavior (Fornander & Kearney, 2020a).

**Park-Based Truancy.** The most severe psychopathological disorders were found in the group of truant students who were found in parks. These students ranged between the ages of 11 and 20 and were in classes $6^{th}$ to $10^{th}$. These students suffered from the most severe forms of psychological disorders and their symptoms indicated disorders such as: conduct disorder, sexual disorder, anxiety, depression, anti-social personality disorder, psychopath personality disorder, and substance abuse disorders. Similar to previous levels, these also include covert and overt behaviors, but unlike the previous levels, these students have more overt behaviours. They have been found to have severe forms of covert behaviour like compulsive lying, manipulation, and criminal theft, which may lead to or be the cause of psychological issues such as conduct disorder (CD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Antisocial Behavior (ASB), Psychopathic symptoms, anxiety, depression, and learning problems These students mostly were based on a group hierarchy system where the older student would lead the younger student's group. These students were also found to be involved in criminal activities such as sexual solicitation,

drug use, stealing, theft, gang violence, sexual harassment, rape, etc., as a direct consequence of these psychological disorder symptoms. The findings also reflected on the causes behind such psychological symptoms, and the findings suggested that sexual and physical abuse in the younger years of life by senior students leads to the development of such psychopathological disorders, which when once grown, manifest in the one enforcing such activities on the younger students, making it a vicious, repetitive cycle. One interesting finding in this particular group was that it was based on only males and no females were associated with park-based truant students. Previous research findings support the current study's claim that there is a group difference in truant samples. An earlier study's findings highlighted that those students who had severe psychiatric problems displayed more severe patterns of school truancy in middle and high school students. Furthermore, Stempel et al. (2017) observed that there were significant differences between those students who had skipped less and more than fifteen days of classes. They found that more severe school truancy was associated with more negative childhood experiences, including parental incarceration or divorce, family psychopathology or substance use, financial hardship, and neighbourhood and domestic violence. Results of previous studies explained that school truancy had a positive association with verbal or physical aggression, drug use, delinquency, and sexual risk behavior (Hallfors et al., 2002; Henry, 2007, 2010; Maynard, et al., 2012). Problem behavior theory has also explained that problematic behaviours including marijuana use, drinking, sexual intercourse, and delinquent behaviours cluster to establish a pattern of problem behaviour in school-going adolescence globally (Donovan & Jessor,1985). Multitiered systems of support (MTSS) models are supported in the current study's

findings. MTSS is also classified into three tiers, which explain different level of school truancy. Tier 1 MTSS typically focused on early prevention, while Tier 2 MTSS focused on early intervention for emerging adolescents, mild, or moderate to severe problems. We focused on rigorous intervention development for severe truancy problems in Tier 3 of MTSS (Eagle et al., 2015). MTSS models were used to improve a wide variety of social, academic, and deviant activities as well as emotional or behavioural problems such as anxiety and depression (Weist et al., 2018). Previous studies highlighted that there were inconsistent findings on sexual risk behaviour and criminal activities in male and female school-going adolescents (Baker et al., 2020). Moreover, both male and female students were more involved in sexual and criminal activities in European countries. In contrast, this present study demonstrated that male truant students were more involved in sexual risky behaviour and criminal activities in the Pakistan context. The findings of previous studies are in line with the present study's findings. Previous studies highlighted that school truancy was associated with the growth of deviant and criminal behaviour such as juvenile delinquency (Reid, 2013) substance use (Maynard et al., 2018), as well as adult criminal offending (Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Ginder et al., 2016b). Furthermore, truancy was also linked to psychopathology and criminal activities including psychiatric problems, externalizing problem behavior, delinquency, risky sexual behaviour, teenage pregnancy, and alcohol addiction, tobacco or cigarette use, marijuana and other substances (Chou et al., 2006; Egger et al., 2003; Jaafar et al., 2013; Seidu et al., 2020). Interestingly, there is well established evidence that risky deviant, criminal, sexual acts and psychiatric issues such as delinquency and substance use coexist in middle and high school-going truant adolescents and adults (Kronholz, 2011). Several prior investigations have highlighted that

school truancy is positively associated with risky sexual behavior, self-reported delinquency, attention difficulties, conduct disorder, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and substance addition in school-going adolescents (Kearney & Graczyk, 2020). Importantly for the current investigation, this investigation is among one of the few to precisely establish a linkage among school truancy, oppositional deficiency disorder, learning problems, conduct disorder, delinquent activities, sexual risk behaviors, antisocial personality, psychopath personality, and psychopathology (Gerth, 2020). Previous studies also supported our study's findings related to antisocial and psychopath personality. As per previous studies, school truancy is considered a major developmental milestone of antisocial and psychopath behaviour all over the world (Gerth, 2020). Most experts in the field of antisocial and psychopath personality disorders believe that both personality traits start to develop at an early age when children get involved in aggressive and violent behaviour against other people, animals, and objects  (Porres, 2016),  After that, they gradually start to develop conduct disorder symptoms and, after 18 years, they have fully developed symptoms of antisocial and psychopath personality disorders(Fornander & Kearney, 2019b; Kearney, 2002b; Lyon & Cotler, 2007).

**Group Variation in School Truancy and its Severity**

The current study is based on evidence from habitual adolescent students who exhibit common covert and overt behaviours and are at a very high risk for serious psychiatric problems, criminal behavior, and juvenile delinquency. Prior research has revealed that both overt and covert behaviours manifest and begin in primary school students (Gonzálvez, et al., 2019; Gonzálvez, et al., 2018a; Maynard et al., 2017c). Therefore, academic failure, school refusal, and dropout could ultimately be outcome

factors of the overt behaviour of truant school students, though school involvement may predict delinquent behaviour in later life (Kearney et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2005). The current study's findings support our study assumptions and provide new information for educational, forensic, and clinical psychology that adolescents who skip school or classes more frequently, go outside of schools, and spend their time in parks are at a very high risk of severe deviant behavior, substance use, juvenile delinquency, and sexual risky behaviours when compared to school-going adolescents who skip classes less frequently. The current study's preliminary findings show that park school-going adolescents are more likely to engage in deviant and criminal activities such as serious fighting inside and outside of school; alcohol and drug use; stealing; criminal activities as well as sexual risky behaviour such as homosexual or heterosexual behavior; rape when compared to moderately frequent school-going internet-cafe truants and school-going truant students. Furthermore, our study's results suggest a consistent pattern of group differences between the severity and types of overt and covert behaviours in school-going adolescents. From an exploratory evaluation of Tables 2, 3 and Figure 5 that both park and internet cafe school-going truants are more likely to report involvement in more serious criminal activities and mental health problems as compared to school-going truant students who skip classes and stay in school. They are showing less commitment and involvement in severe criminal activities and mental health problems. As mentioned above, results on differences between truant groups reveal that the three groups of school-going truant students vary in important and noteworthy ways based on psychopathology, deviant activities, and sexual risky behaviors. However, our study findings also highlight that the most important consequences for highly truant students are low academic grades as well as school dropout.

Though low academic performance can be perceived as a feature of dis-involvement in class and school, it can further be observed as interlinked with deviant behaviour and psychopathology, as earlier investigations reveal that those truant adolescents who have had mental health issues and are involved in deviant activities. They also likely to get low grades(Maynard et al., 2017c).

Importantly, in spite of this study, it explored differences in school-going truant students and also categorised truant students into three categories based on psychopathology and deviant activities. It clearly makes a distinction between minor, moderate, and severe school truancy types. This does not mean that early screening to diagnose school behaviour and intervention or prevention resources should only be focused on severe group truant students; it obviously seems probable that minor and moderately school-going truant students may become part of more severe school truancy types in later life and over time. This could be claimed that prevention funds may be better used with moderate types of truant students, provided the possibility that severe or chronic truant students are a minor percentage of the populace as well as it may be harder to find them. Moreover, early screening of school truancy behaviour is mandatory for the enrolment of new students at all schools.

**Conclusions**

Nowadays, Pakistan is experiencing a major challenge in ensuring all schoolchildren, primarily the most underprivileged, learn, stay, and attend all levels of school. Whereas retention or enrolment rates are improving day by day, advancement has been found to be very slow to progress in educational indicators all over Pakistan. This study's findings revealed that truant school-going students' personal experiences highlighted multiple indigenous factors that negatively influence or trigger school truancy in adolescents and recommended numerous indicators for decreasing school truancy in the Pakistan context, including: amendments to the class and school climate to improve student engagement and reduce school phobia; a more positive and effective school response to tackle and improve school truancy in middle and high schools; and further engagement and involvement of parents for improvement of above subject matter. School practitioners, policy makers, and researchers can also make positive efforts to tackle school truancy and spread awareness and create insight for society on how to address this crucial problem. Moreover, partnerships between schools and police that communicate, in a procedurally fair way, parental legal responsibilities for their children to attend school hold promise for increasing a truanting young person's willingness to go to school and reducing their self-reported antisocial behavior, at least in the short run. This study has also incorporated several precautionary measures and guidelines on how to improve school truancy problems and establish early warning systems for prompt and positive response to school truancy problems, helping with global policy analysis and implementation and dissemination or adapting to future modifications in technology and education. Moreover, given the serious academic, social, physical or mental health, and legal antecedents and ramifications of

school truancy in middle and high school-going students, the substantial ongoing efforts and intervention to reduce school truancy in Pakistani culture are surely well vindicated. However, current research results illustrate that in spite of the efforts being made at the state, federal, and local levels, there has been little observed impact towards decreasing school truancy. In short, school truancy remains a serious problem in Pakistan that needs to be addressed at all levels of the school population. As seen in the current study, an additional nuanced unique description of focus groups arises once temporal trends in school truancy are stratified based on gender, age, grades, and truant group. The present study provided in-depth information related to the variation in trends as well as found associations in school truancy across gender, age, grades, and truant groups. It also observed the demographic variation happening in Pakistan. School truancy reduction interventional programmes may need to modify existing educational policies and develop a new more distinguished and unique culture-based approach to tackle and eradicate cultural and other nuanced factors linked with school truancy. Furthermore, when observing vulnerable populations, including different types of school-going truants, adolescents involved in juvenile delinquent behaviour or criminal activities, sexual risky behavior, and mental health problems, there is a huge need to evaluate natural variation in delinquent behavior, criminal activities, sexual risky behavior, and mental health issues separately across gender, age, grades, and different truant groups. Unfortunately, several school truancy programmes are less focused on the juvenile delinquent behaviour or criminal activities, sexual risky behavior, and mental health problems of school-going adolescents who are incapable of attending their schools because of numerous social, academic, personal, and mental health problems in Pakistani culture. For example, in order

to boost progress as well as ensure the reasonable development of quality education, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) facilitates the efforts of Pakistan's government to significantly improve school truancy at primary schools. Furthermore, this education programme places more emphasis on early childhood education, alternative learning pathways, school-community linkages, and equity in education at primary levels in Pakistan. However, past research clearly illustrated a lot of adolescents classified as truants could be facing serious mental health issues and involved in delinquent behavior, sexual risky behavior, and drug addiction (Fornander & Kearney, 2019b, 2020c; Gonzálvez, et al., 2018c; Higa et al., 2002b). This study highlights that if physical or mental health problems, delinquent behavior, sexual risky behavior, and drug addiction problems are not well recognised and appropriately addressed or resolved, future problems in school-going truant adolescents may be expected. The findings of this study are clearly illuminating, addressing the complexities of school truancy and its serious consequences on the mental health and later life of truant students in Pakistan. There is a huge need to properly respond and immediately address the school truancy issue. In addition, truant school-going students' personal experiences highlighted multiple indigenous factors that negatively influence or trigger school truancy in adolescents and recommended numerous indicators for decreasing school truancy in the Pakistan context, including: amendments to the class and school climate to improve student engagement and reduce school phobia; a more positive and effective school response to tackle and improve school truancy in middle and high schools; and further engagement and involvement of parents for improvement of above subject matter. School practitioners, policy makers, and researchers can also make positive efforts to tackle school truancy and spread awareness and create insight for society on how to

address this crucial problem. Moreover, partnerships between schools and police that communicate, in a procedurally fair way, parental legal responsibilities for their children to attend school hold promise for increasing a truanting young person's willingness to go to school and reducing their self-reported antisocial behavior, at least in the short run. This study has also incorporated several precautionary measures and guidelines on how to improve school truancy problems and establish early warning systems for prompt and positive response to school truancy problems, helping with global policy analysis and implementation and dissemination or adapting to future modifications in technology and education. Furthermore, this study model demonstrates a complex interaction between delinquent behaviour and mental health problems, which is a perplexing area for practitioners and policymakers because the exact relationship between delinquent behaviour and mental health issues is still unknown. This model illustrates that there are shared psycho-social and academic risk factors for school truancy for delinquency and mental health issues in truant school-going students. However, this study is less conclusive about whether psychological problems enhance the odds of truant school-going students' involvement in delinquent behaviour or whether delinquent behavior enhances truant school-going students' psychological problems. It reveals that a few externalizing disorders such as oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, substance use disorder, antisocial personality, and psychosis behaviour do enhance the probability of violence, aggression, and delinquent behavior in park and internet truant school-going students. However, it also demonstrates that internalizing disorders, including depression and anxiety disorders, are associated with delinquency in truant school-going students in the Pakistan context.

**Limitations and suggestions**

This present study has several limitations. The very first major drawback is that this study primarily explored the personal experiences of school-going truant adolescents without conducting an interview with their family members. This could have resulted in some variation in the thematic structure derived from our analysis. Future studies may analyze the perceptions of adolescents' family members and make comparisons between their life experiences with those of youngsters. Second, some of the participants had mental health issues. Their educational absenteeism experiences may differ from those of adolescents without mental health issues. As a result, future research could also distinguish between these two heterogeneous groups in order to draw more inferences. Third, while the present study results suggested a few potential preventions and interventions for adolescent school truancy, this study did not focus on adequate intervention for school truancy. Forth, the research team included several investigators with diverse backgrounds but little expertise in school truancy issues, which could potentially bias the researchers' interpretations. Their personal knowledge and experience influence their research conclusions and observations.

Fifth, as with most qualitative studies, the findings are not intended to be generalised to the entire Pakistani population due to the small sample size of truant students. Most of the sample of school-going truant students represents a subcategory of adolescents who have the potential to improve their school truancy struggles as well as are on their way towards completing their final years of school. While the school-going adolescents in the present study may have diverse experiences and knowledge as compared

to those adolescents who are entirely involved in school truancy and dropout from high school, as well as those students who attend classes daily, their contributions on the ways in which they have potential to resolve their life's struggles give insight into how adolescents could again be attached to their school.

On the sixth, the young research assistants conducted several of our mini-focus groups with truant students. While this facilitated developing rapport with adolescent truant students as well as a sense of peer-to-peer conversation, the young research assistants did not have extensive experience and professional training for conducting focus groups, therefore generating potential gaps in collecting data for few participants in the current study.

Lastly, it was not possible to completely analyze transcriptions alongside data gathering. Overall, this present study illustrates the multifaceted array of issues that impact school attendance. As policy and decision-makers examine ways to reduce truancy and improve associated outcomes, the youths' experiences and recommendations described in our study point to the importance of modifying the school environment to increase student engagement, implementing effective school responses to address truancy, and engaging parents to help support school-based efforts.

While this work provides insights into strategies for system improvement, additional research is needed to continue to identify effective practices. By incorporating youths' perspectives into intervention design and development, researchers and practitioners might be able to better meet youths' needs and implement mutually reinforcing strategies that address the

complex, inter-related factors that impact school attendance. Grounding future research and policy work in youths' experiences can hopefully contribute to changing a challenging, yet crucial, area that fosters youth success.

**Implications for Further Research and Practice**

In-depth understanding of the causes and consequences of truant school-going adolescents and psycho-social factors that put these adolescent students   at risk of school truancy is required for effective prevention and intervention to tackle this heterogeneous problems (Henry & Huizinga, 2007b). Different psycho-social and demographic variables, including cultural, group diversity, gender, age, environmental, personal, family, and school factors, among others, warrant explicit focus in both the remediation and prevention of school truancy issues. Lyon and Cotler (2007) emphasized   for the need to address both psycho-social and unique cultural factors such as cultural norms and traditions related to education's value as well as cultural diversities in the structure of family and school relationships, such as the higher positive influence in family and school relationships in low-income families (Lyon & Cotler, 2007).

This study's findings recommend that schools have an opportunity to tackle and prevent school truancy by encouraging school engagement through enhancing and developing healthy relationships between students, administration staff, and teachers and introducing new attractive and healthy activities to engage and increase students' interest in class and school. This study also helps to understand and address the role of discouragement and disengagement with specific classes and school due to teacher or subject-related issues, which were found to be a mutually unique commencing point for the development trajectory of school truancy, academic failure, dropout, mental health

problems, and involvement in delinquent, sexual risky, and criminal activities among school-going truant adolescents in the present study. Certainly, the relationship between school attendance and school engagement has been found in previous studies. (Maynard et al., 2012). In previous studies, when asked what they would have changed to improve their school truancy trajectory, several truant students mentioned the importance of school structures and policies related to the curriculum that contribute to keeping them involved in school or class appealing and entertaining activities (Maynard et al., 2012). In the present study, several adolescents reported that the compulsory subjects such as English, Math, and Science were not appropriate and related to their lives and futures. As these negative perceptions have been critical points to the process of disengagement or detachment from their classes and school, this study suggests that there may be a specific desire to provide an appropriate curriculum that includes attractive and entertaining activities that are socially and practically appropriate and tailored to adolescents' experiences and interests. While the findings are consistent with previous well-established truancy-reduction interventions such as integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports Model (MTSS)-Based Approaches, positive behavioural intervention and support (PBIS), and the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework (Fornander & Kearney, 2020d; Kearney, 2016a; Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Tolin et al., 2009). The aforementioned models addressed the causal factors of the school environment broadly, they proposed modifications and improvement in truant behavior through training of school staff, teachers, and parents. Further efforts and inputs are also required to more efficiently respond to improving school truancy in middle and high schools in Pakistan. As observed in present research, school truancy often starts initially in the lives of truant students as well as it could lead to a vicious cycle or

process of school detachment if left unresolved. Although a scarcity of previous research with rigorous methodology has concentrated on truant behavior in primary, middle, and high school students, (Maynard et al., 2013; McCluskey et al., 2004). Furthermore, the findings of similar studies suggested that many students become habitually truant and begin truancy as early as sixth grade (Henry & Huizinga, 2007b; Kern et al., 2019; Reid, 2013). This present study's findings support the aforementioned study's results, demonstrating that truant students may take advantage of preventions and interventions that define and set clear limitations as well as consequences for school truancy early in the lives of students. Additionally, while earlier investigations have criticised and raised questions about interventions or preventions with a disciplinary module (Mueller & Stoddard, 2006), This study recommended that adolescents may be observed for consequences and boundaries as long as they are executed in the context of a solution-oriented framework.In the current study, truant students highlighted the value of an intervention that takes students to comprehend the major antecedents of problematic behavior including family, school, and psychological problems. Prior studies recommended that a lot of adolescents did not prefer to take advantage of mental health facilities; they needed the consultancy of professionals to resolve their personal issues. Institutions could provide an important point for recognising and connecting to desired services for both punctual and truant students  (Gonzálvez et al., 2019).

However, our study found that most truant students felt uncomfortable and insecure about sharing personal and social problems or getting facilities in this situation. This study also explains that truants may not be able to share their personal issues without strong

attachments with school administrative staff, teachers, and peers, and may not be reluctant to access mental health facilities.

Proactively recognising and addressing the needs of students may be most beneficial, instead of waiting till adolescents are involved in problematic situations. It would be helpful to resolve issues and address adolescents' needs. It is very useful to address the needs of students for continued involvement, as adolescents' problems are often chronic and complex in nature, and are, thus, unlikely to disappear fully with a temporary prevention or intervention. In an environment of continued budget deficits, maintaining low faculty-to-student ratios as well as updating staff skills to conduct different workshops and address the needs of students who are at-risk should be a priority. Moreover, findings recommend the value of parental school and family involvement as key partners in explaining and addressing truant behavior. Parental school and family involvement are one of the most important roles played in encouraging and supporting dialogue with adolescents related to the value of education in the future, assisting to monitor truant behavior, as well as ensuring the service's delivery. Prior research highlighted the advantages of parental school and family involvement and parental involvement approaches such as improved school attendance through positive communication with truant students (Epstein, 2008; Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Maynard et al., 2015). Regrettably, our study's findings reflect prior study's results revealing that most parents of truant students are themselves facing turmoil, as well as in need of extra funding or facilitation to navigate the school systems of their children (Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Rodríguez & Conchas, 2009). In the Pakistan context, most parents are working day and night to fulfil the basic needs of their families. That's why they don't have much

time for interaction with their children and they have meagre financial resources to pay for their children's school fees. They avoid interacting and involving their children in school matters because of their busy and hectic daily routine. These above-mentioned reasons create significant barriers and obstacles for parents of truant students to participation in official subject matters. However, school efforts to involve parents of truant students that did not also explain the abovementioned realities have often been unsuccessful. Innovative and distinctive models of parental school and family involvement, such as integrated Multi-tiered system of support model (MTSS)-based approaches that aid in educating and training both parents while also establishing links between parents, teachers, and students, may be a viable method (Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Gonzálvez et al., 2019).

Finally, the present research has several benefits along with those already discussed; it can be of imperative importance to combine different fields, including psychology, education, and forensics, etc., that are working on a joint agenda. Additionally, it also identifies the common issues that students face in their respective schools on a daily basis. One more benefit of the present research is that it can consequently be a baseline to develop interventions and screening instruments for truant students and curb the process of crime. Much research has identified teenage delinquency as the path towards a life of crime, and by identifying the root causes, it is more beneficial for stopping individuals from becoming truants and criminals later on. Moreover, this study is helpful in identifying the difficulties relating to educational, behavioural, social, and environmental adjustments of truant students. Also, the study is able to identify the factors that can lead students (primary, middle, and high school) towards truancy, leading to delinquency. Also, the scale developed from the gathered data can be used for screening purposes to identify students

with tendencies towards truancy during admission and also to provide them with adequate help and support required to adjust to their daily lives.

## Study 2: Development and Validation of School Truancy Scale

**Objectives**

The primary aims of study 2 are to develop the psychometric properties of school truancy in truant school-going students. Moreover, this study examines the association between the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior in school-going truant and punctual students.

The objectives of the present study include:

1. To develop an indigenous measure to assess school truancy in truant students.

2. To establish the psychometric properties of the school truancy scale in truant and punctual students.

3. To examine the association between the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior in school-going truant and punctual students.

4. To investigate the role of demographic variables such as gender and student status (truant and punctual students) on the school truancy scale and school refusal behaviour in school students.

**Hypotheses**

1. School truancy will be positively associated with school refusal behavior in both truant and punctual students.

2. Truant students will exhibit more school truancy and school refusal behavior than punctual students.

3.      Male truant students will display more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to school-going female truant students.

4.      Male and female truant students will exhibit more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to female and male punctual students.

5.      School truancy will positively predict school refusal behavior in both truant and punctual students.

**Research Methodology**

In the present study, exploratory sequential design was applied to develop the School Truancy Scale (STS) in truant and punctual school-going students. This study was divided into two parts: (a) the qualitative part and (b) the quantitative part. In the qualitative part, indigenous theory was developed based on a ground theory approach. ten mini focus group discussions with 81 school-age adolescent students from Faisalabad, Pakistan, who had a history of truancy The findings of the thematic analysis revealed nine global themes of antecedents, including (1) peer influence, (2) impact of school, (3) personal characteristics, (4) entertaining activities, (5) family problems, (6) media influence, (7) self-esteem, (8) morality, and (9) group adherence. However, 3 global themes of consequences emerged, including (1) psychopathology, (2) academic problems, and (3) health issues. In the quantitative part, this study aimed to develop and establish the psychometric properties of the STS to examine the risk and tendency of problematic truant behaviour for school-going truant students in Pakistan.

This study was used and identified two phases of a method that consists of three steps. In the first phase, items were created and the content validity of these items was evaluated by subject experts in a pre-testing study. In the second phase, the instrument was

developed. There were different steps in scale development, such as main-testing the items, conducting the survey with participants and experts, decreasing the number of questions, and comprehending how many latent factors the scale explored and developed. Moreover, the newly developed scale was examined through exploratory factor analysis, the number of factors was tested to develop construct validity, and different types of reliability and validity were established through different analyses in the main study.

**Phase 1. Scale Development**

This present research was planned to explore the antecedents and consequences of school truancy and further to construct the indigenous scale in the Pakistan context. A two-stage method was used: (1) identify and recognize appropriate manifestations of school truancy using the thematic analysis technique, or (2) item construction; establish the content validity of newly developed items by professional opinions.

*Material and Procedure*

Ten mini focus groups were performed through proper interview protocol guidelines, which were based on empirical and theoretical approaches to school truancy (Kearney, 2008; King & Bernstein, 2001) and advice from researchers and experts (e.g., What do you think about behaviours of school-going truant students? How would you define truant behavior, according to you? How would we identify and recognize truant school-going students earlier? What are the antecedents and consequences of school truancy at school? These mini focus groups were preliminary pilot-tested with five middle school-going students and four school faculty members. All these focus groups were conducted by a professional psychologist. These focus groups were documented as well as lasting from 20 to 60 minutes.

*Thematic analysis*

A corpus of ten mini focus groups was analysed using a thematic analysis technique. The themes were generated by agreement between the professionals and the author of this study. Thematic analysis demonstrated good inter-rater reliability, as shown using Cohen's kappa coefficient (Vogt, 2015). A total of 9 global themes of antecedents were identified using the thematic analysis: (1) peer influence; (2) impact of school; (3) personal characteristics; (4) entertaining activities; (5) family problems; (6) media influence; (7) self-esteem; (8) morality; and (9) group adherence. Each of these global themes of antecedents consisted of organized themes and basic themes, and their thematic structure was reported in Table 2. Whereas, in total, there are three global themes of consequences which were recognized using the thematic analysis :(1) psychopathology, (2) academic problems, and (3) health issues. Each of these global themes of consequences consisted of organized themes and basic themes, and their thematic structure was reported in Table 3.

**Phase 2: Item Generation and Selection by Experts and Scale Construction**

*Screener Derivation Process*

Figure 6 displays the sequence of scale development steps which were followed in the present study.

**Step 1: Item Generation Pool.** In phase 1, the item pool of the truancy scale was carefully evaluated to identify and confirm items that measure school truancy behavior in school-going truant students. Items were generated based on the verbatim recoding of participants. Percentage analysis of subthemes permitted identification of the most prevalent subthemes as basic themes for item generation. These basic themes were used as signs to construct an item bank. Therefore, a set of 190 items was constructed by the author in the present study.

**Step 2: Latent Construct Operationalization.** The latent construct of the school truancy scale was explored and defined, based upon the empirical evidence and theoretical work of the present study.

*School Truancy.* The present study examined absenteeism by different standardized definitions. Many previous researchers proposed various methods for detecting absenteeism both inside and outside of schools. In the present investigation, the criteria for truancy were defined as those school students who remained absent for twenty-one days from their school without the consent of parents, teachers, and higher authorities and without any medical reason, which was modified according to Pakistan's education law and the period was reduced to 16 days (Aqeel et al., 2016; Colorado Department of Education, 2013; Hassan et al., 2016). In contrast, park-going truant students and internet café truant students' definitions were based on the reports by the authorities of the park and

internet cafes as well as the general description of the students, such as wearing school uniforms, having school bags, and being present in parks and internet cafes during school timings.

**Step 3: Content Validity of the Item Pool**. As suggested by DeVellis (2011), to establish the content validity of the school truancy scale, the item bank was reviewed by professionals. A panel of three professional psychologists as well as 12 school-going adolescent students showing a school truancy scale (age: 12–18 years old; $M = 15.2$, $SD = 1.5$) were requested to rate (1-10) on each item of the scale with regard to its relevance for the school truancy scale. Professionals were further requested to provide remarks on the item pool as well as to provide recommendations for improving these items. Those items that had higher consensus or agreement among experts were retained in the scale, and the remaining items were excluded from the scale. However, those items that were rated above 6 by the experts and school-going adolescent students were retained. Therefore, 95 items were retained (95 items by both school-going adolescent students and experts). Furthermore, the author of the study ensured that all basic themes were covered and embodied through a minimum of one item (theoretical-conceptual approach). The remarks of the professional were analysed and incorporated into the current study; a few items were reworded and modified for better understanding, and a few items from item pools were removed and discarded. In total, 95 items were retained for further main study testing.

**Step 4: Comprehensibility and Clarity of the 95-Item Pilot Instrument** The 95-item pilot instrument using a five-point likert scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (strongly *agree)* format response, was applied to twelve school-going adolescent students. They were requested to evaluate the comprehensibility and clarity of the instruction of the

school truancy scale, the formulation of each item, and the response format. They were also instructed to identify the cognitive burden of respondents while understanding and reading the item, which assisted in refining its clarity and comprehensibility (Schwarz, 2012). Our probing questions and interviews with students displayed that the clarity of the items and comprehension of the guidelines of the scale were good (students did not find or raise issues with the items' wording and instruction) and indicated informal construct validity. Therefore, the 95-item pilot instrument of the school truancy scale for school-going adolescent students was referred for the further validation process in the main study.

**Step 5: Main Study, Validation of the School Truancy Scale.** This present research was planned to evaluate the psychometric properties of the school truancy scale using (1) exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to explore the covert factor structure of the school truancy scale in samples of school-going truant and punctual students. (2) Various reliability analyses were used to assess item internal consistency; (3) Pearson correlation coefficients were used to assess discriminate and convergent validity. (Steiger & Ward, 1987) The Pearson correlation coefficients were also used to measure the association between school truancy scale scores and school refusal behavior scale scores, and (4) receiver operating characteristic curve (ROC) analysis was used to establish a cutoff point value that determined the clinical efficacy of the school truancy scale for school-going truant and punctual students.

**Figure 6**

*Flowchart of School Truancy Scale Development Process.*

| Step I: Item Selection base on Theoretical Model of the present study |
|---|

**Conceptualization**
1. Theory development
2. Thematic analysis

| Step II: Scale Development of School Truancy |
|---|

**Item Construction**
Identification of the domain/ item generation
Item generation pool
Content validity

| Step III: Scale evaluation |
|---|

**Pilot testing**
Pre-testing questions
Item reduction
Extraction of latent factors

Content validity established by Panel of Experts and students

| Step IV: Item Screening |
|---|

Comprehensibility and Clarity of the 95-Item

| Step V: Test of Reliability and Validity Analyses |
|---|

Main study

Internal Consistency Reliability

1. Content validity

2. Construct/factorial Validity

a. Divergent validity

b. Convergent validity

3. Criterion validity

a. Concurrent validity

b. Predictive validity

Panel of Experts

Alpha Coefficients

EFA
Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations analysis, receive operational curve (ROC), independent samples t-test

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**Table 4**

*Sample Characteristics of Truant and Punctual School-Going Students (N=960)*

| Characteristics | Truant students (n = 361) | | Punctual students ( n = 599) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *f* | *%* | *f* | *%* |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | 200 | 55.4 | 330 | 55.1 |
| Female | 161 | 44.6 | 269 | 44.9 |
| **Age** | | | | |
| 12.00 | 22 | 6.1 | 69 | 11.5 |
| 13.00 | 54 | 15.0 | 74 | 12.4 |
| 14.00 | 66 | 18.3 | 89 | 14.9 |
| 15.00 | 50 | 13.9 | 98 | 16.4 |
| 16.00 | 73 | 20.2 | 91 | 15.2 |
| 17.00 | 45 | 12.5 | 74 | 12.4 |
| 18.00 | 51 | 14.1 | 104 | 17.4 |

*Note.* f= Frequency; %= Percentage.

**Sample**

960 participants (Truan*t* = 361, Punctual = 599) were recruited from public schools, internet cafes, and community parks in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Both groups of school-going students were recruited from the same grade level and schools. This selection criterion was based on a comparison between punctual and truant students. The sample of truant students was selected to establish the construct validity of the school truancy scale in the desired sample. Additionally, a sample of punctual students was also taken based on the idea of constructing criterion validity and for a comparative analysis between truant and normal students. Moreover, previous studies only included punctual student samples based on the idea that truancy is a limited factor present in normal student samples. The current study has tried to distinguish truant students from normal students. Considering the theoretical and empirical evidence found in the current study.

*Punctual Students Sample*

A purposive sampling technique was applied to enrol punctual adolescent students in the present study. 599 school-going punctual students (44.9% females, 55.1% males) with an age range of 12–18 ($M$ = 15.21, $SD$ = 1.80) years old were recruited from different public middle and high schools, Faisalabad, Pakistan. Inclusion criteria are set for recruiting punctual students, such as those students who did not skip regular classes from their schools last year. It was also identified and confirmed with the help of the mutual agreement of school administration, class proctors, and class teachers, who assured that these students regularly attended their classes. Those students who fulfilled the aforementioned criteria were considered as school-going, punctual students (Aqeel et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2016). These adolescent students participated on a volunteer basis after getting their parents and teachers to have previously given explicit verbal and written consent. The scales were filled out in a classroom sitting between the public middle and high schools.

*Truant Students Sample*

361 truant students (44.6% females, 55.4% males) aged 12–18 years ($M$ = 15.17, $SD$ = 1.96) were recruited from various public schools, internet cafes, and community parks in Faisalabad, Pakistan. A convenient sampling technique and cross-sectional design were used in the current study. Inclusion criteria were set for school-going truant students as 1) students who skipped classes for more than 21 days without permission of authority, teachers, and parents; they were assumed as truant students in the present investigation (Aqeel et al., 2016; Colorado Department of Education, 2013; Hassan et al., 2016); students

who used to be on school grounds, cafeteria, or washroom during class time; and 3) those identified as truant students by the school administration. Similarly, inclusion criteria set for park-going truant students and internet café truant students included: 1) students wearing school uniform and being present in parks and internet cafes during school timings; and 2) those identified by the park and internet café authorities as truant students based on their presence at parks or internet cafes regularly at school timings. These adolescent students participated on a volunteer basis after getting their parents and teachers to have previously given explicit verbal and written consent. The scales were filled out in classrooms, internet cafes, and park sitting.

**Measure**

The following instruments were completed by both truant and punctual students. Two instruments were used to examine school refusal behaviour and school truancy in truant and punctual students. A school truancy scale was developed in the present study. The school refusal scale was used for comparison reasons and to establish convergent, divergent, and criterion validity in both punctual and truant students. It was comprised of four subscales, which included: avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity (ASPNA); escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations (EASES); attention seeking (AS); and tangible rewards (TR). All these variables suggest reasons why students don't want to attend school. These causes were found to be very common among those present on the newly developed scale. The majority of them were based on social and psychological factors that drive students to refuse school. However, this was constructed using a normal student sample and not specifically for truant students. Nonetheless, while

catering to the aforementioned components, the newly constructed school went even further by incorporating the antecedents that not only compels students' school refusal behaviour but also truancy, as in both cases the students are compelled to not go to school or attend classes. Therefore, it was best to be used for the current establishment of construct validity. It was also appropriate for testing the convergent validity of a newly developed truancy assessment.

**The School Refusal Assessment Scale.** The Revised School Refusal Assessment Scale (Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Kearney, 2002, 2006) is an 18-item instrument of school refusal behaviour for adolescents. It comprises of four subscales: (1) avoidance of school-related stimuli provoking negative affectivity; (2) escape from aversive social or evaluative situations; (3) garnering parental attention; and (4) positive tangible reinforcement (Kearney, 2002). High scores on all four subscales reveal a higher tendency for school refusal behaviour (Kearney, 2002). Lower subscale scores indicate a lower level of school refusal behaviour (Kearney, 2002). Each item of the subscales is rated on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging between 0 (strongly disagree) and 6 (strongly agree). It has revealed sufficient reliability and validity (Gonzálvez, et al., 2018; Kearney, 2016; Kearney & Silverman, 1993). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha range of subscales was between 0.5 and 0.8 for punctual and truant school-going student samples.

**Procedure**

Nine hundred sixty participants (truant students, $n = 361$; punctual students, $n = 599$) were included from different public schools, internet cafes, and community parks in Faisalabad, Pakistan. This present research was performed in accordance with the ethical

instructions of the American Psychological Association. Moreover, this research as well as its protocols were sanctioned by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the National University of Modern Languages and Islamabad, Pakistan. Verbal and written informed consent was obtained from all volunteers of the study, punctual and truant school-going students. Self-report questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. All participants in the study were approached to fill out a set of instruments, which included demographic information and self-reported instruments, in an ordinary 30 minutes. Approval to carry out the current investigation was sought from the District Education Officer (DEO), higher executive authority of public schools, internet cafes, and community parks after explaining the purpose of the present research as well as making sure that all information about school-going students would be retained secret. Additionally, only those volunteer punctual and truant students who expressed willingness to participate in the present study were included.

**Data Analysis Strategy**

The IBM SPSS Statistics software version 21 package has been used to analyse descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlational analysis, ROC curve analysis, independent samples t-test, binary logistic regression analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) in the present study. Means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and frequency distributions were analyzed. Internal consistency reliability, content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity were established in the current study. The psychometrics of the school truancy scale for truant and punctual school-going student samples were established using different statistical analyses, including Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations, cronbach's alpha if item is deleted, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlational analysis, receive operational curve (ROC), area under the curve (AUC), independent samples t-test, binary logistic regression analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations, and Cronbach's alpha if item is deleted analysis methods were applied to assess the internal consistency of the school truancy scale for only the truant sample. This was done only on truant students and not the punctual students, as the scale's intended purpose was to measure truancy, whereas the punctual sample was only used for comparative purposes, specifically to establish the criterion and know group validity as well as find out the diagnostic efficacy and utilisation of the school truancy scale for punctual and truant students. Construct/factorial validity, criterion validity, and content validity and their subtypes as concurrent validity, predictive validity, known group validity, convergent validity, and discriminate validity were also assessed for the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior scale for both truant and punctual student samples using

different analysis such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlational analysis, receive operational curve (ROC), area under the curve (AUC), independent samples t-test, and binary logistic regression analysis. First of all, initial data screening was performed for univariate outliers before the analysis. After that, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to assess the covert factor structure of the school truancy scale for school-going truant students' sample (Field, 2017). The sample of study was four times higher than the sum of items (Field, 2017; Field, 2013; Osborne et al., 2008). A principal component analysis (PCA) was carried out on ninety-five items through orthogonal rotation (varimax). Later, descriptive statistics were analyzed to find outliers for all the study's items in truant school-going students. These values were used to avoid floor or ceiling effects in the present data. These values were neither extremely low nor too high, which demonstrates the normal distribution of data (Hewitt et al., 2003). Descriptive analysis found that items did not exceed the desired value of kurtosis (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Field, 2017). Moreover, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was provided as evidence of the sampling sufficiency for the factor analysis. The KMO =.89 value showed a sufficient sample to perform exploratory factor analysis for a school-going truant sample (Bunz, 2010). Next, to determine convergent and divergent validity, the Pearson correlation analysis method was used to analyse the relationship between the school refusal behavior scale and the school truancy scale for both school-going truant and punctual students (Field, 2017; Makowski et al., 2020). Furthermore, an independent samples t-test was performed to compare mean differences between truant and punctual school-going student samples on the school truancy scale for establishing known group validity and concurrent validity(Croce et al., 2001;Field, 2017; Kim, 2015; Nachar, 2008). Additionally, to

determine the predictive validity of the school truancy scale, binary logistic regression analysis of the school truancy scale and its subscales on truant and punctual school-going students. Moreover, binary logistic regression analysis was performed to identify school truancy scale predictive ability and diagnostic efficacy in discriminating truant and punctual school-going students(Field, 2017; Saha et al., 2020). Binary logistic regression analysis was used to identify the predictive validity and the diagnostic efficacy of the newly developed scales. Subsequently, receive operational curve (ROC) analysis was also carried out to examine classification accuracies as well as explore the possible clinical efficacy of both the school truancy scale and the school refusal behaviour scale to distinguish between truant and punctual students. For the purpose of comparison, the area under the curve (AUC) of both the school truancy scale and the school refusal behaviour scale were used to discriminate between truant and punctual students. Furthermore, as per the findings of the received operational curve (ROC) as well as the Youden index, cut-off points of both scales were identified to differentiate between punctual and truant samples (Franco-Pereira et al., 2020). Binary logistic regression analysis was used to identify the predictive validity and the diagnostic efficacy of the newly developed scales. Subsequently, receive operational curve (ROC) analysis was also carried out to examine classification accuracies as well as explore the possible clinical efficacy of both the school truancy scale and the school refusal behaviour scale to distinguish between truant and punctual students. For the purpose of comparison, the area under the curve (AUC) of both the school truancy scale and the school refusal behaviour scale were used to discriminate between truant and punctual students. Furthermore, as per the findings of the received operational curve (ROC) as well as the Youden index, cut-off points of both scales were identified to

differentiate between punctual and truant samples (Franco-Pereira et al., 2020). Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also applied to compare multivariate sample means. It was carried out to examine the mean differences on the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior scale between truant and punctual school-going students as well as across gender. The partial eta squared index was used to identify and compare statistically significant differences between truant and punctual students and across gender.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

EFA was performed separately to explore the underlying factor structure of STS for both school-going truant and punctual samples (Field, 2017; Makowski et al., 2020). EFA analysis explored five distinct factors within the STS for the Pakistani truant sample, which was assigned a specific name: (1) general school truancy; (2) teacher-based school truancy; (3) personal issues-based school truancy; (4) social problems-based school truancy; and (5) educational or institutional-based school truancy. These latent factors were derived and identified based on the similar patterns noted in the responses from truant school students, providing a complete understanding of the different dimensions or factors of school truancy in the school truant sample.

In contrast, the EFA was also carried out on the punctual student's sample, which was performed for comparative purposes. It identified a two-factor structure of the STS for punctual students. However, these two factors did not adequately and appropriately capture the underlying nuanced structure and concepts related to school truancy when compared to the school-truant student sample in the present study. This factor structure was deemed questionable and subsequently excluded due to the lack of appropriateness and relevance in reflecting the truancy concept in the present study. The decision was made to exclude

the two-factor structure of the STS from the punctual sample, which was based on the need for a comparable and meaningful factor structure for the aim of the study. This decision ensures that the analysis emphasizes factors genuinely linked to school truancy that permit a more accurate and appropriate comparison between punctual and truant samples (See Appendix D).

# Results

## Table 5

*Factor Loadings of 95 Items with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) through Using Varimax Method (N = 361)*

|    |    | M(SD)       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|----|-------------|------|------|------|---|---|
|    |    |             |      | **Five Factors** |      |   |   |
| 59 | 1  | 1.79(1.36)  | **.651** |      |      |   |   |
| 6  | 2  | 1.68(1.31)  | **.629** |      |      |   |   |
| 82 | 3  | 1.80(1.26)  | **.604** |      |      |   |   |
| 60 | 4  | 1.89(1.41)  | **.597** |      |      |   |   |
| 55 | 5  | 1.65(1.22)  | **.584** |      |      |   |   |
| 4  | 6  | 1.86(1.41)  | **.578** |      |      |   |   |
| 37 | 7  | 1.86(1.26)  | **.566** |      |      |   |   |
| 58 | 8  | 1.50(1.09)  | **.559** |      | .496 |   |   |
| 43 | 9  | 1.54(1.18)  | **.547** |      |      |   |   |
| 75 | 10 | 1.65(1.24)  | **.546** |      |      |   |   |
| 3  | 11 | 1.76(1.33)  | **.541** |      |      |   |   |
| 74 | 12 | 1.62(1.20)  | **.533** |      |      |   |   |
| 39 | 13 | 1.90(1.37)  | **.524** |      |      |   |   |
| 76 | 14 | 1.68(1.25)  | **.520** |      |      |   |   |
| 20 | 15 | 1.56(1.15)  | **.509** |      |      |   |   |
| 56 | 16 | 1.72(1.30)  | .494 |      | .419 |   |   |
| 34 | 17 | 2.19(1.56)  | **.477** |      |      |   |   |
| 42 | 18 | 1.57(1.12)  | **.461** |      |      |   |   |
| 44 | 19 | 1.80(1.38)  | **.448** |      |      |   |   |
| 36 | 20 | 1.81(1.35)  | **.439** |      |      |   |   |
| 31 | 21 | 2.26(1.53)  | **.427** |      |      |   |   |
| 40 | 22 | 1.78(1.32)  | **.426** |      |      |   |   |
| 54 | 23 | 1.98(1.48)  | **.425** |      |      |   |   |
| 68 | 24 | 1.88(1.35)  | **.405** |      |      |   |   |
| 46 | 25 | 1.70(1.19)  | **.405** |      |      |   |   |
| 71 | 26 | 1.64(1.17)  |      |      |      |   |   |
| 5  | 27 | 2.04(1.50)  |      |      |      |   |   |
| 81 | 28 | 3.31(1.59)  |      |      |      |   |   |
| 15 | 29 | 2.01(1.40)  |      | **.677** |      |   |   |
| 8  | 30 | 1.78(1.31)  |      | **.612** |      |   |   |
| 17 | 31 | 1.58(1.18)  |      | **.607** |      |   |   |
| 21 | 32 | 1.84(1.30)  |      | **.584** |      |   |   |
| 7  | 33 | 2.01(2.63)  |      | **.581** |      |   |   |
| 9  | 34 | 2.17(1.52)  |      | **.578** |      |   |   |
| 14 | 35 | 1.90(1.41)  |      | **.571** |      |   |   |
| 18 | 36 | 2.34(1.58)  |      | **.568** |      |   |   |
| 16 | 37 | 1.58(1.20)  |      | **.567** |      |   |   |
| 12 | 38 | 1.72(1.30)  |      | **.561** |      |   |   |
| 13 | 39 | 2.07(1.47)  |      | **.558** |      |   |   |
| 11 | 40 | 1.65(1.24)  |      | **.552** |      |   |   |
| 10 | 41 | 1.90(1.38)  |      | **.529** |      |   |   |
| 22 | 42 | 1.54(1.08)  |      | **.527** |      |   |   |
| 19 | 43 | 2.05(1.45)  |      | **.520** |      |   |   |
| 38 | 44 | 2.17(1.46)  |      | **.501** |      |   |   |
| 30 | 45 | 2.39(1.55)  |      | **.455** |      |   |   |
| 41 | 46 | 2.38(1.53)  |      | **.401** |      |   |   |
| 29 | 47 | 2.18(1.55)  |      |      |      |   |   |

| | | M(SD) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Five Factors | | |
| 45 | 48 | 2.07(2.59) | | | | | |
| 62 | 49 | 1.62(1.20) | | | **.629** | | |
| 64 | 50 | 1.46(1.01) | | | **.599** | | |
| 79 | 51 | 1.46(1.03) | | | **.570** | | |
| 63 | 52 | 1.63(1.17) | | | **.555** | | |
| 78 | 53 | 1.66(1.19) | | | **.511** | | |
| 26 | 54 | 1.81(1.31) | | | **.502** | | |
| 61 | 55 | 1.78(1.35) | | | **.491** | | |
| 67 | 56 | 1.74(1.23) | | | **.490** | | |
| 57 | 57 | 1.64(1.24) | .480 | | **.487** | | |
| 27 | 58 | 1.81(1.37) | | | **.481** | | |
| 25 | 59 | 1.56(1.13) | | | **.468** | | |
| 65 | 60 | 1.75(1.21) | | | **.418** | | |
| 87 | 61 | 2.05(1.49) | | | **.403** | | |
| 28 | 62 | 2.52(1.58) | | | | | |
| 70 | 63 | 1.82(1.32) | | | | | |
| 89 | 64 | 2.00(1.40) | | | | | |
| 80 | 65 | 2.27(1.45) | | | | | |
| 1 | 66 | 1.97(1.42) | | | | **.595** | |
| 24 | 67 | 1.87(1.39) | | | | **.555** | |
| 50 | 68 | 2.21(1.42) | | | | **.522** | |
| 2 | 69 | 1.98(1.43) | .499 | | | **.521** | |
| 23 | 70 | 1.88(1.37) | | | | **.511** | |
| 52 | 71 | 2.40(1.57) | | | | **.482** | |
| 49 | 72 | 1.76(1.25) | | | | **.466** | |
| 48 | 73 | 1.96(1.41) | | | | **.441** | |
| 92 | 74 | 2.34(1.48) | | | | **.433** | |
| 72 | 75 | 1.84(1.34) | | | | **.426** | |
| 35 | 76 | 1.97(1.50) | | | | **.424** | |
| 51 | 77 | 1.80(1.25) | | | | **.408** | |
| 47 | 78 | 1.43(.98) | | | | | |
| 91 | 79 | 2.38(1.50) | | | | | |
| 83 | 80 | 2.23(1.41) | | | | | **.576** |
| 84 | 81 | 2.32(1.43) | .469 | | | | **.560** |
| 86 | 82 | 2.38(1.49) | .433 | | | | **.541** |
| 85 | 83 | 2.36(1.52) | .474 | | | | **.530** |
| 88 | 84 | 3.15(1.65) | | | | | **.483** |
| 94 | 85 | 3.15(1.56) | | | | | **.480** |
| 93 | 86 | 2.52(1.50) | | | | | **.473** |
| 77 | 87 | 2.54(1.62) | | | | | **.427** |
| 53 | 88 | 2.69(1.63) | | | | | **.411** |
| 33 | 89 | 2.54(1.47) | | | | | |
| 66 | 90 | 2.15(1.47) | | | | | |
| 69 | 91 | 2.35(1.55) | | | | | |
| 90 | 92 | 3.53(1.76) | | | | | |
| 32 | 93 | 2.79(1.51) | | | | | |
| 73 | 94 | 2.42(1.69) | | | | | |
| 95 | 95 | 2.56(1.56) | | | | | |
| Eigen Values | | | 25.58 | 3.59 | 3.48 | 3.10 | 2.43 |
| % of Variance | | | 27.21 | 3.82 | 3.70 | 3.30 | 2.58 |
| Cumulative Variance | | | 27.21 | 31.02 | 34.72 | 38.02 | 40.60 |

*Note.* Factor 1= General school truancy (GST); Factor 2= Teacher based school truancy (TST); Factor 3= Personal issues-based school truancy (PST); factor 4= Educational or Institutional based school truancy(EST); factor 5= Social problems-based school truancy (SST).

**Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

Exploratory factor analysis was performed to explore the underlying factor structure of the School Truancy Scale (STS) in Pakistani school-going truant students (Field, 2017; Makowski et al., 2020). Construct validity was also established through EFA analysis of a sample of truant students. The EFA analysis identified five key STS factors: (1) general school truancy; (2) teacher-based school truancy; (3) personal issues-based school truancy; (4) social problems-based school truancy; and (5) educational or institutional-based school truancy. All five subscales of STS revealed good internal consistency for the school-going truant student sample (Cronbach, 1951).

Cronbach's alpha reliability of the overall STS scale was.96 in school-going truant students. The sample of truant school-going students was four times higher in comparison to the total number of items on the STS scale in the present study (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988). A principal component analysis technique was applied to extract original and suitable items based on the varimax method. It was suggested and confirmed that seventy-three appropriate items to measure the internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems of school-going truant students. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics were used to analyse all items on the scale. For the present study sample (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Field, 2013b), Kurtosis and skewed values were used to analyse floor and ceiling effects (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The current study found that both values were neither too low, nor too high in a truant school-going sample with a normal distribution (Hewitt et al., 2003). Additionally, squared multiple correlation values were used to define communalities in a truant student sample (Gorsuch, 1997). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was obtained to determine the sampling adequacy of the present study sample.

The results of EFA analysis revealed the value of KMO was.89, which showed sampling adequacy to carry out EFA in a sample of school-going truant students (Field, 2013b; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The value of Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2$ (*4371*) = *15317.66*, $p$ < .000, demonstrating that sample size was sufficient to perform principal component analysis for a truant school-going student's sample. A scree plot and eigen values suggested a five-factor solution for truant-school students.(Cattell, 1966). Findings revealed the emergence of an obvious five-factor solution, in which each factor is encompassed by several different items.  According to Kaiser's criterion, the eigenvalues of five factors were found to be above 1. Finally, five factors of the STS scale were retained in the present study.

**Content Validity**

Three subject experts (SMEs) provided their opinions to establish the content validity of the DSTBS scale. All the experts were qualified in the field of clinical psychology. All of them regularly serve as professors in different universities' departments of psychology at Foundation University Islamabad. They were requested to assign an appropriate name to the newly developed five factors of the STS scale based on the appropriate content to establish content validity. They were assigned names for five key factors of the STS: (1) general school truancy; (2) teacher-based school truancy; (3) personal issues-based school truancy; (4) social problems-based school truancy; and (5) educational or institutional-based school truancy.

Factor 1 (3, 4, 6, 20, 31, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 54, 55, 59, 60, 68, 74, 75, 76, and 82) includes 23 items that were designed to measure general school-related problematic behavior  of truant students. Further, factor 2 (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,

16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 30, 38, and 41) comprises 18 items that were designed to evaluate conflict between teachers and truant students. Moreover, factor 3 (25, 26, 27, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 78, 79, and 87) contains 12 items that were designed to examine internalizing behavior problems of truant students. Factor 4 (1, 23, 24, 35, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 72, and 92) encompasses 11 items that were developed to examine the educational problematic behavior of truant school-going students. Factor 5 (53, 77, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 93, and 94) includes 9 items that were developed to examine the socially problematic behavior of truant students. The remaining 22 items were excluded from this scale, such as 2, 5, 28, 29, 32, 33, 45, 47, 56, 57, 58, 66, 69, 70, 71, 73, 80, 81, 89, 90, 91, and 95. Finally, the newly developed STS scale includes 73 items that measure the internalizing and externalizing behavior problems of school-going truant students. Factors 1, 2, 4, and 5 were used to asses' truant students' externalizing behavior problems. However, only Factor 3 was used to measure truant students' internalizing behavior problems.

**Figure 7**

*Scree Plot is Suggesting Five Factor Solution of School Truancy Scale in Truant School-Going Students*
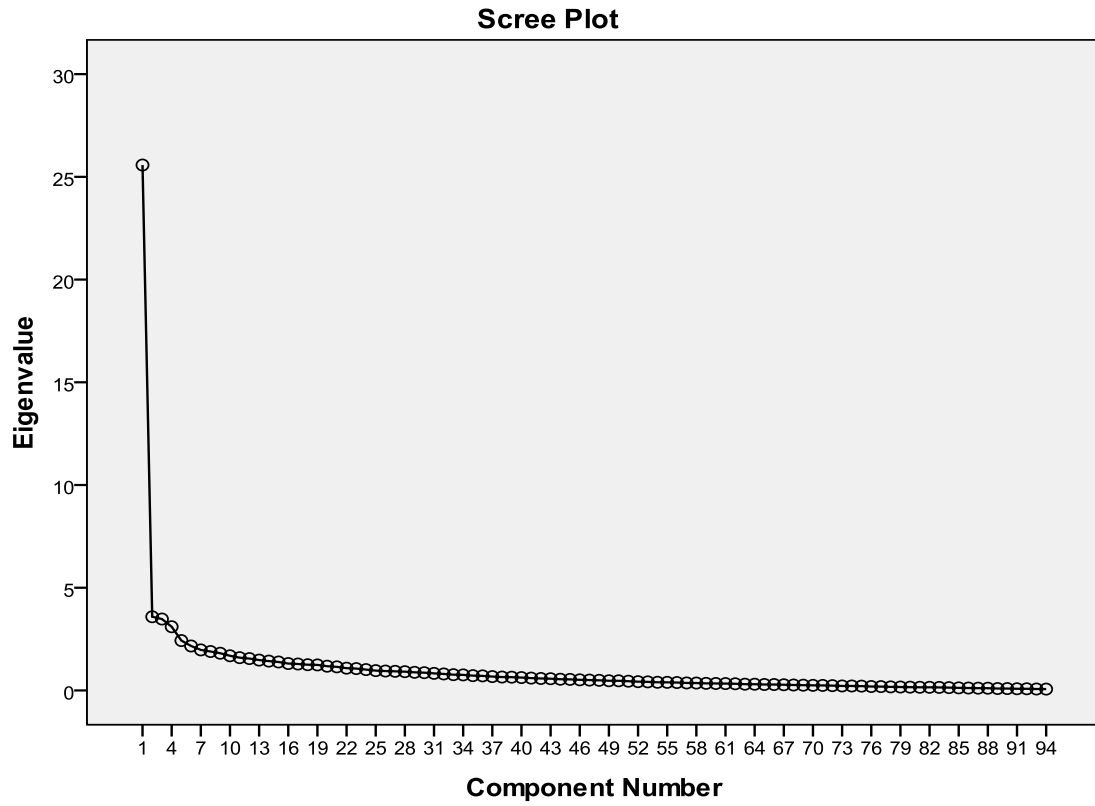
**Table 6**

*Item-Total Correlations, Cronbach's Alpha if an Item is Deleted, Mean, and Standard Deviations of the School Truancy Scale (STS) for Truant School-Going Students (N = 361)*

| Item | M | SD | Item-total correlations | Cronbach's a if item is deleted |
|------|------|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 1.71 | 1.27 | .52 | .96 |
| 2 | 1.71 | 1.26 | .48 | .96 |
| 3 | 1.59 | 1.22 | .42 | .96 |
| 4 | 1.65 | 1.29 | .50 | .96 |
| 5 | 1.76 | 1.33 | .55 | .96 |
| 6 | 1.48 | 1.13 | .57 | .96 |
| 7 | 1.84 | 1.31 | .32 | .96 |
| 8 | 1.65 | 1.24 | .41 | .96 |
| 9 | 2.06 | 1.51 | .41 | .96 |
| 10 | 1.84 | 1.37 | .36 | .96 |
| 11 | 1.52 | 1.10 | .47 | .96 |
| 12 | 1.54 | 1.17 | .51 | .96 |
| 13 | 2.07 | 1.49 | .44 | .96 |
| 14 | 1.91 | 1.44 | .50 | .96 |
| 15 | 1.78 | 1.24 | .53 | .96 |
| 16 | 1.40 | 1.0 | .52 | .96 |
| 17 | 1.45 | 1.07 | .51 | .96 |
| 18 | 2.27 | 1.58 | .42 | .96 |
| 19 | 1.91 | 1.39 | .51 | .96 |
| 20 | 1.33 | .87 | .38 | .96 |
| 21 | 1.79 | 1.28 | .47 | .96 |
| 22 | 1.41 | .98 | .52 | .96 |
| 23 | 1.70 | 1.26 | .59 | .96 |
| 24 | 1.75 | 1.31 | .59 | .96 |
| 25 | 1.46 | 1.07 | .64 | .96 |
| 26 | 1.74 | 1.31 | .53 | .96 |
| 27 | 1.71 | 1.30 | .56 | .96 |
| 28 | 2.45 | 1.53 | .45 | .96 |
| 29 | 1.91 | 1.47 | .54 | .96 |
| 30 | 2.38 | 1.59 | .50 | .96 |
| 31 | 2.11 | 1.53 | .59 | .96 |
| *Item* | *M* | *SD* | *Item-total correlations* | *Cronbach's a if item is deleted* |

| Item | M | SD | Item-total correlations | Cronbach's a if item is deleted |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | 2.83 | 1.53 | .09 | .96 |
| 33 | 2.43 | 1.45 | .15 | .96 |
| 34 | 1.93 | 1.48 | .59 | .96 |
| 35 | 1.75 | 1.36 | .57 | .96 |
| 36 | 1.57 | 1.16 | .62 | .96 |
| 37 | 1.69 | 1.17 | .59 | .96 |
| 38 | 2.01 | 1.42 | .63 | .96 |
| 39 | 1.73 | 1.26 | .60 | .96 |
| 40 | 1.58 | 1.15 | .61 | .96 |
| 41 | 2.32 | 1.53 | .43 | .96 |
| 42 | 1.45 | 1.02 | .59 | .96 |
| 43 | 1.44 | 1.09 | .59 | .96 |
| 44 | 1.63 | 1.25 | .60 | .96 |
| 45 | 1.88 | 1.34 | .52 | .96 |
| 46 | 1.56 | 1.09 | .61 | .96 |
| 47 | 1.52 | 1.03 | .45 | .96 |
| 48 | 1.83 | 1.32 | .44 | .96 |
| 49 | 1.68 | 1.22 | .52 | .96 |
| 50 | 2.01 | 1.38 | .50 | .96 |
| 51 | 1.79 | 1.28 | .45 | .96 |
| 52 | 2.39 | 1.58 | .45 | .96 |
| 53 | 2.69 | 1.68 | .22 | .96 |
| 54 | 1.80 | 1.38 | .46 | .96 |
| 55 | 1.53 | 1.16 | .60 | .96 |
| 56 | 1.57 | 1.20 | .66 | .96 |
| 57 | 1.52 | 1.17 | .66 | .96 |
| 58 | 1.45 | 1.07 | .63 | .96 |
| 59 | 1.61 | 1.20 | .59 | .96 |
| 60 | 1.71 | 1.31 | .68 | .96 |
| 61 | 1.67 | 1.20 | .60 | .96 |
| 62 | 1.54 | 1.14 | .49 | .96 |
| 63 | 1.57 | 1.11 | .54 | .96 |
| 64 | 1.45 | 1.01 | .58 | .96 |
| 65 | 1.70 | 1.18 | .54 | .96 |
| 66 | 2.12 | 1.46 | .40 | .96 |
| 67 | 1.65 | 1.20 | .49 | .96 |

| Item | M | SD | Item-total correlations | Cronbach's a if item is deleted |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 68 | 1.74 | 1.26 | .57 | .96 |
| 69 | 2.26 | 1.56 | .45 | .96 |
| 70 | 1.61 | 1.18 | .55 | .96 |
| 71 | 1.58 | 1.17 | .59 | .96 |
| 72 | 1.90 | 1.41 | .47 | .96 |
| 73 | 2.52 | 1.74 | .19 | .96 |
| 74 | 1.50 | 1.11 | .62 | .96 |
| 75 | 1.46 | 1.08 | .56 | .96 |
| 76 | 1.58 | 1.19 | .57 | .96 |
| 77 | 2.53 | 1.67 | .39 | .96 |
| 78 | 1.55 | 1.12 | .63 | .96 |
| 79 | 1.40 | 1.0 | .51 | .96 |
| 80 | 2.10 | 1.44 | .48 | .96 |
| 81 | 3.40 | 1.65 | -.03 | .96 |
| 82 | 1.68 | 1.16 | .58 | .96 |
| 83 | 2.16 | 1.41 | .54 | .96 |
| 84 | 2.27 | 1.45 | .47 | .96 |
| 85 | 2.27 | 1.51 | .53 | .96 |
| 86 | 2.30 | 1.52 | .47 | .96 |
| 87 | 1.92 | 1.43 | .49 | .96 |
| 88 | 3.17 | 1.72 | .27 | .96 |
| 89 | 1.94 | 1.45 | .39 | .96 |
| 90 | 3.56 | 1.64 | .06 | .96 |
| 91 | 2.28 | 1.53 | .46 | .96 |
| 92 | 2.21 | 1.50 | .46 | .96 |
| 93 | 2.45 | 1.57 | .42 | .96 |
| 94 | 4.01 | 1.44 | .22 | .96 |
| 95 | 2.52 | 1.57 | .51 | .96 |

*Note.* STS= School truancy scale.

### Internal Consistency

In Table 6, the internal consistency of school truancy scale (STS) items is examined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient as well as item-total correlation in the present study. The Cronbach's alpha if an item is deleted method is used to examine the internal consistency of each item. These results reveal the higher internal consistency of the school truancy scale in the present study.

**Table 7**

*Item-Total Correlations of School Truancy Scale (STS) and its Sub-Dimensions for Truant School-Going Students (N=361)*

| Item | STS | GST | TST | PST | EST | SST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .54** | | | | .59** | |
| 3 | .45** | .50** | | | | |
| 4 | .53** | .57** | | | | |
| 6 | .60** | .68** | | | | |
| 7 | .36** | | .50** | | | |
| 8 | .45** | | .57** | | | |
| 9 | .45** | | .61** | | | |
| 10 | .40** | | .53** | | | |
| 11 | .50** | | .59** | | | |
| 12 | .53** | | .64** | | | |
| 13 | .48** | | .60** | | | |
| 14 | .54** | | .66** | | | |
| 15 | .56** | | .71** | | | |
| 16 | .55** | | .66** | | | |
| 17 | .54** | | .62** | | | |
| 18 | .45** | | .61** | | | |
| 19 | .55** | | .64** | | | |
| 20 | .41** | .38** | | | | |
| 21 | .49** | | .62** | | | |
| 22 | .55** | | .59** | | | |
| 23 | .62** | | | | .67** | |
| 24 | .62** | | | | .71** | |
| 25 | .65** | | | .67** | | |
| 26 | .53** | | | .65** | | |
| 27 | .56** | | | .65** | | |

| Item | STS | GST | TST | PST | EST | SST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | .52** | | .58** | | | |
| 31 | .62** | .64** | | | | |
| 34 | .62** | .68** | | | | |
| 35 | .60** | | | | .66** | |
| 36 | .65** | .70** | | | | |
| 37 | .62** | .66** | | | | |
| 38 | .65** | | .60** | | | |
| 39 | .62** | .64** | | | | |
| 40 | .64** | .67** | | | | |
| 41 | .43** | | .42** | | | |
| 42 | .61** | .68** | | | | |
| 43 | .61** | .67** | | | | |
| 44 | .61** | .67** | | | | |
| 46 | .61** | .64** | | | | |
| 48 | .45** | | | | .55** | |
| 49 | .54** | | | | .63** | |
| 50 | .53** | | | | .64** | |
| 51 | .46** | | | | .56** | |
| 52 | .47** | | | | .58** | |
| 53 | .23** | | | | | .45** |
| 54 | .48** | .55** | | | | |
| 55 | .62** | .71** | | | | |
| 59 | .62** | .68** | | | | |
| 60 | .70** | .73** | | | | |
| 61 | .62** | | | .71** | | |
| 62 | .50** | | | .70** | | |
| 63 | .56** | | | .69** | | |
| 64 | .58** | | | .72** | | |
| 65 | .54** | | | .60** | | |
| 67 | .50** | | | .63** | | |
| 68 | .58** | .60** | | | | |
| 72 | .47** | | | | .61** | |
| 74 | .66** | .71** | | | | |
| 75 | .60** | .65** | | | | |
| 76 | .60** | .67** | | | | |
| 77 | .39** | | | | | .51** |
| 78 | .63** | | | .72** | | |
| 79 | .53** | | | .63** | | |
| 82 | .61** | .67** | | | | |
| 83 | .56** | | | | | .70** |
| 84 | .49** | | | | | .69** |

| Item | STS | GST | TST | PST | EST | SST |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 85 | .55** | | | | | .73** |
| 86 | .49** | | | | | .72*** |
| 87 | .49** | | | .57** | | |
| 88 | .26** | | | | | .52** |
| 92 | .46** | | | | .55** | |
| 93 | .42** | | | | | .54** |
| 94 | .21** | | | | | .58** |

*Note.* STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

In Table 7, the internal consistency of the overall school truancy scale and its five subscales items is evaluated by Cronbach's αlpha coefficient. The item-total correlation method is used to compute the correlation between items and their relevant factors. These findings reveal associations between items and overall scores for school truancy schools (item-total correlations range from.22 to.66), for general school truancy (item-total correlations range from.38 to.73), for teacher-based school truancy (item-total correlations from.42 to.71), for personal issues-based school truancy (item-total correlations from.57 to.71), for educational/institutional based school truancy (item-total correlations from.55 to.71), and for social problems-based school truancy (item-total correlations from.51 to.73). These results also reveal the higher internal consistency of the school truancy scale in the present study.

**Table 8**

*Mean, standard deviation, skewness, maximum and minimum scores range of school refusal behavior and school truancy scale along its subscales for school-going truant and punctual students (N= 960)*

| Variables | N | Score Range | Min | Max | M | SD | Skewness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School-going punctual students (n = 599)** | | | | | | | |
| 1.STS | 599 | 1-5 | 73.00 | 331.00 | 127.96 | 43.23 | 1.28 |
| 2.GST | 599 | 1-5 | 23.00 | 111.00 | 36.46 | 15.69 | 1.65 |
| 3.TST | 599 | 1-5 | 18.00 | 90.00 | 31.51 | 13.31 | 1.22 |
| 4.PST | 599 | 1-5 | 12.00 | 60.00 | 19.11 | 8.11 | 1.70 |
| 5.EST | 599 | 1-5 | 11.00 | 47.00 | 19.65 | 7.80 | 1.01 |
| 6.SST | 599 | 1-5 | 9.00 | 45.00 | 21.16 | 7.27 | .366 |
| 7.SRBS | 599 | 1-6 | 24.00 | 120.00 | 52.78 | 16.91 | .86 |
| 8.ASPNA | 599 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 31.00 | 11.96 | 5.01 | 1.08 |
| 9.EASES | 599 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 74.00 | 11.72 | 5.46 | 1.29 |
| 10.AS | 599 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 36.00 | 15.12 | 5.58 | .77 |
| 11.TR | 599 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 35.00 | 13.95 | 5.92 | .88 |
| **School-going truant students (n =361)** | | | | | | | |
| 1.STS | 361 | 1-5 | 73.00 | 292.00 | 134.41 | 49.87 | 1.24 |
| 2.GST | 361 | 1-5 | 23.00 | 102.00 | 37.34 | 17.89 | 1.46 |
| 3.TST | 361 | 1-5 | 18.00 | 88.00 | 33.14 | 14.25 | 1.32 |
| 4.PST | 361 | 1-5 | 12.00 | 56.00 | 19.35 | 9.36 | 1.80 |
| 5.EST | 361 | 1-5 | 11.00 | 52.00 | 20.72 | 9.20 | 1.14 |
| 6.SST | 361 | 1-5 | 9.00 | 44.00 | 23.8421 | 8.45 | .14 |
| 7.SRBS | 361 | 1-6 | 24.00 | 124.00 | 48.7244 | 16.71 | 1.15 |
| 8.ASPNA | 361 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 29.00 | 10.4640 | 4.60 | 1.42 |
| 9.EASES | 361 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 31.00 | 9.9723 | 4.41 | 1.56 |
| 10.AS | 361 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 36.00 | 15.3172 | 6.15 | .74 |
| 11.TR | 361 | 1-6 | 6.00 | 40.00 | 12.9709 | 6.32 | 1.30 |

*Note.* STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale; ASPNA=Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity; EASES= Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations; AS =Attention seeking; TR= Tangible rewards. $**p < .01, ***p < .001$.

In Table 8, the results reveal the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and maximum and minimum score range of school refusal behaviour and the school truancy scale along with its subscales for school-going truant and punctual students. The aforementioned table values illustrate that the school truancy scale has a higher mean value for punctual and

truant school-going students. Furthermore, skewness values demonstrate the normal distribution of all study variables.

**Table 9**

*Mean, standard deviation, cronbach alpha coefficient, and correlational matrix among school refusal behavior, school truancy, and demographic variables as (age and gender) for school-going truant and punctual students (N= 960)*

| Variables | M | SD | α | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School-going truant students (n =361)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.STS | 134.41 | 49.87 | .96 | - | .93** | .84** | .85** | .85** | .66** | -.04 | -.02 | -.02 | -.02 | -.07 | .09 | -.11* |
| 2.GST | 37.34 | 17.89 | .94 | | - | .68** | .78** | .76* | .49** | -.02 | -.02 | .01 | -.01 | -.03 | .11* | -.15** |
| 3.TST | 33.14 | 14.25 | .89 | | | - | .59** | .62** | .47** | -.06 | -.04 | -.06 | -.05 | -.03 | .03 | -.07 |
| 4.PST | 19.35 | 9.36 | .88 | | | | - | .69** | .45** | .01 | .02 | .02 | .02 | -.02 | .12* | -.13* |
| 5.EST | 20.72 | 9.20 | .84 | | | | | - | .51** | -.04 | -.01 | -.01 | -.01 | -.09 | .11* | -.05 |
| 6.SST | 23.84 | 8.45 | .78 | | | | | | - | -.08 | -.04 | -.02 | -.02 | -.15** | -.00 | .01 |
| 7.SRBS | 48.72 | 16.71 | .84 | | | | | | | - | .79** | .80** | .74** | .78** | .24** | -.02 |
| 8.ASPNA | 10.46 | 4.60 | .59 | | | | | | | | - | .66** | .41** | .52** | .23** | -.02 |
| 9.EASES | 9.97 | 4.41 | .58 | | | | | | | | | - | .48** | .47** | .23** | .04 |
| 10.AS | 15.31 | 6.15 | .61 | | | | | | | | | | - | .35** | .01 | -.06 |
| 11.TR | 12.97 | 6.32 | .72 | | | | | | | | | | | - | .30** | -.01 |
| 12. Age | 15.21 | 1.80 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | - | .35** |
| 13. Gender- | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | - |
| **School-going punctual students (n = 599)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.STS | 127.96 | 43.23 | .95 | - | .91** | .86** | .82** | .83** | .59** | .13** | .16** | .09* | .05 | .11** | .01 | .05 |
| 2.GST | 36.46 | 15.69 | .91 | | - | .69** | .70** | .72** | .42** | .09* | .13** | .06 | .01 | .07 | -.01 | -.02 |
| 3.TST | 31.56 | 13.31 | .88 | | | - | .63** | .66** | .37** | .15** | .20** | .10* | .05 | .11** | .01 | -.01 |
| 4.PST | 19.11 | 8.11 | .82 | | | | - | .60** | .44** | .09* | .13** | .08* | .05 | .03 | -.06 | .06 |
| 5.EST | 19.65 | 7.80 | .76 | | | | | - | .42** | .13** | .14** | .06 | .04 | .15** | .08* | .04 |
| 6.SST | 21.16 | 7.27 | .68 | | | | | | - | .09* | .04 | .05 | .07 | .10** | -.03 | -.01 |
| 7.SRBS | 52.78 | 16.91 | .81 | | | | | | | - | .79** | .74** | .76** | .77** | .21** | -.07 |
| 8.ASPNA | 11.96 | 5.01 | .59 | | | | | | | | - | .50** | .48** | .49** | .19** | .02 |
| 9.EASES | 11.72 | 5.46 | .52 | | | | | | | | | - | .40** | .39** | .12** | -.07 |
| 10.AS | 15.12 | 5.58 | .54 | | | | | | | | | | - | .45** | .04 | -.09* |
| 11.TR | 13.95 | 5.92 | .71 | | | | | | | | | | | - | .28** | -.07 |
| 12. Age | 15.17 | 1.96 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | - | .04 |
| 13. Gender | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | - |

*Note.* Upper portion of correlational matrix = School going truant student sample; lower portion of correlational matrix = School going punctual student sample; *α=* cronbach alpha coefficient; STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale; ASPNA=Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity; EASES= Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations; AS =Attention seeking; TR= Tangible rewards

$p < .05, \boldsymbol{p} < .01, \boldsymbol{p} < .001$

The internal consistency of both the school truancy scale and the school refusal behaviour scale, along with their sub-scales, are examined using Cronbach's alpha

coefficient. The combined sample of punctual and truant students reveals sufficient internal consistency (=.96) in a combined sample of punctual and truant students, whereas the internal consistency of the SRBS is.86, demonstrating an adequate level of internal reliability. When data from the study is split into two samples as truant and punctual students to check the separate internal consistency of both scales, both the school truancy scale and the school refusal behavior scale internal reliability remain stable, respectively.

The following findings were obtained for truant school-going students, The study's findings revealed that alpha Cronbach reliability of both scales were reported as $\alpha$ =.96 for the school truancy scale, $\alpha$ =.94 for general school truancy, $\alpha$ =.89 for teacher-based school truancy, $\alpha$ =.88 for personal issues-based school truancy, =.84 for educational or institutional based school truancy, $\alpha$ =.78 for social problems-based school truancy, $\alpha$ =.84 for the school refusal behaviour scale, $\alpha$ =.59 for avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity, $\alpha$ = .58 for the escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations, $\alpha$ = .61 for the, attention seeking, and $\alpha$ = .72 for the tangible rewards.

For punctual school-going students, the findings obtain are; $\alpha$ = .95 for the school truancy scale, $\alpha$ = .91 for the general school truancy, $\alpha$ = .88 for the teacher based school truancy, $\alpha$ = .82 for the personal issues-based school truancy, $\alpha$ = .76 for the educational or institutional based school truancy, $\alpha$ = .68 for the social problems-based school truancy, $\alpha$ = .81 for the school refusal behavior scale, $\alpha$ = .59 for the avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity, $\alpha$ = .52 for the escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations, $\alpha$ = .54 for the, attention seeking, and $\alpha$ = .71 for the tangible rewards.

These results reveal that both the school truancy and school refusal behavior scales' items show satisfactory statistical efficacy, providing psychometric evidence for the utilisation of both scales in identifying school truancy behaviour in punctual and truant students. Additionally, results of the present study also provide psychometric support for the use of school truancy in identifying punctual, deviant, and truant behaviour for school-going students in the Pakistani population.

**Convergent and Discriminant Validity**

Moreover, findings of the present study in Table 9 exhibit inter-correlations between overall scores of the school truancy scale and its five dimensions for both school-going truant and punctual students. The results in the above table reveal that there is a significant positive association between overall scores of the school truancy scale and its subscales in both school-going truant and punctual students.

In Table 9, the results in the upper portion of the above table indicate an association among school refusal behavior, school truancy behavior, and demographic variables for school-going truant and punctual students. The results of the present study reveal that school refusal behavior is negatively non-significant associated with school truancy in school-going truant students. Further, it demonstrates that there is a significant negative association between age and school truancy. However, it also illustrates that there is a positive association between gender and school refusal behavior.

In Table 9, findings in the upper portion of the above table reveal  association among school refusal behavior, school truancy behavior, and demographic variables for school-going punctual students. Surprisingly, the results of the present study show that school refusal behavior is positively significant associated with school truancy in school-

going punctual students. Further, it demonstrates that there is a significant positive association between age and school refusal behavior in school-going punctual students.

These findings of the present study provide evidence for both the convergent and discriminant validity of the newly developed school truancy scale. Noteworthy, the school truancy scale is negatively non-significant associated with school refusal behavior in school-going truant students. Conversely, the school truancy scale is also positively significant associated with school refusal behavior in school-going punctual students. Surprisingly, these results provide support for the discriminant and convergent validity of the school truancy scale in two different student samples. The school truancy scale total score is statistically significantly positively associated with the school refusal behavior scale total score ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$), which shows good convergent validity for punctual students. Whereas the school truancy scale total score is statistically negative non-significant associated with the school refusal behavior scale total score ($r = -0.04$, $n.s$), which indicates discriminate validity for truant school-going students. These findings provide psychometric evidence that the school truancy scale is unique screening tool for school truancy behavior which is also used to measure deviant and truant behavior in the present study. These findings also provide psychometric evidence that it can be used to measure deviant and criminal behaviour in school students.

**Concurrent Validity**

This kind of validity provides psychometric support that could be collected to protect the use of an instrument for predicting other relevant outcome variables. It is obtained once an instrument correlates well with a previous validated measure. There are different well-defined ways to determine concurrent validity. One way to address the

concurrent validity of a school truancy scale is the correlation coefficient method. Further, these study's results also indicate that there is a positive association between the school truancy scale and the refusal behaviour scale in the punctual student's sample. Moreover, the results show a negative relationship between the school refusal behaviour scale and the school truancy scale for the truant school students' sample. Therefore, the concurrent validity of the school truancy scale is supported by the Pearson correlation method.

**Table 10**

*Diagnostic Performance of Both the School Truancy Scale (STS) and the School Refusal Behaviour Scale (SRBS) for Detection of Truant Behavior in Truant and Punctual School-Going Students through Receive Operational Curves (ROC) (N = 960)*

| Variables | AUC | SE | p | 95% CL | | Cut -off point | TPR | FPR | TPR +FPR |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| STS | .63 | .02 | .00 | .59 | .66 | .86 | .92 | .86 | 1.78 |
| SRBS | .42 | .01 | .01 | .38 | .46 | .48 | .42 | .52 | .94 |

*Note.* Students type is a categorical variable in present study [1 = School-going truant students ($n$ = 361), 2 = School-going punctual students (n= 599)], Abbreviations: AUC, area under the curve; STS, School truancy scale; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale, CL= confidence limit, FPR= Specificity, TPR= Sensitivity, $p <$ .05, $p < .01$, $p < .001$.

**Specificity (FPR) and Sensitivity (TPR) Analysis**

The sensitivity index or true positive rate (TPR) is displayed in the vertical axis and the specificity index or false positive rate (FPR ) is depicted in the horizontal axis to draw the receive operational curves (ROC) of the school truancy scale. The current study demonstrates that school truancy scales have significant potential for distinguishing and identifying school-going students who have a proclivity for truancy from those who do not. Moreover, the area under the curve (AUC) of the school truancy scale (0.63) is moderate, demonstrating that school truancy scale scores have moderate diagnostic efficacy to

discriminate punctual and truant school-going students (see Figure 10; Table 10). As per the Youden index criteria, the higher the sensitivity and specificity, the more accurate and valid the cut-off point is used for differentiating between normal and abnormal populations. In the present study, Table 10 shows the cut-off points of both the school truancy and school refusal behavior scales to distinguish between school-going truant and punctual students. The best cut-off value for the school truancy scale is calculated to be.86, explaining fair accuracy (0.63) for discriminating between those students who have a tendency for school truancy ($n = 361$) and those students who do not have a tendency for school truancy ($n = 599$). However, a cut-off score of.86 may be used to diagnose truant behavior in school, forensic, as well as clinical settings. On the other hand, the optimal cut-off of scores on the school refusal behavior scale has been determined to be. 48, with a low accuracy (0.42) for distinguishing students who were prone to school truancy from those who were not prone to school truancy in Pakistan. However, a cut-off score of.42 may not be suitable to discriminate against truant behavior in schools and other clinical settings in Pakistan. The comparisons of the aforementioned two scales, which are used to examine truant behavior revealed that only the area under the curve (AUC) of the school truancy scale is higher as compared to the school refusal behavior scale. The AUC of the school truancy scale (0.63) is greater than the AUC of school refusal behavior (less than 0.63). Additionally, the abovementioned results demonstrate that the school truancy scale has higher sensitivity and specificity in correctly identifying students who have   tendency to truant behavior or do not have a tendency to truant behavior. This present study's results showed that school truancy scales may be appropriate tools to screen out truant behavior in school-going truant students (see Figure 8, 9, 10).

**Criterion Validity**

This study is also examined  the criterion validity of school truancy scale (STS) and school refusal behavior scale (SRBS), ROC curve analysis is performed to detect  truant and punctual behavior through   school truancy scale (STS) and school refusal behavior scale (SRBS). Area under curve (AUC) is used to detect diagnostic efficacy of both the school truancy scale (STS) and the school refusal behavior scale (SRBS). The AUC of the school truancy scale (STS) is 0.63, whereas the AUC of the school refusal behavior scale (SRBS) is.42 for detecting truant and punctual behaviors in the present study.

It is interesting that the sample of truant students was selected based on the requirements of the newly developed instrument. It is recommended that truant students be measured because it not only determines the level of truancy but also diagnoses many psychosocial components that lead to truancy. While also catering for diagnostic features of psychopathology based on clinical theoretical components of DSM 5 criteria. The study's theory development section describes and clarifies truancy as a psychopathological disease in and of itself.

Moreover, the school refusal scale was used to examine students' refusal to attend school. It was comprised of four subscales, which included: avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity (ASPNA); escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations (EASES); attention seeking (AS); and tangible rewards (TR). All these variables suggest reasons why students don't want to attend school. These causes were found to be very common among those present in the newly developed scale. The majority of them were based on social and psychological factors that drive students to refuse school. However,

this was constructed using a normal student sample and not specifically for truant students. Nonetheless, while catering to the aforementioned components, the newly constructed school went even further by incorporating the antecedents that not only compels students' school refusal behaviour but also truancy, as in both cases the students are compelled to not go to school or attend classes. Therefore, it was best to be used for the current establishment of construct validity. It was also appropriate for testing the convergent validity of a newly developed truancy assessment.

### *Predictive Validity*

This kind of validity involves testing a set of individuals for a certain instrument as well as matching them with findings achieved at a certain time in the future. To assess the predictive utility of the school truancy scale as well as the school refusal behavior scale for truant and punctual school-going students. The ROC curve analysis results indicate that the school truancy scale is statistically effective and useful in distinguishing between truant and punctual school-going students. As per ROC curve analysis, the school truancy scale correctly identifies and discriminates truant and punctual school-going students with a total accuracy rate of 63%, whereas the school refusal behaviour scale correctly identifies and discriminates truant and punctual school-going students with a total accuracy rate of 42%. Thus, these results illustrate that school truancy scale scores have the potential to statistically differentiate between truant and punctual school-going students as well as cut-off scores indicate in predicting punctual and truant behavior in both normal and abnormal populations.

Moreover, analysis of the ROC curve reveals that the diagnostic efficacy of the newly developed school truancy scale for identifying truant behavior is more accurate as

compared to the previously developed school refusal behavior scale in the Pakistani context. The abovementioned results provide strong evidence for a newly developed school truancy scale that better examines both truant behaviour and punctual behavior in school-going students. The school truancy scale, therefore, is a suitable clinical measure for evaluating school truancy in Pakistani culture.
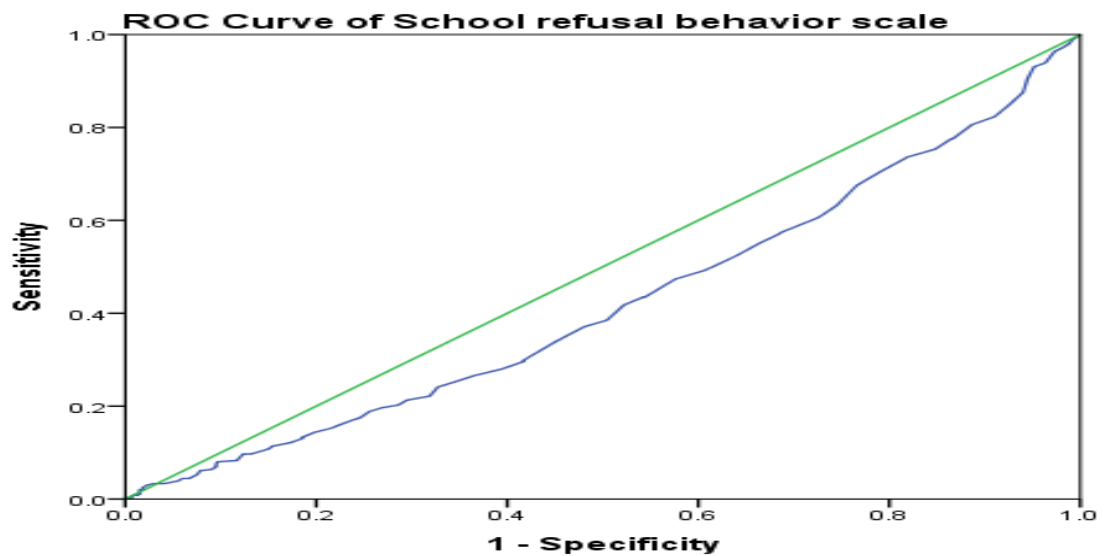
**Figure 8**

*Specificity and Sensitivity of School Truancy Scale for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599)*



ROC Curve of School Truancy Scale (STS)
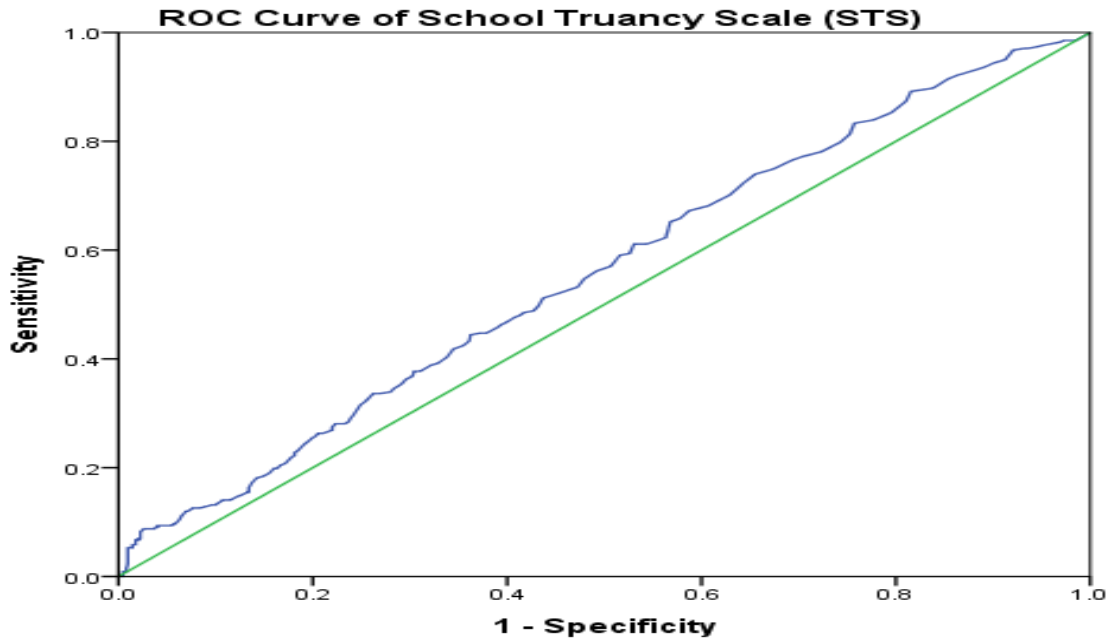
**Figure 9**

*Specificity and Sensitivity of School Refusal Behaviour Scale for Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599)*



ROC Curve of School refusal behavior scale

**Figure 10**

*Comparison Curves of Specificity and Sensitivity for Both School Refusal Behavior Scale
and School Truancy Scale in School-Going Truant students (n = 361) and Punctual
students (n = 599)*
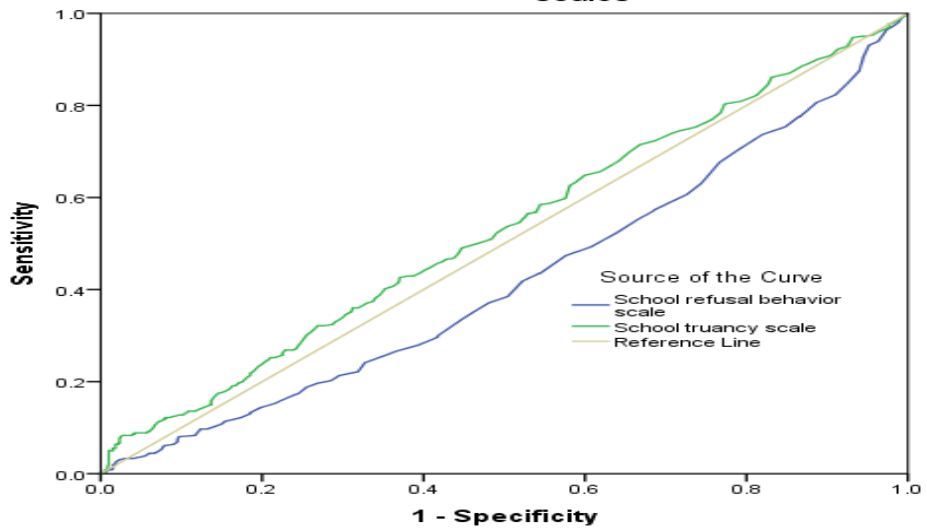
**Table 11**

*Mean Wise Differences on School Truancy Behavior and School Refusal Behavior along its Subscales for School-Going Truant and Punctual Students (N= 960)*

| Variables | Truant Students (N=361) M | SD | Punctual Students (N=599) M | SD | t(958) | p | LL | UL | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STS | 134.40 | 49.87 | 127.96 | 43.23 | 2.11(958) | .03 | .45 | 12.43 | .2 |
| GST | 37.34 | 17.89 | 36.46 | 15.69 | .79(958) | .42 | -1.29 | 3.03 | - |
| TST | 33.14 | 14.25 | 31.56 | 13.31 | 1.73(958) | .08 | -.20 | 3.36 | - |
| PST | 19.35 | 9.36 | 19.11 | 8.11 | .42(958) | .66 | -.87 | 1.37 | - |
| EST | 20.72 | 9.20 | 19.65 | 7.80 | 1.91(958) | .05 | -.02 | 2.15 | 0.2 |
| SST | 23.84 | 8.45 | 21.16 | 7.27 | 5.19(958) | .00 | 1.66 | 3.69 | .34 |
| SRBS | 48.72 | 16.71 | 52.78 | 16.91 | 3.61(958) | .00 | -6.25 | -1.85 | .24 |
| ASPNA | 10.46 | 4.60 | 11.96 | 5.01 | 4.64(958) | .00 | -2.13 | -.86 | .31 |
| EASES | 9.97 | 4.41 | 11.72 | 5.46 | 5.16(958) | .00 | -2.41 | -1.08 | .35 |
| AS | 15.31 | 6.15 | 15.12 | 5.58 | .49(958) | .62 | -.56 | .94 | - |
| TR | 12.97 | 6.32 | 13.95 | 5.92 | 2.44(958) | .01 | -1.78 | -.19 | 0.2 |

*Note.* STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale; ASPNA=Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity; EASES= Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations; AS =Attention seeking; TR= Tangible rewards.

$p < .05, p < .01, p < .001$

Table 11 shows that there are statistically significant mean differences in school truancy behaviour ($t = 2.11$, p.03) between truant students ($n = 361$, $M = 134.40$, $SD = 49.87$) and punctual students ($n = 599$, $M = 127.96$, $SD = 43.23$).Furthermore, the current study found statistically significant mean differences in truant school students ($n = 361$, $M = 20.72$, $SD = 9.20$) and punctual students ($n = 599$, $M = 21.16$, $SD = 7.27$) on the educational or institutional based school truancy subscale of school truancy behaviour ($t = 1.91$, p.05). Furthermore, results show a significant difference in social problems-based school truancy subscales of school truancy behaviour between truant and punctual students.

Additionally, parallel results are found on school refusal behavior ($t = -3.61$, $p < .000$) indicting statistically significant mean differences between truant school students ($n$

= 361, *M* = 48.72, *SD* = 16.71) and punctual students (*n* = 599, *M* = 52.78, *SD* = 16.91). Furthermore, findings of the present study reveal that there are statistically significant mean differences found on the avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity, attention seeking, and tangible rewards subscales of school refusal behavior in truant school students and punctual students. Findings show punctual students have a tendency to avoid stimuli provoking negative affectivity, attention seeking, and tangible rewards subscales of school refusal behavior as compared to truant students. These results display that truant students have a tendency to school truancy behavior as compared to punctual students. In contrast, findings also demonstrate that punctual students have a tendency toward school refusal behavior as compared to truant students. Moreover, in the above two groups, punctual school-going students have a higher representation (62.4%) as compared to truant school-going students (37.6%). Whereas, the magnitude of the mean differences in both samples found is small school truancy behavior (d = 0.2), educational or institutional based school truancy subscale of school truancy behavior (d = 0.2), social problems-based school truancy subscales of school truancy behavior (d = 0.34), school refusal scale (d = 0.24), avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity subscale of school refusal scale (d = 0.31), attention seeking subscale of school refusal scale (d = 0.35), and tangible rewards subscales of school refusal behavior (d = 0.21) as compared to truant students.

**Known-Group Validity**

It is used to examine the diagnostic efficacy of a newly developed school scale to discriminate between punctual and truant school students. The results of the present study provide support to known-group validity for differentiating between punctual and truant school-going students on both school truancy scale and the school refusal behavior scale. An independent sample t-test is also used to examine differences between truant and punctual students on the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior. These results exhibit truant students have a tendency for school truancy behavior as compared to punctual students. In contrast, findings also demonstrate that punctual students have more tendency for school refusal behavior as compared to truant students, which indicates known-group validity for truant school-going students in both scales.

This kind of validity provides psychometric support that could be collected to protect the use of an instrument for predicting other relevant outcome variables. It is obtained once an instrument correlates well with a previous validated measure. There are different well-defined ways to determine concurrent validity. The second way to measure the appropriateness of the newly developed school truancy scale in identifying differences between school-going truant and punctual students. This study's results demonstrate a statistically significant difference between truant and punctual students on the school truancy scale and its subscales in the present study. Therefore, the concurrent validity of the school truancy scale is supported by independent sample $t$-test findings.

**Table 12**

*Gender Wise Differences on School Truancy Behavior and School Refusal Behavior for School-Going Truant and Punctual Students (N= 960)*

| | School Truant Students (N=361) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Male (N=200)* | | *Female (N=161)* | | | | | | |
| *Variables* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *t(359)* | *p* | *LL* | *UL* | *Cohen's d* |
| STS | 139.38 | 54.60 | 128.22 | 42.64 | 2.12*(359)* | .03 | .82 | 21.49 | .22 |
| GST | 39.87 | 19.61 | 34.19 | 14.96 | 3.03*(359)* | .00 | 1.99 | 9.36 | .32 |
| TST | 34.11 | 15.19 | 31.93 | 12.93 | 1.44*(359)* | .14 | -.78 | 5.14 | - |
| PST | 20.44 | 10.34 | 18.01 | 7.80 | 2.46*(359)* | .01 | .49 | 4.36 | .26 |
| EST | 21.18 | 10.10 | 20.14 | 7.93 | 1.06*(359)* | .28 | -.88 | 2.95 | - |
| SST | 23.77 | 8.99 | 23.93 | 7.75 | -.18*(359)* | .85 | -1.92 | 1.60 | - |
| SRBS | 49.05 | 16.57 | 48.31 | 16.93 | .42*(359)* | .67 | -2.73 | 4.23 | - |
| ASPNA | 10.55 | 4.50 | 10.34 | 4.73 | .42*(359)* | .66 | -.75 | 1.16 | - |
| EASES | 9.81 | 4.15 | 10.16 | 4.72 | -.75*(359)* | .45 | -1.27 | .56 | - |
| AS | 15.65 | 6.32 | 14.89 | 5.94 | 1.17*(359)* | .24 | -.51 | 2.04 | - |
| TR | 13.02 | 6.41 | 12.90 | 6.23 | .18*(359)* | .85 | -1.19 | 1.44 | - |
| | Punctual Students (N=599) | | | | | | | | |
| | Male (N=330) | | Female (N=259) | | | | | | |
| *Variables* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *t(581)* | *p* | *LL* | *UL* | *Cohen's d* |
| STS | 127.72 | 44.38 | 128.26 | 41.86 | -.15*(581)* | .87 | -7.52 | 6.43 | - |
| GST | 36.80 | 15.96 | 36.05 | 15.38 | .58*(581)* | .55 | -1.77 | 3.29 | - |
| TST | 31.74 | 13.48 | 31.34 | 13.13 | .36*(581)* | .71 | -1.74 | 2.55 | - |
| PST | 18.66 | 8.20 | 19.65 | 7.97 | -1.47*(581)* | .14 | -2.29 | .32 | - |
| EST | 19.32 | 7.73 | 20.06 | 7.87 | -1.16*(581)* | .24 | -2.0 | .51 | - |
| SST | 21.17 | 7.86 | 21.14 | 6.48 | .04*(581)* | .96 | -1.14 | 1.20 | - |
| SRBS | 53.88 | 17.39 | 51.41 | 16.22 | 1.78*(581)* | .07 | -.25 | 5.19 | - |
| ASPNA | 11.86 | 4.78 | 12.09 | 5.29 | -.57*(581)* | .56 | -1.04 | .57 | - |
| EASES | 12.11 | 6.04 | 11.25 | 4.61 | 1.91*(581)* | .05 | -.02 | 1.73 | 0.2 |
| AS | 15.58 | 5.86 | 14.56 | 5.17 | 2.23*(581)* | .02 | .12 | 1.91 | 0.2 |
| TR | 14.33 | 6.17 | 13.50 | 5.57 | 1.70*(581)* | .08 | -.12 | 1.78 | - |

*Note*. Values above the first portio*n* = truant school student sample; Values above the second portio*n* = punctual school student sample; Values above the last portion= part truant students, STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale; ASPNA=Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity; EASES= Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations; AS =Attention seeking; TR= Tangible rewards. $p < .05, p < .01, p < .001$

Table 12 shows that there are statistically significant mean differences in school truancy behaviour (*t* = 2.12, p.03) between male truant students (*n* = 200, *M* = 139.38, *SD* = 54.60) and female truant students (*n* = 161, *M* = 128.22, *SD* = 42.64).Furthermore, the

current study found statistically significant mean differences in male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 39.87$, $SD = 19.61$) and female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 34.19$, $SD = 14.96$) on the general school truancy subscale of school truancy behaviour ($t = 3.03$, p.000).Furthermore, statistically significant mean differences in school truancy behaviour were found on the personal issues-based school truancy subscale ($t = 2.46$, p.01) for male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 20.44$, $SD = 10.34$) and female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 18.01$, $SD = 7.80$).These results display that male truant students have a tendency for school truancy behavior along its subscales of general school truancy and personal issues-based school truancy as compared to female truant students. However, the magnitude of the mean differences in the male and female truant samples found is small for school truancy behavior (d = 0.22), general school truancy subscale of school truancy behavior (d = 0.32), and personal issues-based school truancy subscale of school truancy behavior (d = 0.26).

Furthermore, statistically significant mean differences in male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 12.11$, $SD = 6.04$) and female punctual students ($n = 259$, $M = 11.25$, $SD = 4.61$) were found on the escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations subscale of school refusal behaviour ($t = 1.91$, p.05).Furthermore, findings show statistically significant mean differences in male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 15.58$, $SD = 5.86$) and female punctual students ($n = 259$) on the attention-seeking subscale of school refusal behaviour ($t = 2.23$, p.02).These results display that male punctual students have a tendency to school refusal behavior along its subscales of attention seeking and escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations as compared to female punctual students. These results demonstrate that male truant and punctual students are shown more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to female punctual and truant students in the present study. However, the magnitude of the mean differences found in male and

female punctual samples is also small, with the exception of the attention-seeking subscale of school refusal behaviour (d = 0.2) and escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations (d = 0.2).

**Table 13**

*Binary Logistic Regression Analysis for Predicting School Refusal Behavior and School Truancy Behavior in School-Going Truant and Punctual Students (N= 960)*

| Variables | B | SE | Wald $\chi2$ | p | Adjusted OR | OR 95% CI LL | UL | Cox & Snell $R^2$ | $\chi2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| age | -.08 | .04 | 4.13 | .04 | .92 | .85 | .997 | .000 | 32.51*** |
| Gender | -.05 | .14 | .16 | .68 | .94 | .71 | 1.24 | | |
| STS | -.05 | .01 | 21.93 | .00 | .95 | .93 | .97 | | |
| GST | .05 | .01 | 18.20 | .00 | 1.05 | 1.03 | 1.08 | | |
| TST | .04 | .01 | 9.15 | .00 | 1.04 | 1.01 | 1.06 | | |
| PST | .06 | .01 | 13.80 | .00 | 1.06 | 1.03 | 1.10 | | |
| EST | .04 | .01 | 5.14 | .02 | 1.04 | 1.00 | 1.07 | | |
| SST | -.04 | .01 | 25.72 | .00 | .95 | .94 | .97 | | |
| SRBS | .01 | .01 | .54 | .46 | 1.01 | .98 | 1.04 | | |
| ASPNA | .03 | .02 | 2.05 | .15 | 1.04 | .98 | 1.09 | | |
| EASES | .07 | .02 | 7.43 | .01 | 1.07 | 1.02 | 1.13 | | |
| AS | -.06 | .02 | 8.12 | .00 | .93 | .89 | .98 | | |
| TR | -.03 | .01 | 6.92 | .01 | 1.03 | 1.00 | 1.05 | | |
| Constant | 1.95 | .65 | 8.87 | .01 | 7.04 | - | - | | |

Prediction Between Groups;
 Truant students= 33.5%
 Punctual students=90.7%

*Note.* STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale; ASPNA=Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity; EASES= Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations; AS =Attention seeking; TR= Tangible rewards. $p < .05, p < .01, p < .001$

In Table 13, a hierarchical binary logistic regression analysis is carried out to identify and discriminate school truancy scale and school refusal behavior along their subscales that most contribute to accurately identifying truant and punctual students' group classification in the present study. It was also helpful to establish predictive validity for the

classification of truant and punctual students. Furthermore, a logistic regression analysis was carried out to examine the predicting roles of demographic variables, school refusal, and school truancy behaviors along its subscales on student types (punctual and truant students). Demographic variables, school refusal behavior and school truancy behavior as independent variables, and student types (punctual and truant students) as dependent variables. In logistic regression analysis, demographic variables such as age and gender as well as school refusal and school truancy behaviors along its subscales, namely, general school truancy (GST), teacher-based school truancy (TST), personal issues-based school truancy (PST), educational or institutional based school truancy (EST), social problems-based school truancy (SST), avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity(ASPNA), escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations (EASES), attention seeking (AS), and tangible rewards (TR) scores are entered as predictor variables in regression model. The student types (punctual and truant students) are added as outcome variables in the regression model. The Wald test values reveal that the standardized regression coefficients of the school truancy behavior scale along its subscales are statistically significantly greater as compared to the school refusal behavior scale and its subscales ($\chi2 = 32.51$; $p < .000$).

Moreover, a logistic regression analysis indicates that the adjusted OR values of the GST, TST, PST, EST, ASPNA, EASES, and TR are higher than 1, recommending that the aforementioned variables may be risk or vulnerable factors for truant and punctual school-going students. However, STS, GST, TST, PST, EST, ASPNA, EASES, AS, and TR values statistically significantly predicted student types (Truant students prediction = *33.5%*, *n =* 361; Punctual students prediction = *90.7%*, *n =* 599). The adjusted OR values of the STS, SST, and AS are less than 1 in the present study. These findings reveal that the school

truancy scale along with its subscales that most contribute to accurately identifying truant and punctual students' group classification in the present study. Therefore, the predictive validity of the school truancy scale is supported by logistic regression analysis.

**Table 14**

*Mean Differences between Students Types and Gender on School Refusal Behavior and School Truancy Behavior along its subscales (N= 960)*

| Variables | Truant (N=361) | | Punctual(N=599) | | Student types | | | Gender | | | Gender*Student types | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | F | p | $\eta_p^2$ | F | p | $\eta_p^2$ | F | p | $\eta_p^2$ |
| **School truancy scale (STS)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 139.38 | 54.60 | 127.72 | 44.38 | 3.59 | .05 | .01 | 2.99 | .08 | .003 | 3.63 | .05 | .00 |
| Female | 128.22 | 42.64 | 128.26 | 41.86 | | | | | | | | | |
| **General school truancy (GST)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 39.87 | 19.61 | 36.80 | 15.96 | .30 | .58 | .00 | 8.48 | .00 | .01 | 4.96 | .02 | .01 |
| Female | 34.19 | 14.96 | 36.05 | 15.38 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Teacher based school truancy (TST)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 34.11 | 15.19 | 31.74 | 13.48 | 2.61 | .10 | .00 | 1.98 | .15 | .002 | .93 | .33 | .01 |
| Female | 31.93 | 12.93 | 31.34 | 13.13 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Personal issues-based school truancy (PST)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 20.44 | 10.34 | 18.66 | 8.20 | .01 | .91 | .00 | 1.57 | .20 | .002 | 8.82 | .00 | .01 |
| Female | 18.01 | 7.80 | 19.65 | 7.97 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Educational or Institutional based school truancy (EST)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 21.18 | 10.1 | 19.32 | 7.73 | 3.02 | .08 | .00 | .06 | .79 | .00 | 2.53 | .11 | .00 |
| Female | 20.14 | 7.93 | 20.06 | 7.87 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Social problems-based school truancy (SST)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 23.77 | 8.99 | 21.17 | 7.86 | 26.82 | .000 | .02 | .01 | .89 | .00 | .03 | .85 | .00 |
| Female | 23.93 | 7.75 | 21.14 | 6.48 | | | | | | | | | |
| **School refusal behavior scale (SRBS)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 49.05 | 16.57 | 53.88 | 17.39 | 12.39 | .00 | .01 | 2.03 | .15 | .00 | .58 | .44 | .00 |
| Female | 48.31 | 16.93 | 51.41 | 16.22 | | | | | | | | | |

| Variables | Truant (N=361) | | Punctual(N=599) | | Student types | | | Gender | | | Gender*Student types | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | F | p | $\eta_p^2$ | F | p | $\eta_p^2$ | F | p | $\eta_p^2$ |
| **Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity(ASPNA)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 10.55 | 4.50 | 11.86 | 4.78 | 21.92 | .00 | .02 | .01 | .96 | .00 | .47 | .49 | .00 |
| Female | 10.34 | 4.73 | 12.09 | 5.29 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations (EASES)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 9.81 | 4.15 | 12.11 | 6.04 | 24.62 | .00 | .02 | .55 | .45 | .00 | 3.16 | .07 | .00 |
| Female | 10.16 | 4.72 | 11.25 | 4.61 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Attention seeking (AS)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 15.65 | 6.31 | 15.58 | 5.86 | .26 | .60 | .00 | 5.27 | .02 | .00 | .10 | .74 | .00 |
| Female | 14.89 | 5.94 | 14.56 | 5.17 | | | | | | | | | |
| **Tangible rewards (TR)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 13.02 | 6.41 | 14.33 | 6.17 | 5.48 | .01 | .00 | 1.38 | .24 | .00 | .74 | .38 | .00 |
| Female | 12.90 | 6.23 | 13.5 | 5.57 | | | | | | | | | |

*Note.* Students types = School going-truant and punctual student sample; STS= School truancy scale; GST= General school truancy; TST=Teacher based school truancy; PST= Personal issues-based school truancy; EST= Educational or Institutional based school truancy; SST= Social problems-based school truancy; SRBS= School refusal behavior scale; ASPNA=Avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity; EASES= Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations; AS =Attention seeking; TR= Tangible rewards.

*p* < .05, *p* < .01, *p* < .001

The MANOVA analysis findings indicate statistically significant gender differences in both school truancy and school refusal behaviors along its subscales in punctual and truant school-going truant students [Wilks' Lambda =0.97, F = 2.29; $p <$ 0.000, n2 p = 0.02]. Table 14 shows the means and standard deviations of all study variables. Gender (male and female) and student types (punctual and truant students) are considered as independent variables. However, school truancy behavior and school refusal behavior along with its subscales are considered dependent variables.

**School Truancy Scale.** The MANOVA analysis results show a statistically significant difference for student types (F = 3.59, p =.000, p2 =.01), gender (F = 2.99, p = n.s, p2 =.003), and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F = 3.63, p =.05, p2 =.004) on the school truancy scale. These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n$ = 200, $M$ = 139.38, $SD$ = 54.60), female truant students ($n$ = 161, $M$ = 128.22, $SD$ = 42.64), male punctual students ($n$ = 330, $M$ = 127.72, $SD$ = 44.38), and female punctual students ($n$ = 269, $M$ = 128.26, $SD$ = 41.86) conditions. These results illustrate that male truant students have a tendency to school truancy behavior as compared to other types of truant and punctual students (See Figure 11).

**General School Truancy (GST).** The MANOVA findings also reveal statistically significant differences for student types (F =.30, p = n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00), gender (F = 8.48, p = .000, $\eta_p^2$ = .01) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F = 4.96, p =.02, $\eta_p^2$ = .004) on general school truancy (GST). These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n$ = 200, $M$ = 39.87, $SD$ = 19.61), female truant

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students ($n = 161$, $M = 34.19$, $SD = 14.96$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 36.80$, $SD = 15.96$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 36.05$, $SD = 15.38$) conditions. These findings also demonstrate that male truant students have a tendency to general school truancy as compared to other conditions of truant and punctual students (See Figure 12).

**Teacher Based School Truancy (TST).** The MANOVA findings further reveal a statistically non-significant difference for student types ($F = 2.61$, $p = $ n.s, $\eta_p^2 = .00$), gender ($F = 1.98$, $p = $ n.s, $\eta_p^2 = .02$) and an interaction effect between gender and student types ($F = .93$, $p = $ n.s, $\eta_p^2 = .02$) on teacher-based school truancy (TST). These results display that there is a non-statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 34.11$, $SD = 15.19$), female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 31.93$, $SD = 12.93$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 31.74$, $SD = 13.48$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 31.34$, $SD = 13.13$) conditions (See Figure 13).

**Personal Issues-Based School Truancy (PST).** The MANOVA results also show a statistically significant difference for student types ($F = .01$, $p = $ n.s, p2 $= .00$), gender ($F = 1.57$, $p = $ n.s, p2 $= .02$), and an interaction effect between gender and student types ($F = 8.82$, $p = .00$, p2 $= .01$).These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 20.44$, $SD = 10.34$), female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 18.01$, $SD = 7.80$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 18.66$, $SD = 8.20$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 19.65$, $SD = 7.97$) conditions (See Figure 14).

**Educational or Institutional Based School Truancy (EST).** The MANOVA findings also reveal statistically non-significant differences for student types ($F = 3.02$, p

= n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00), gender (F =.06, p = n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F = 2.53, p =n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) on educational or institutional based school truancy (EST). These results display that there is a statistically non-significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n$ = 200, $M$ = 21.18, $SD$ = 10.10), female truant students ($n$ = 161, $M$ = 20.14, $SD$ = 7.93), male punctual students ($n$ = 330, $M$ = 19.32, $SD$ = 7.73), and female punctual students ($n$ = 269, $M$ = 20.06, $SD$ = 7.87) conditions (See Figure 15).

**Social Problems-Based School Truancy (SST).** The MANOVA findings also reveal statistically significant differences for student types (F = 26.82, p = .000, $\eta_p^2$ = .02), but non-significant differences observed in gender (F = 0.01, p = n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F =.03, p =n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .001) on social problems-based school truancy (SST). These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n$ = 200, $M$ = 23.77, $SD$ = 8.99), female truant students ($n$ = 161, $M$ = 23.93, $SD$ = 7.75), male punctual students ($n$ = 330, $M$ = 21.17, $SD$ = 7.86), and female punctual students ($n$ = 269, $M$ = 21.14, $SD$ = 6.48) conditions. These findings also demonstrate that male truant students have more tendency to social problems-based school truancy as compared to other conditions of truant and punctual students (See Figure 16).

**School Refusal Behavior Scale (SRBS).** The MANOVA analysis findings demonstrate a statistically significant difference for student types (F = 12.39, p =.00, $\eta_p^2$ = .01), gender (F = 2.03, p = n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .001) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F =.58, p =n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) on the school refusal behavior scale (SRBS). These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects

between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 49.05$, $SD$ = 16.57), female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 48.31$, $SD = 16.93$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 53.88$, $SD = 17.39$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 51.41$, $SD$ = 16.22) conditions. These results illustrate that male punctual students have a tendency to school truancy behavior as compared to other conditions of truant and punctual students (See Figure 17).

**Avoidance of Stimuli Provoking Negative Affectivity (ASPNA).** The MANOVA analysis findings demonstrate a statistically significant difference for student types (F = 21.92, p = .00, $\eta_p^2$ = .02), gender (F =.01, p = n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F= .47, p =n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) on the avoidance of stimuli provoking negative affectivity (ASPNA). These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 10.55$, $SD = 4.50$), female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 10.34$, $SD = 4.73$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 11.86$, $SD = 4.78$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 12.09$, $SD = 5.29$) conditions. These findings show that female punctual students are more likely to engage in school truancy behaviour than other truant and punctual students (See Figure 18).

**Escape from Aversive Social and/or Evaluative Situations (EASES).** The MANOVA analysis findings demonstrate a statistically non-significant difference for student types (F = 24.62, p = .00, $\eta_p^2$ = .02), gender (F = .55, p = n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F= 3.16, p =n.s, $\eta_p^2$ = .00) on escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations (EASES). These results display that there is a statistically non-significant difference between interaction effects between gender and

student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, $M = 9.81$, $SD = 4.15$); female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 10.16$, $SD = 4.72$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 12.11$, $SD = 6.04$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 11.25$, $SD = 4.61$) conditions (See Figure 19).

**Attention Seeking (AS).** The MANOVA analysis results show a statistically significant difference in attention seeking (AS) for student types (F =.26, p = n.s, p2 =.00), gender (F = 5.27, p =.02, p2 =.00), and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F =.10, p = n.s, p2 =.00).These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, 15.65, $SD = 6.31$), female truant students ($n = 161$, $M = 14.89$, $SD = 5.94$), male punctual students ($n = 330$, $M = 15.58$, $SD = 5.86$), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, $M = 14.56$, $SD = 5.17$) conditions. These results illustrate that male truant students have a tendency to school truancy behavior as compared to other types of truant and punctual students (See Figure 20).

**Tangible Rewards (TR).** The MANOVA analysis findings demonstrate a statistically significant difference for student types (F = 5.48, p = .01, $\eta_p^2 = .00$), gender (F = 1.38, p = n,s, $\eta_p^2 = .00$) and an interaction effect between gender and student types (F =.74, p =n.s, $\eta_p^2 = .00$) on tangible rewards (TR). These results display that there is a statistically significant difference between interaction effects between gender and student types, such as male truant students ($n = 200$, 13.02, SD=6.41), female truant students ($n = 161$, M=12.90, SD=6.23), male punctual students ($n = 330$, M=14.33, SD=6.17), and female punctual students ($n = 269$, M=13.5, SD=5.57) conditions. These results illustrate

that male truant students have a tendency to school truancy behavior as compared to other

types of truant and punctual   students (See Figure 21).

**Figure 11**

*Gender Wise Differences on School Truancy Scale for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*
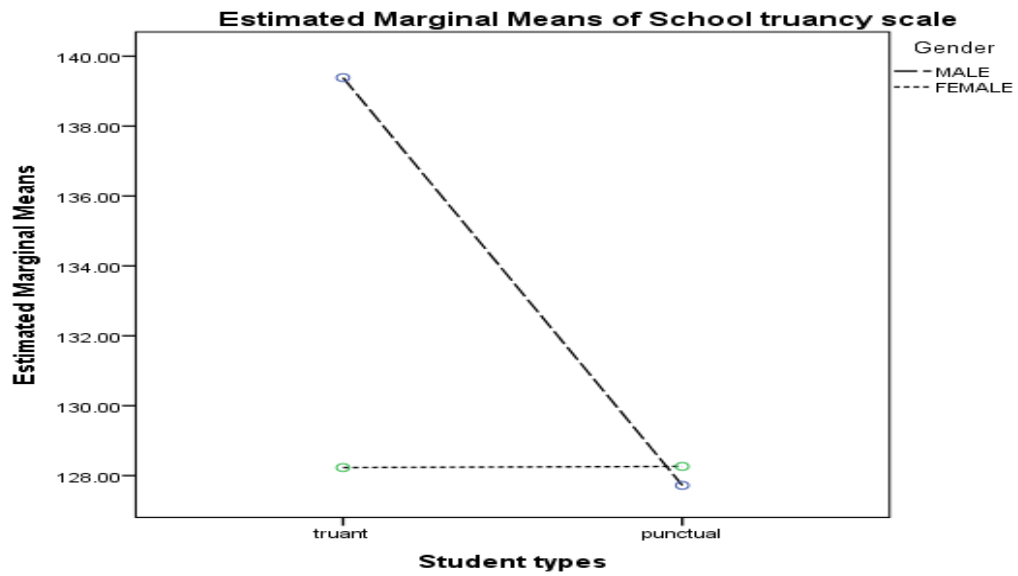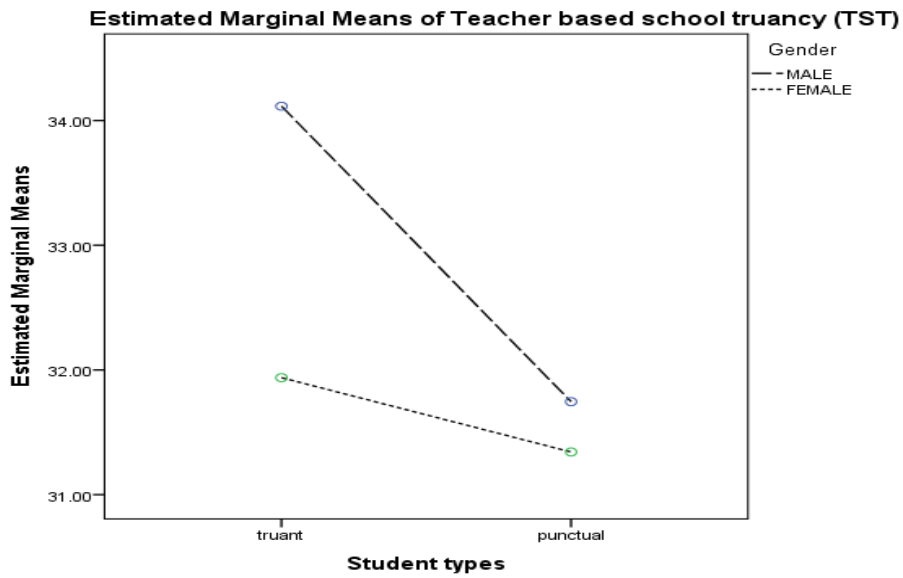
**Figure 12**

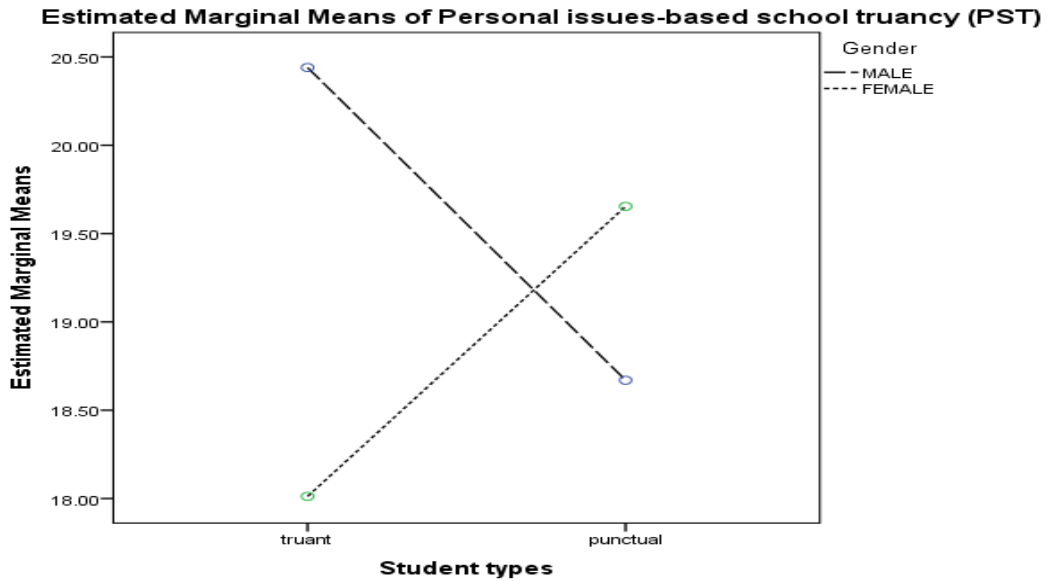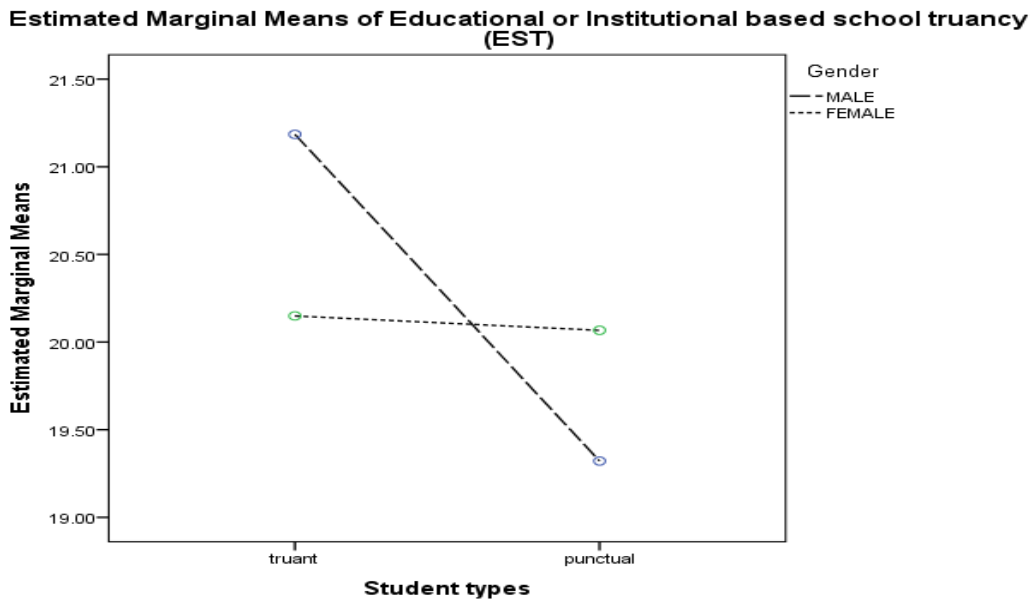*Gender Wise Differences on General School Truancy (GST) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*
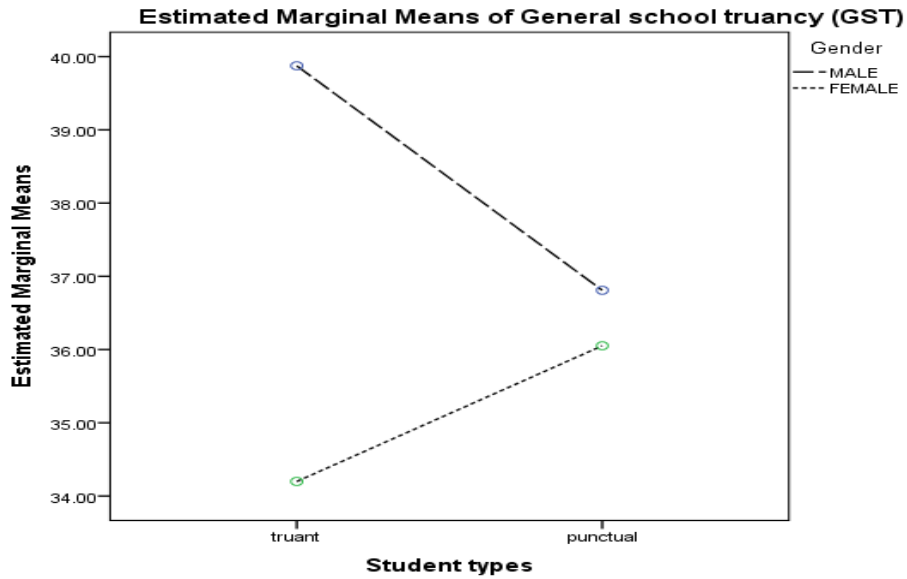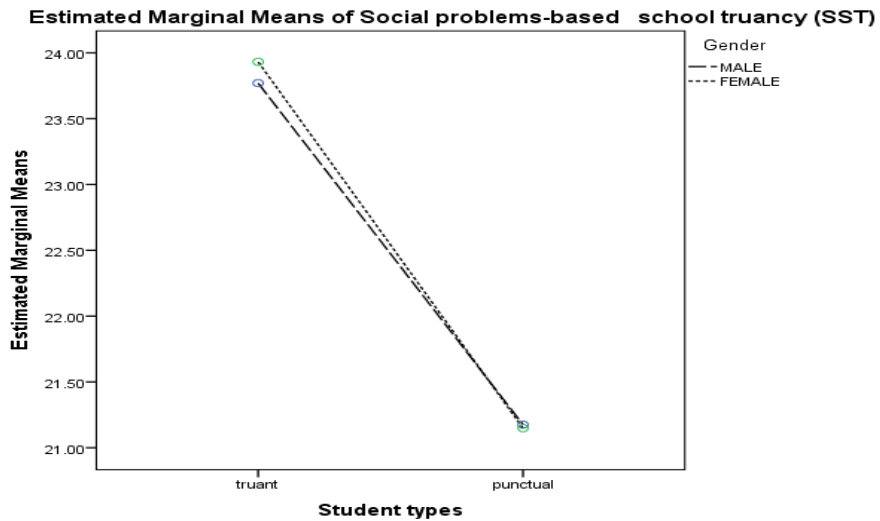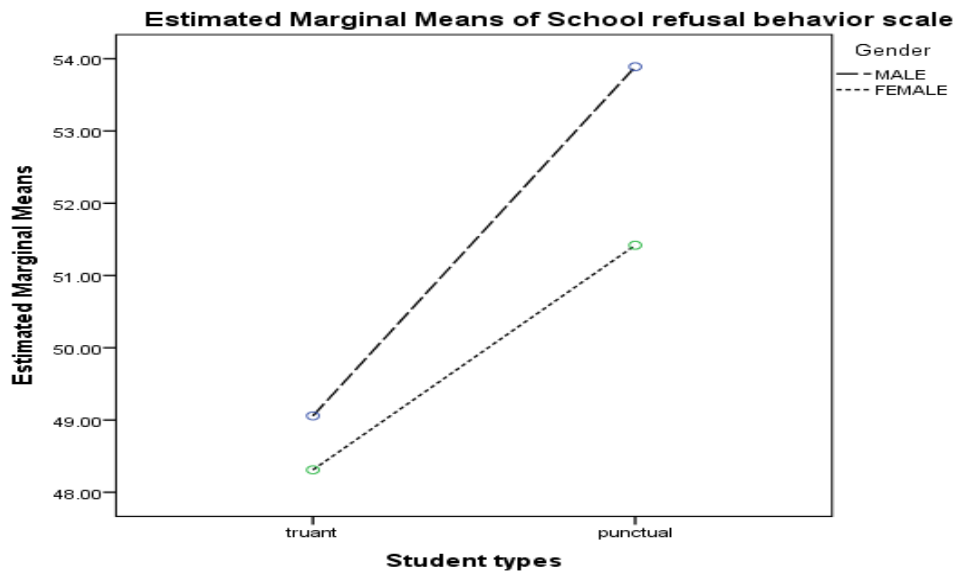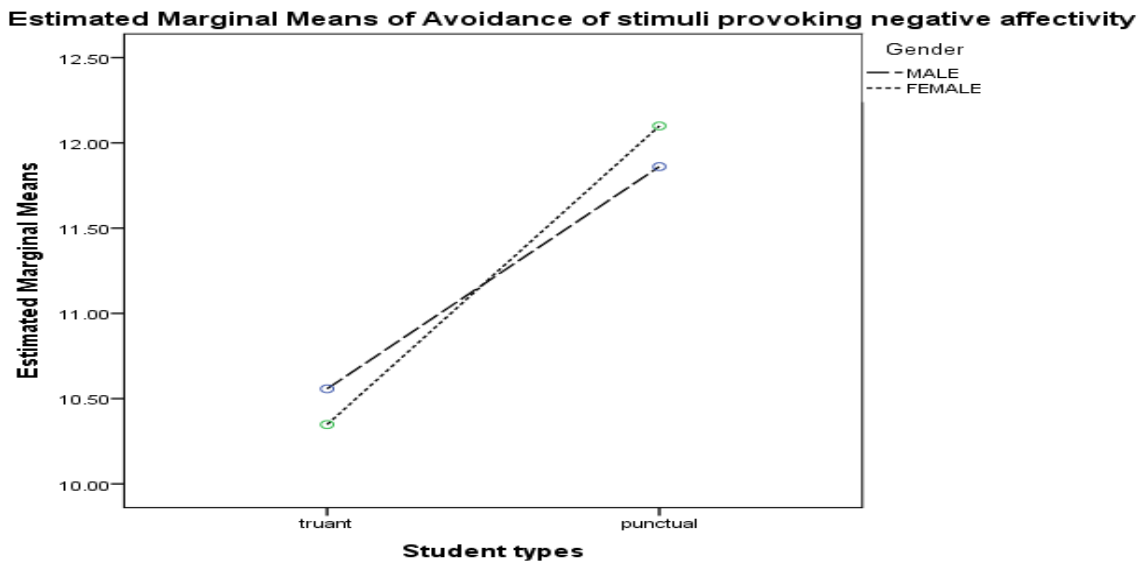


**Figure 13**

*Gender Wise Differences on Teacher Based School Truancy (TST) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*
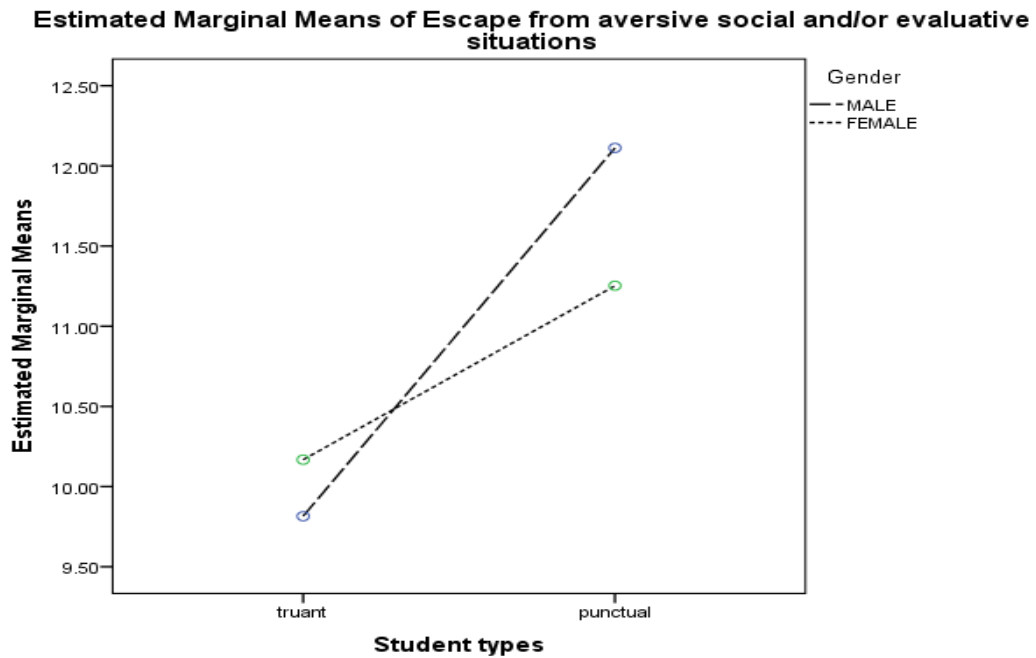


**Figure 14**

**Figure 15**

*Gender Wise Differences on Personal Issues-Based School Truancy (PST) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*

**Figure 16**

*Gender Wise Differences on Social Problems-Based School Truancy (SST) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*



**Figure 17**

*Gender Wise Differences on School Refusal Behavior Scale (SRBS) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*

**Figure 18**

*Gender Wise Differences on Avoidance of Stimuli Provoking Negative Affectivity (ASPNA) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*
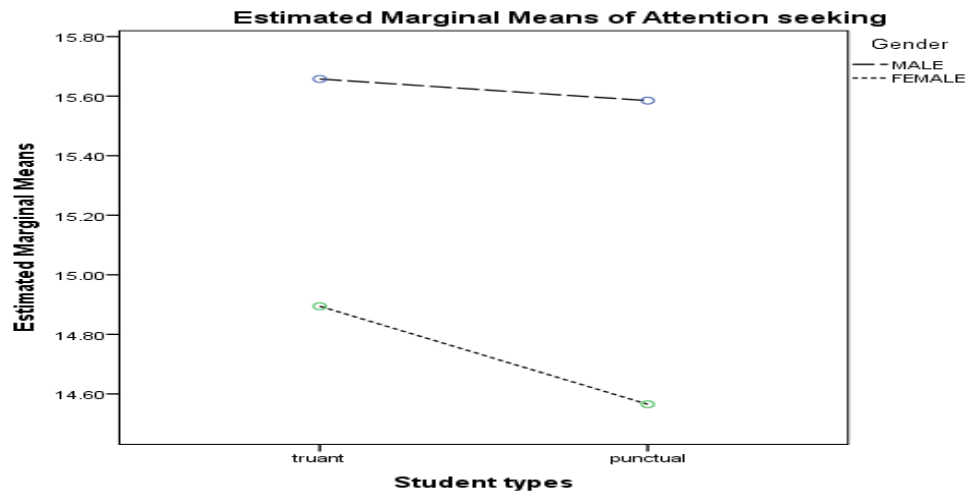


**Figure 19**

*Gender Wise Differences on Escape from Aversive Social and/or Evaluative Situations (EASES) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*
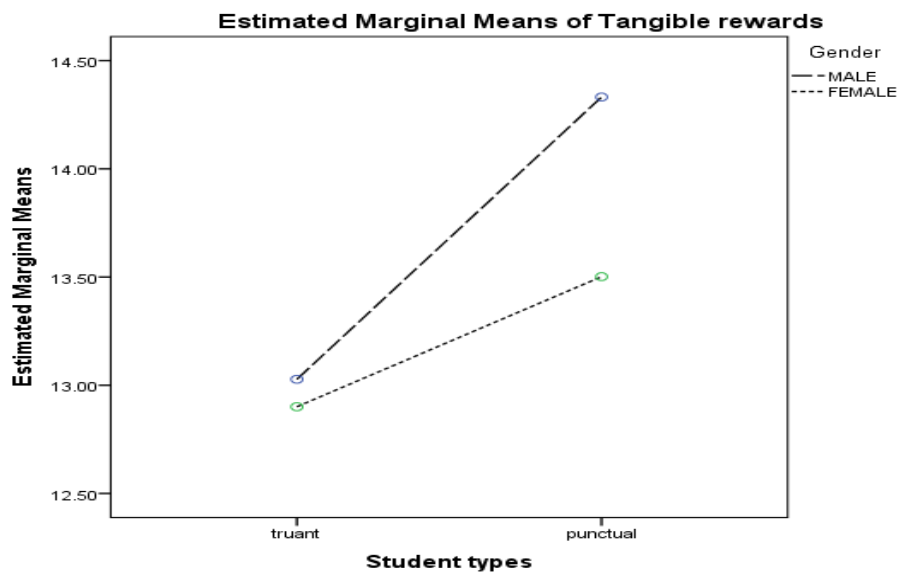
**Figure 20**

*Gender Wise Differences on Attention Seeking (AS) for School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*



**Figure 21**

*Gender Wise Differences on Tangible Rewards (TR) For School-Going Truant Students (n = 361) and Punctual Students (n = 599).*

## Discussion

School truancy is one of the most persistent and challenging problems facing educational institutions. It is a prevailing, deleterious behavior and lifestyle among school-going children and adolescents globally (Patton et al., 2017). Poor academic performance, economic deprivation, physical and mental health problems such as externalising and internalising behaviour problems, juvenile delinquency, disruptive behavior, conduct disorder, adolescent pregnancy, risky sexual behavior, or the abuse of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and other substance-related disorders are frequently associated with it (Attwood & Croll, 2015; Credé et al., 2010; Fornander & Kearney, 2020d;Kearney, 2022; Rasasingham, 2015). The purpose of the present study was to develop the psychometric properties of the School Truancy Scale (STS) for school-going students in the Pakistan context. Furthermore, this study aimed to clarify and determine the diagnostic efficacy of the STS in detecting truant behaviour for truant and punctual school-going students. More specifically, this research was also designed to examine the following hypotheses that were more closely associated with school truancy behavior and the experiences of truant school-going students in Pakistan: Hypothesis 1 (H1): School truancy will be positively associated with school refusal behavior in both truant and punctual school-going students. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Truant school-going students will be shown a higher level of school truancy and school refusal behaviour as compared to punctual school-going students. Male truant students will display more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to school-going female truant students. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Male truant students will display more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to school-going female truant students. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Male and female truant students

will exhibit more school truancy and school refusal behavior as compared to female and male punctual students. Hypothesis 5 (H5): School truancy will positively predict school refusal behavior in both truant and punctual students.

Firstly, EFA was carried out to explore the underlying factor structure of the School Truancy Scale (STS) in Pakistani school-going truant students (Field, 2017; Makowski et al., 2020). Construct validity was also established through EFA analysis of a sample of truant students. The EFA analysis identified five key STS factors: (1) general school truancy; (2) teacher-based school truancy; (3) personal issues-based school truancy; (4) social problems-based school truancy; and (5) educational or institutional-based school truancy. All five subscales of STS revealed good internal consistency for school-going truant students (Cronbach, 1951). These results provided psychometric evidence that the STS was valid for the assessment of school truancy behavior in a truant population. Additionally, the internal consistency of the school truancy scale and its sub-scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

**Factor 1: General School Truancy**

General school truancy is characterized as any school absenteeism contrary to the provisions and violation of school law. It may be included as skipping particular lessons or classes, parentally condoned absenteeism, school refusal, psychological absenteeism, and school phobia. Several earlier studies demonstrated that school truancy was associated with negative school factors, including poor school climate and conflict with teachers and peers (Egger et al., 2003; Malcolm et al., 2016). It is also linked with deleterious school factors, including negative peer influence , poor peer support, and conflict with other students (Havik et al., 2015a; Ingul et al., 2019). Ecological theory addresses that there is a

significant role for family and school factors in the development of the cognitive and social development of children (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

**Factor 2: Teacher-Based School Truancy**

It is defined as any intentional, illegal, and unauthorised absence due to conflict with a teacher, including personal grudges, and cruel, harsh, discriminating behavior, as well as physical and mental punishment toward class students.   It commonly occurs due to the harsh and unacceptable behaviour of the teacher toward their class students. Cruel and harsh behaviour of teachers toward students has an important **role** in swaying the truanting behaviours of school-going students. Most studies also explained that most truant students experienced harassment and disrespect by school peers and teachers; they experienced mental and physical health issues because of the negative school environment (Attwood & Croll, 2006; Havik et al., 2015a; Kearney, 2022; Rasasingham, 2015).

**Factor 3: School Truancy Due to Personal Issues**

It is defined as any intentional, illegal, and unauthorized absence caused by personal factors such as financial issues, aggressive acts, a lack of motivation and interest in their academic activities, careless behavior, poor physical health issues, and mental health problems. Similar empirical evidence reported that individual factors were associated with physical and mental problems, special educational needs, and drug or alcohol use in children (Egger et al., 2012; Gase et al., 2015; Havik et al., 2015a; Ingul et al., 2012, 2019; Kearney, 2022).

**Factor 4: Social Problem-Based School Truancy**

It is defined as any intentional, illegal, and unauthorized absence due to social issues and environmental factors, including family issues, social issues, and domestic issues. Several previous studies revealed that school truancy was associated with different social factors such as neglectful parenting, lack of school and family parental involvement, family conflict, unemployment, school climate and structure (Filippello et al., 2019; Gase et al., 2015; Haight et al., 2011; Ingul et al., 2012;Kearney, 2022). A similar study found that school truancy was linked to environmental factors including negative peer influence, poor peer support, peer conflict, and group pressure from friends to skip school (Kearney, 2022; Maynard et al., 2018).

**Factor 5: Educational or Institutional-Based School Truancy**

It is defined as any intentional, illegal, and unauthorized absence due to educational issues such as climate and structure of class and school, major faculties, and teaching quality. Previous research has found that truant students have poor relationships with their peers and teachers in educational settings(Aqeel et al., 2016; Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Attwood & Croll, 2015; Credé et al., 2010; Filippello et al., 2019; Fornander & Kearney, 2019, 2020; Kearney, 2008, 2022; Maynard et al., 2018; Strand & Granlund, 2014; Tahira & Jami, 2021). Similar studies also explained that most truant students experienced harassment and disrespect by school peers, and teachers; they experienced mental and physical health issues because of the negative school environment (Havik et al., 2015b;Kearney, 2022).

Furthermore, the purpose of this study was to determine the diagnostic efficacy of the newly developed STS scale in detecting problematic truant behavior in both school-going punctual and truant students. Through ROC analysis, criterion validity was

established to discriminate between punctual and truant school-going students on both the STS and school refusal behavior scales. ROC analysis was also used to evaluate specificity and sensitivity in identifying cut-off scores for both the STS and school refusal behavior scales to diagnose truant behavior in school-going students. This study's analysis provided sound psychometric evidence for the diagnostic efficacy of the newly developed STS scale in school-going students. Additionally, ROC analysis illustrated that the high sensitivity of the STS scale was providing sound evidence to identify truant students who missed their school classes without the knowledge of teachers, parents, and during regular class time. On the other hand, the results of the present study revealed that the high specificity of the newly developed STS scale provided strong evidence to identify punctual students who did not miss their classes during regular class time. Additionally, area under curve (AUC) was also applied to detect clinical utilisation of both the school refusal behavior and the STS scales.

The results of the AUC curve revealed that the STS scale more accurately identified truant behavior in comparison to the school refusal behavior scale. These results provide clear psychometric evidence of the diagnostic efficacy of the STS scales to determine punctual and truant behavior in the Pakistan context. Interestingly, the sensitivity of the STS scale was.92%, and its specificity was.86%. However, the sensitivity and specificity of the school refusal behavior scale were relatively very low (.42% and .52%, respectively). These results suggest that the school refusal behavior was not a suitable instrument to detect truant behavior. On the other hand, the sensitivity and specificity of the STS scale were relatively higher, which explained why the STS scale was a useful diagnostic instrument for identifying truant behavior in school-going students.

Additionally, the convergent and discriminating validity of STS was established through Pearson correlational analysis for truant and punctual school-going student samples. A Pearson correlational analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between school refusal behavior and STS scales. This study's results demonstrated that the STS scale was negatively significant linked to the school refusal behavior scale in a truant school-going student sample. Whereas, this study also found that the STS scale was positively significant related to the school refusal behavior scale in punctual school-going students. Therefore, the discriminating and convergent validity of the newly developed STS scale was confirmed by correlational analysis. Moreover, this study provided strong psychometric evidence of discriminant validity for the STS scale in school-going truant students. However, this study's findings also provide psychometric evidence of convergent validity for the STS scale in punctual school-going students. Interestingly, this study revealed that both instruments were more appropriate to measure punctuality in school-going students, but, newly developed STS scale also appropriately measured truant behavior in both punctual and truant school-going students. The STS scale was sensitively examined for the tendency of school truancy in school-going students in comparison with previously developed scales. The results of the present study further established group validity in both samples due to group variation.

For the purpose of determining the concurrent validity of the school truancy scale in school-going punctual and truant students. There are a lot of different ways to determine the concurrent validity of a school truancy scale. One way to find out the clinical efficacy of the school truancy scale in detecting truant behavior was to make comparisons between truant and punctual students. An independent samples t-test was used to make comparisons

between truant and punctual students based on the mean and standard deviation on the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior. The results of this analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference found between truant and punctual students on the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior. The findings of the current study revealed that truant students were shown more truant behavior as compared to punctual students. Whereas the results of the current study demonstrated that punctual students were more inclined to school refusal behavior as compared to truant students. Moreover, the MANOVA analysis was used to examine further differences between male or female punctual and truant students on the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior. These results also revealed that male truant students were more likely to exhibit truant behavior as compared to male and female truant and punctual students. Therefore, the concurrent validity and known-group validity of the school truancy and school refusal behavior scales were supported by the above analysis.

In addition, another way to determine the concurrent validity of the school truancy scale, Pearson correlational analysis, was performed to measure the association between the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior for punctual and truant school-going students. The results of correlational analysis revealed that the school truancy scale was statistically significantly associated with the school refusal behavior scale for punctual students. Whereas, the findings also found that there was a statistically non-significant association between school refusal behavior and school truancy scales for the truant sample. Thus, the concurrent validity, convergent validity, and discriminating validity of the school truancy scale were supported by correlational analysis. The evidence revealed that the school refusal behavior scale was indicated for the discriminant validity of the

school truancy scale in the truant sample. The results of the study found that school refusal behavior was found to have the convergent validity of the school truancy scale in punctual samples. The reason for this could be the fact that both the instruments were more appropriate to measure punctual students and those meant for a normal population of students, which was evident from the rationale of the previously developed instrument and its purpose of usage. Nevertheless, the present scale was unique in the sense that it not only was appropriate for measuring punctual samples but was also able to detect school truancy, which was more oriented towards deviant behavior on the part of the students, such as sexual activities, drug abuse, gang fights, etc., which provided evidence for its usage with only the criminal population as well. This allowed us to measure truancy more sensitively in comparison to the previous instrument and has been proven through correlational analysis as above. These results also supported known group validity because of group variation in the present study.

Additionally, a binary logistic regression analysis was performed to identify and discriminate between truant and punctual school-going students on the school truancy scale and the school refusal behavior scale along their subscales. The results indicated that the school truancy scale was statistically significant, predicting to discriminate between punctual and truant samples. The results of logistic regression analysis were also helpful in establishing predictive validity for the classification of truant and punctual students. Thus, the predictive validity of school truancy was evidenced from logistic regression analysis. These results suggest that school truancy is a useful and clinical instrument for detecting truant behavior in truant and punctual school-going students. The present study's findings also recommended that the school truancy scale be a psychometrically sound tool

for detecting truant behavior in punctual and truant school-going students in Pakistani culture.

Moreover, this present research examined the association between school truancy scales and school refusal behavior scales along their subscales between truant and punctual school-going students. The results revealed that the school truancy scale was statistically positively linked to the school refusal behavior scale for punctual school-going students. Whereas the current study's findings were statistically insignificant in terms of school refusal behaviour in truant students. The present investigation results were supported by previous study findings (Aqeel et al., 2015; Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017b; Baker et al., 2020; Brandibas et al., 2004; Filippello et al., 2019; Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Gonzálvez et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2016). Many prior studies found that those students who skipped their classes were shown to have more school refusal or withdraw tendency as compared to those students who did not skip their regular classes. Moreover, several earlier studies revealed that school refusal behavior was linked to school truancy behavior in school students (Attwood & Croll, 2015; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Burton et al., 2014; Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Fornander & Kearney, 2020b; Maynard et al., 2015; Mazerolle et al., 2018; Rasasingham, 2015; Rocque et al., 2017).

Additionally, this study also examined the differences between truant and punctual school-going students on the school truancy scale and the school refusal behavior scales along their subscales. The results of present study indicated that truant school-going students had a higher tendency toward school truancy behavior as compared to punctual school-going students. Whereas, this study further revealed that punctual school-going students were identified in school refusal behavior than truant school-going students. The

present investigation results provide evidence for previous studies. Several previous studies found that students who skipped their classes had a higher school refusal or withdrawal tendency than students who did not skip their regular classes (Maynard et al., 2012; Perlman, 2009).

Furthermore, the current study also investigated the differences between male and female truant and punctual school-going students on the school truancy scale and school refusal behavior scales along their subscales. Male truant school-going students were more inclined toward school truancy behaviour than female truant and punctual school-going students, according to the results of the independent samples t-test and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Whereas, this study further revealed that male punctual school-going students were more predisposed toward school refusal behavior as compared to female truant and punctual school-going students. The results of the present study supported previous study findings. A few earlier studies demonstrated that male truant students had higher levels of school truant behavior and school refusal behavior as compared to female truant students (Maynard et al., 2012; Perlman, 2009). Maynard et al. (2012) described how male students who missed their classes during school time were found to engage in school refusal behavior and delinquent activities more often than female truant and punctual students (Maynard et al., 2012). Whereas the U.S. Department of Education (2016) conducted a similar study, the results of this study found that female school students who missed their classes during school time were more likely to engage in sexual activities, delinquent behavior, and school refusal behaviour than male truant students (Aqeel et al., 2015; Aqeel & Akhtar, 2017b; Baker et al., 2020; Brandibas et al.,

2004; Filippello et al., 2019; Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Gonzálvez et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2016; Higa et al., 2002b;Kearney & Albano, 2015a; Lyon & Cotler, 2007, 2009).

**Limitations and Implications**

There were many drawbacks to this research. Initially, the research was a pilot effort to devise a School Truancy Scale (STS) in Pakistani school-going students; thus, validity and reliability have not yet been developed in school-going students. Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis was not carried out to confirm the factor structure of the newly developed scale in the Pakistani context. Although this study was first designed to divide the data into two parts for analysis, half the data will be used for exploratory factor analysis and the other set of data will be used for CFA. Because of the small sample size of truant school-going students, confirmatory factor analysis was not possible (Mundfrom et al., 2005). Finally, because of the purposive sampling technique, we did not include an appropriate truant school-going student's sample to represent the whole truant community, so we were just capable of comparing and differentiating between punctual and truant school-going students. Hence, with these major drawbacks, there is a dire need to perform future research to endorse the generalizability factor structure of the newly developed STS by performing a CFA on different kinds of truant student samples. Furthermore, this study admits that there could be a dire need to develop more new items, particularly in the clinical presentation of the school truancy dimension, as well as further modify and discard previous items, and examine the validity and reliability of the STS scale. Furthermore, future research can also evaluate the STS scale and its subscales across different samples of school-going truant and punctual students.

**Conclusion**

The main purpose of the present study was to develop the School Truancy Scale (STS) to measure the risk and tendency of truant behavior in Pakistani school-going truant students. Additionally, this study provided a newly developed instrument to measure the risk and tendency of truant behavior that had sufficient psychometric properties. The STS scale was developed with sufficient content, criterion, and construct validity that it could be utilised for screening truant behavior in school-going students. Construct validity was established using exploratory factor analysis. Convergent and divergent validity of the STS scale was established through a bivariate correlation method with the school refusal scale on school-going truant and punctual student samples. In addition, ROC and Cronbach's alpha analysis were also applied to examine the diagnostic properties and evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the scale in the present study. This study's results recommended that the newly developed STS scale was a valid and reliable screening instrument for Pakistani school-going students. It would be a practical scale for stakeholders to assess and eradicate school truancy that was developed based on the relevant experiences of school-going truant students.

**Synthesis of Current Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

Prior studies revealed that school truancy is a complex problem. Kearney's (2008a) multidisciplinary model of school truancy that is based on a synthesis of research papers identifies six distal and proximal components that contribute to chronic absenteeism and school truancy. These factors include characteristics and situations related to the child, family, parents, classmates, school, and society. Furthermore, other similar research has explored relationships between school truancy and social relationships, home environments, school factors, and personal characteristics (Kearney, 2008a; Kearney &

Graczyk, 2020; Rasasingham, 2015; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). This study has explored the antecedents and consequences of school truancy in truant students with an appropriate cultural and demographical context. Moreover, the study also highlighted group differences and similarities in school truancy among different forms of truancy. Additionally, this study identifies and compares school truancy based on gender and their location of residence according to the Pakistani context. Lastly, how truancy can be in itself a factor causing psychopathological issues was also explored.

The study found several antecedents and consequences of truancy in school students in Pakistan during qualitative exploration. The antecedents included peer influence; the impact of school; personal characteristics; entertaining activities; family problems; media influence; self-esteem; morality; and group adherence. Whereas 3 global themes of consequences were identified, including psychopathology; academic problems; and health issues. While the quantitative analytical part of the study mainly focused on the academic consequences of truancy. The findings revealed that school truancy was positively associated with and a significant predictor of school refusal behaviour in both punctual and truant students.

Initially, there was no such classification of truancy as the literature suggested (Filippello et al., 2019; Fornander & Kearney, 2020c; Higa et al., 2002). However, the present study managed to divide truancy into three sub-categories based on severity. These varied severity levels of truancy were based on the truant activities, the respective ages of the students, and their educational levels in each group. These classifications were developed during the qualitative part of the study, suggesting that severity increases with the process of involvement in various truant activities. Similarly, analytical findings based

on the constructed instrument also revealed similar findings by differentiating between punctual and truant students. Furthermore, quantitative findings also showed that truant students exhibited significantly more school truancy behaviour as compared to punctual students.

Another finding, according to the Pakistani context, is that truancy was observed to increase with each grade. This inclination may also lead to future criminal behaviour in truant students. As in matriculation, truancy increases at peak levels. These findings were opposite to those found in literature, as they suggested that most of the truancy begins in 6th grade and ends in high school due to students becoming more future-oriented, with dull students more involved in truancy (Gonzálvez, Kearney, Lagos-San Martín, et al., 2018; Rasasingham, 2015).

Additionally, age was also found to be another important factor for the variation in categories. As previous studies suggested that truancy is almost the same across all classes in all age groups (Gonzálvez, Kearney, Jiménez-Ayala, et al., 2018c), In contrast, the current study discovered that younger students were more involved in either inside school truancy or internet café truancy. Another important finding was that the more diverse the gang was, the more severe acts of truant behaviour were found in them. Similarly, location was discovered to be a significant predictor of the type of truancy displayed by students. Surprisingly, truant students from villages exhibited more overt truancy, whereas those from cities exhibited more covert truancy.

Secondly, in relation to gender, according to Pakistan's cultural context, males were observed to be more prone to truancy in comparison to female students, as was found in the qualitative portion of the study. While the literature suggested that males and females

both displayed truancy, with a bit higher in male students (Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Lyon & Cotler, 2009). Findings from the qualitative part of the present study were also consistent with the findings of the quantitative study where males displayed higher truancy in comparison to female truant students. While male and female truant students likewise displayed higher truancy in comparison to male and female punctual students.

Psychiatric issues were also identified as a consequence of truancy based on age and truancy group category during the qualitative phase of the study. Symptoms found elaborated that younger aged students mostly suffered from mild to moderate levels of psychological issues such as anxiety, frotteuristic disorder, depression, and homosexual behaviors. Whereas more mature-aged students suffer from psychopathological issues such as anxiety, depression, drug addiction, sexual behaviors, criminal activities, antisocial and psychopath personality disorders etc. However, further quantitative testing needs to be implemented for better assessment and understanding the severity of the discussed issues. All these aforementioned findings were found to be consistent in both qualitative and quantitative parts of the study. This suggests truancy has multiple domains and levels of severity and can lead to various psychopathological issues if not identified and rectified.

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# Annexures

# Interview protocol/ focus group guide

نام۔

عمر۔

سکول کا ٹائپ (school type)

کلاس۔

سکول کا ٹائم        1۔صبح        2۔شام

رہائشی علاقہ۔        1۔شہر        2 گاؤں

1۔        کیا آپ نے کبھی سکول سے بھاگنے کے متعلق سوچا؟۔

2۔        کیا آپ نے کبھی سکول سے بھاگنے کا تجربہ (Experience) کیا ہے تو کتنے وقت کے لیے سکول سے بھاگے ہیں۔

3۔        کیا آپ مجھے سکول سے بھاگنے کے متعلق کچھ بتا سکتے ہیں۔

4۔        آپ اپنے سکول کے بارے میں کیسا محسوس کرتے ہیں۔

5۔        سکول میں آپ کیسا محسوس کرتے ہیں۔

6۔        کیا آپ مجھے سکول سے بھاگنے کی وجہ بتا سکتے ہیں؟

i۔        آپ کو ((مثلاً ۔ٹیچر کے مارنے کی وجہ سے) Reason) کی وجہ سے سکول سے بھاگنا کیسا لگتا ہے۔

ii۔        آپ سکول سے بھاگنے کے بعد سکول سے باہر کیسا محسوس کرتے ہیں۔

7۔        جب آپ سکول سے پورا دن بھاگنے کے بعد کیسا محسوس کرتے ہیں۔

8۔        آپ سکول میں کیسا محسوس کرتے ہیں۔

9۔        جب آپ سکول نہیں جاتے تو کیسا محسوس کرتے ہیں۔

10۔        آپ کو اپنے سکول کے استاتذہ اور دوسرے بچوں کے ساتھ رہنا کیسا لگتا ہے۔

i۔        کیا آپ ان کے بارے میں کچھ اور بتا سکتے ہیں۔

11۔        کیا آپ سکول سے بھاگنے کا فیصلہ استاتذہ کی وجہ سے کرتے ہیں۔ یا کسی اور وجہ سے؟

12۔        جب آپ سکول سے بھاگتے ہیں تو اگلے دن آپ کے سکول کے استاتذہ کے رویہ آپ کے ساتھ کیا ہوتا ہے۔

13۔        سکول سے بھاگنے کے بعد آپ کو کیا کیا مشکلات کا سامنا ہوا۔

i۔        کیا آپ ان کے بارے میں کچھ اور بتا سکتے ہیں۔

14۔        کیا آپ سکول سے دوستوں کے ساتھ بھاگتے ہیں کیا کیا کہا کیلیے؟

i۔        کیا آپ ان کے بارے میں کچھ اور بتا سکتے ہیں۔

## School Truancy Scale

سکول سے بھاگنے والے بچوں کا پیمانہ (School Truancy Scale)

سوالنامہ

ہدایت۔

ذیل میں چند بیانات دینے گئے ہیں کہ آپ سے گزارش ہے کہ ہر بیان کو غور سے پڑھ کر یہ بتائیے کہ
یہ بیانات آپ کی شخصیت کے بارے میں کس حد تک صحیح ہے اگر بالکل صحیح ہے تو 5 کے
گرد دائرے کا نشان لگائیں اور اگر بالکل غلط ہے تو 1 کے گرد دائرے کا نشان لگائیں ۔ مہربانی
فرما کر ہر بیان کے سامنے دیئے گئے سکیل کی مدد سے وہ جواب دیں جو آپ کی شخصیت کے
قریب ہو آپ کے جوابات صرف تحقیق کے لیے استعمال کئے جائیں گے۔

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| بالکل صحیح | کسی حد تک صحیح | معلوم نہیں | کسی حد تک غلط | بالکل غلط |
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

| Items | Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I like to bunked off school<br>میں سکول سے بھاگنا پسند کرتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 2 | I bunked off school to play with friends<br>میں سکول سے بھاگ کر دوستوں کے ساتھ کھیلنا پسند کرتا ہوں | | | | | |
| 3 | I bunked off school to go to other cities for leisure<br>میں سکول سے بھا گ کر دوسرے شہروں میں تفریح کیلئے جاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 4 | I bunked off school to go outside for food<br>میں سکول سے بھا گ کر کھانے کیلئے سکول سے باہر جاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 5 | I bunked off school with my friends to go for different sports activities ( like cricket, football, kabaddi etc etc)<br>میں سکول سے بھا گ کر اپنے دوستوں کے ساتھ سپورٹس کی سرگرمیوں میں ( جیسا کہ کرکٹ ، فٹ بال ، کبڈی وغیرہ وغیرہ)میں جاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 6 | I bunked off school and go to various activities like teasing girls, do inappropriate with boys etc etc)<br>میں سکول سے بھا گ کر کے اپنے دوستوں کے ساتھ مختلف سرگرمیاں (جیساکہ لڑکوں کو چھیڑنا ، لڑکوں کے ساتھ غلط کام کرنا وغیرہ وغیرہ) میں جاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 7 | My teachers beat me on small/minor mistakes<br>میرے اساتذہ مجھے معمولی غلطیوں پر مارتے ہیں | | | | | |
| 8 | My teachers give/administer me physical punishment on small/minor mistakes<br>میرے اساتذہ چھوٹی سی غلطی پر مجھے جسمانی سزا دیتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 9 | My teachers insult me in front of the class for small/minor mistakes<br>میرے اساتذہ مجھے اکثر معمولی غلطیوں پر جماعت کے سامنے بے عزت کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 10 | My teachers turn me out of the class for making a small/minor mistake<br>میرے اساتذ ہ مجھے چھٹی کرنے پر کلاس سے نکال دیتے ہیں ۔ | | | | | |

| 11 | I bunked off school for fear of physical punishment<br>میں سکول سے مار کھانے کے خوف سے بھاگتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | The reason I bunked off school is for fear of being embarrassed in the class<br>میرے سکول سے بھاگنے کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ مجھے کلاس میں شرمندگی کا سامنا کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 13 | My teachers favor students who take tuition lessons with them<br>میرے اساتذہ اپنے پاس ٹیوشن پڑھنے والے طلب کو کلاس میں باقی طلباءکی نسبت زیادہ ترجیح دیتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 14 | My teachers give preferential treatment to those classmates whose parents are rich, influential or occupy senior positions<br>میرے اساتذہ کلاس میں ہم جماعتوں کو ترجیح دیتے ہیں جن کے والدین دولت مند ، بااثر یا اچھے عہدوں پر ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 15 | Most of the teachers in the school have a stern/harsh attitude towards me<br>سکول کے زیادہ تر اساتذہ کا رویہ میرے ساتھ سخت ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 16 | The teachers of my school beat me for no reason<br>میرے سکول کے اساتذہ مجھے بلا وجہ مارتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 17 | My school teachers beat me more as compared to other students<br>میرے سکول کے اساتذہ مجھے باقی طلباءکی نسبت مجھے زیادہ مارتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 18 | My teachers give preferential treatment to some of the students in the class<br>میرے اساتذہ کلاس میں کچھ بچوں کو زیادہ ترجیح دیتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 19 | I do not like the teaching style of my teachers<br>مجھے اپنے اساتذہ کے پڑھانے کا طریقہ پسند نہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 20 | Some of my teachers provoked me to do inappropriate act like sexual abuse<br>میرے بعض اساتذہ نے مجھے غلط کام کے لئے اکسانے کی کوشش کی۔(مثلاً جنسی تعلقات وغیرہ وغیرہ) | | | | | |
| 21 | My teachers are less inclined toward teaching<br>میرے اساتذہ میں پڑھانے کا رجحان کم ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 22 | My teachers are not so fond of teaching me as compared to some other students<br>میرے اساتذہ میری کلاس کے دوسرے طلباءکی نسبت مجھے کم پڑھانا پسند کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 23 | I am not interested in studying in my school<br>مجھے اپنے سکول میں پڑھنے میں دلچسپی نہیں ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 24 | I am not interested in studying my books<br>مجھے اپنی کتابوں کو پڑھنے میں دلچسپی نہیں ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 25 | The reason I bunked off school is that the school curriculum is in English language<br>میرے سکول سے بھاگنے کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ میرے سکول کا نصاب انگریزی میں ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 26 | The books being taught in my school are in a difficult language, like English etc | | | | | |

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| # | Statement | | | | | |
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| | میرے سکول میں پڑھائی جانے والی کتابیں مشکل زبان میں ہیں۔(جیسا کہ انگریزی وغیرہ وغیرہ) | | | | | |
| 27 | The reason I bunked off school is that I find mathematics difficult<br>میں سکول سے اسی لئے بھاگتا ہوں کہ مجھے ریاضی بہت مشکل لگتا ہے ۔ | | | | | |
| 28 | I forget easily what I have learned (memorized) in class.<br>مجھے کلاس میں یاد کیا ہوا سبق جلد بھول جاتا ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 29 | I find it difficult to follow school rules, such as wearing proper uniform, punctuality in arriving at school, carrying the course books etc<br>مجھے اپنے سکول کے قوانین کی پیروی کرنے میں مشکل پیش آتی ہے۔(جیسا کہ مناسب کتابیں، یونیفارم پہننے ، وقت کی پابندی سے سکول آنا، کتا بیں لانا وغیرہ ( وغیرہ | | | | | |
| 30 | Most of the students in my school get admission due to reference<br>میرے سکول میں بہت سے طلباءکو سفارش کی بنیاد پر داخلہ دیاجاتا ہے | | | | | |
| 31 | I scare or threaten any student who tries to complain about me<br>اگر کوئی بچہ میری شکایت کرے یا کرنے لگے تو میں اسے ڈراتا یا دھمکاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 32 | I do not tell lies<br>میں کبھی بھی جھوٹ نہیں بولتا۔ | | | | | |
| 33 | My friends do not tell lies<br>میرے دوست کبھی بھی جھوٹ نہیں بولتے۔ | | | | | |
| 34 | I bunked off school of my own free will/volition<br>میں سکول سے اپنی مرضی سے بھاگتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 35 | My friends force me to bunk off school<br>میرے دوست مجھے سکول سے بھاگنے پر مجبور کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 36 | I physically beat up other students in school<br>میں سکول میں دوسرے طلبا ءکو جسمانی طور پر مارتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 37 | I use profanities/abusive language in my conversation<br>میں با ت چیت کے دوران گالی گلوچ کا استعما ل کرتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 38 | My teachers attitude angers me<br>اساتذہ کا رویہ میرے غصے کو بڑھاتا ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 39 | I talk ill of (use bad language about) the teachers in the school<br>میں سکول میں اساتذہ کو بُرا بھلا کہتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 40 | My friends and I beat up other classmates<br>میں اور میرے دوست مل کر ہم جماعتوں کی پٹائی کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 41 | I have an exchange of harsh words with my friends<br>میرے اپنے دوستوں کے ساتھ اکثرتلخ کلامی ہو جاتی ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 42 | I steal from my classmates, like their lunch, water etc<br>میں سکول میں بچوں کی چیزوں کو چرالے آتا ہوں ۔ مثلاًکھانے پینے وغیرہ | | | | | |
| 43 | I have been sent to the Police Station because of my bad deeds<br>میں اپنے بُرے کاموں کی وجہ سے پولیس تھانے گیا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 44 | I place bets in school, such as betting money on sporting events etc<br>میں سکول میں شرطیں لگاتا رہتا ہوں جیسا کہ کسی بھی کھیلنے والی سرگرمیوں میں پیسے لگانا وغیرہ | | | | | |
| 45 | I am quick in forming negative opinions about others<br>میں دوسروں کے بارے میں اپنے ذہن میں جلد ہی منفی خیالات بنا لیتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |

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| 46 | I start offending others verbally for no real reason<br>میں بغیر کسی وجہ کے دوسروں کو بُرا بھلا کہنا شروع کر دیتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 47 | I feel that studying is of no benefit to my future<br>مجھے ایسا لگتا ہے کہ پڑھنے کا مستقبل میں کوئی فائدہ نہیں ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 48 | I feel that only influential people achieve any benefit from studying<br>مجھے ایسا لگتا ہے کہ پڑھنے کا فائدہ صرف با اثر لوگوں کو ہوتاہے۔ | | | | | |
| 49 | I have a habit of exaggerating small matters<br>مجھے چھوٹی چھوٹی باتیں بڑھا چڑھا کر پیش کرنے کی عادت ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 50 | I don't complete my homework on time<br>میں اپنا ہوم ورک وقت پر مکمل نہیں کرتا۔ | | | | | |
| 51 | I think I am not able to do anything in a befitting (effective) manner in this world<br>میرا خیال ہے کہ میں دنیا میں کوئی بھی کام اچھے طریقے سے نہیں کر سکتا ۔ | | | | | |
| 52 | I think my school has less facilities for students as compared to other schools<br>میر اخیال ہے کہ میرے سکول میں دوسرے سکولوں کی نسبت سہولتیں کم ہیں ۔ | | | | | |
| 53 | I feel bad after bunking school<br>مجھے سکول سے چھٹی کر کے بھاگ کر کے بے چینی سی رہتی ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 54 | I don't feel sorry or regretful after committing bad deeds<br>مجھے بُرے کام کرنے کے بعد شرمندگی محسوس نہیں ہوتی۔ | | | | | |
| 55 | I bunked off school to meet/tease girls<br>میں سکول سے بھاگ کر لڑکیوں کو ملتا ،چھیڑتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 56 | My friends and I bunked off school to play video games<br>میں اور میرے دوست سکول سے بھاگ کر ویڈیو گیم کھیلنے جاتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 57 | I bunked off school to go to the internet café with my friends<br>میں سکول سے بھاگ کر اپنے دوستوں کے ساتھ انٹرنیٹ کیفے پر جاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 58 | I bunked off school to go to the internet café with my friends for watching pornography<br>میں سکول سے بھاگ کر اپنے دوستوں کے ساتھ انٹرنیٹ کیفے پر فحش فلمیں دیکھتا ہوں ۔ | | | | | |
| 59 | My friends and I bunked off school to go to other cities for enjoyment<br>میں اور میرے دوست سکول سے بھاگ کر تفریح کرنے کیلئے دوسرے شہروں میں جاتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 60 | My friends and I bunked off school to go to parks and markets to have fun<br>میں اور میرے دوست اکثر سکول سے بھاگ کرمزہ کرنے کے لئے بازاروں اور پارکونمیں جاتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 61 | I have financial problems at home<br>مجھے گھر سے پیسوں کا مسئلہ رہتا ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 62 | My parents are too poor to afford my education<br>میرے گھر والے اتنے غریب ہیں کہ وہ میرے پڑھنے لکھنے کا خرچ نہیں اٹھا سکتے ۔ | | | | | |
| 63 | I exchange harsh words with my parents at home<br>ہمارے گھر میں میری والدین کے ساتھ تلخ کلامی ہوتی ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 64 | My parents quarrel with me at home | | | | | |

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| | میرے والدین گھر میں لڑتے رہتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 65 | My parents keep scolding me at home<br>میرے والدین ہر وقت مجھے ڈانٹتے رہتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 66 | My parents grant all of my wishes; reasonable or not<br>میرے والدین میری ہر جائز اور ناجائز بات کو مانتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 67 | My parents have less resources for my education as compared to other people<br>میرے والدین کے پاس دوسرے لوگوں کی نسبت مجھے پڑھانے کے لئے بہت کم وسائل ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 68 | My parents keep me occupied with domestic chores like bringing grocery from the market etc<br>میرے والدین زیادہ تر مجھے گھر کے کاموں میں مصروف رکھتے ہیں جیسا کہ بازار سے چیزیں لانا وغیرہ وغیرہ ۔ | | | | | |
| 69 | I have little time at home for my studies<br>میرے پاس گھر میں پڑھنے کے لئے کم وقت ہوتا ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 70 | My parents ask me about my school<br>میرے والدین مجھ سے سکول کے متعلق کبھی نہیں پوچھتے ۔ | | | | | |
| 71 | My parents don't visit the school when my asked by my teachers<br>میرے والدین اساتذہ کے بلانے پر سکول نہیں آتے ۔ | | | | | |
| 72 | I keep quarrelling (fighting) with my elder brothers and sisters<br>میں اپنے بڑے بھائی اور بہنوں کے ساتھ لڑتا رہتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 73 | My elder brothers and sisters scold me at home for not doing my school homework<br>میرے بڑے بھائی بہن مجھے گھر میں سکول کا کام نہ کرنے پر ڈانٹتے ہیں ۔ | | | | | |
| 74 | I use narcotic substances like cigarettes and snuff-tobacco<br>میں نشہ آور ادویات کا استعمال کرتا ہوں جیسا کہ سگریٹ پینا ،نسوار وغیرہ وغیرہ | | | | | |
| 75 | My friends and I use narcotic substances like smoking cigarettes and sniffing tobacco<br>میں اور میرے دوست نشہ آور ادویات کا استعمال کرتے ہیں جیسا کہ سگریٹ پینا،نسوار وغیرہ وغیرہ | | | | | |
| 76 | I watch dirty movies, soaps and drama serials on TV<br>میں ٹیلی ویژن پر گندی فلمیں اور ڈرامے دیکھتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 77 | I watch violent cartoons on TV<br>میں ٹیلی ویژن پر لڑائی والے کارٹون دیکھتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 78 | My friends molest me/commit sodomy and violate me sexually میرے<br>دوست میرے ساتھ بد فعلی /قابل اعتراض حرکتیں کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 79 | I make my friends bunked off school and commit sodomy or violate me sexually<br>میں اپنے دوستوں کوسکول سے بھگا کر ان کے ساتھ بد فعلی /قابل اعتراض حرکتیں کرتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 80 | I consider myself weak in studies at school as compared to other students<br>میں سکول میں اپنے آپ کو دوسرے طلباءکی نسبت پڑھائی میں کمزور سمجھتا ہوں ۔ | | | | | |
| 81 | I abide by rules /laws (I am a law abiding student)<br>میں قوانین کی پابندی کرتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 82 | I do things which are looked down upon by society | | | | | |

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| | میں اکثر وہ کام کرتا ہوں جنہیں معاشرے میں اچھا نہیں سمجھا جاتا۔ | | | | | |
| 83 | I agree to everything my friends say, whether good or evil<br>میں اپنے دوستوں کی ہر اچھی اور بری بات کو مانتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 84 | My friends accept everything I say (do), whether right or wrong<br>میرے دوست میری ہر اچھی اور بری بات کو مانتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 85 | I help my friends in all their activities, regardless of being positive or objectionable<br>میں اپنے دوستوں کی ہر اچھے اور برے کام میں مدد کرتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 86 | My friends help me in everything I do; good or bad.<br>میرے دوست میری ہر برے اور اچھے کام میں مدد کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 87 | I feel if I don't comply with them, my friends would expel me from their group<br>مجھے ایسا لگتا ہے کہ اگر میں اپنے دوستوں کی بات نہیں مانوں گا تو وہ مجھے اپنے گروپ سے نکال دیں گے۔ | | | | | |
| 88 | I cannot leave my friends at any cost<br>میں اپنے دوستوں کو کسی قیمت پر بھی نہیں چھوڑ سکتا۔ | | | | | |
| 89 | I find it difficult to have a conversation with other classmates<br>مجھے سکول میں دوسرے کلاس والوں سے بات چیت کرنے میں مشکل پیش آتی ہے۔ | | | | | |
| 90 | My friends and I do good deeds<br>میں اور میرے دوست ہمیشہ اچھا کام کرتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 91 | I feel as if other people think of me as a selfish person<br>مجھے ایسا لگتا ہے کہ دوسرے لوگ مجھے خودغرض سمجھتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 92 | I think that everyone is selfish<br>میں ایسا سوچتا ہوں کہ سب لوگ خود غرض ہوتے ہیں۔ | | | | | |
| 93 | People think I do not talk to anyone without having a self-interest (motive, purpose)<br>میرے بارے میں لوگ سوچتے ہیں کہ میں بغیر کسی مقصد کے بات نہیں کرتا۔ | | | | | |
| 94 | People think of me as a person who easily mixes up with others/befriends others<br>میرے بارے میں لوگ سوچتے ہیں کہ میں دوسروں سے جلدی گھل مل جاتا ہوں۔ | | | | | |
| 95 | Whatever I try to do goes wrong<br>میں جو بھی کرنے کی کوشش کرتا ہوں وہ غلط ہو جاتا ہے۔ | | | | | |

**The School Refusal Assessment Scale**

# سکول سے انکاری بچوں کا پیمانہ

کبھی کبھی بچے مختلف وجوہات کی بنا پر سکول جانا نہیں چاہتے۔ کچھ بچوں کو سکول برا لگتا ہے، کچھ کو دوسروں کے ساتھ مشکل پیش آتی ہے، کچھ بس اپنے گھر والوں کے ساتھ رہنا چاہتے ہیں اور باقی سکول کے علاوہ تفریح کرنا چاہتے ہیں۔

اس فارم میں دیئے گئے سوال اس بارے میں ہیں کہ آپ سکول کیوں نہیں جانا چاہتے۔ ہر سوال کے لیے ایک ایک ایسے نمبر کا انتخاب کریں جو گزشتہ چند روز کے بارے میں آپ کی عکاسی کرتا ہو۔ ایک سوال پر جواب دینے کے بعد اگلے کی جانب چلیں۔ کوئی سوال مت چھوڑیں۔

یہاں کوئی صحیح اور غلط جواب نہیں، بس ایک ایسے نمبر کا انتخاب کریں جو کہ بہتر طور پر آپ کے سکول جانے سے متعلق احساسات کی عکاسی کرتا ہو۔

یہاں ایک مثال سے طریقہ کار واضح کیا گیا ہے۔ کوشش کریں ایسے نمبر پر نشان لگائیں جو کہ آپ کو بہترین طریقے سے بیان کرتا ہو۔

مثال:    آپ شاپنگ پہ جانا کس حد تک پسند کرتے ہیں؟

کبھی نہیں        کبھی کبھی        آدھی دفعہ        اکثر        تقریباً ہمیشہ        ہمیشہ

| ہمیشہ | تقریباً ہمیشہ | اکثر | آدھی دفعہ | کبھی کبھی | کبھی نہیں | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | آپ سکول اس لیے نہیں جانا چاہتے رہا ہتی کیونکہ آپ سکول کی کسی چیز سے خوفزدہ ہیں۔ (مثلاً نمبرز، امتحان، سکول کی گھنٹی) | -1 |
| | | | | | | آپ اس لیے سکول نہیں جانا چاہتے کیونکہ آپ کے لیے دوسرے بچوں سے بات چیت کرنا مشکل ہے؟ | -2 |
| | | | | | | کیا آپ سکول جانے کی بجائے اپنے والدین کے ساتھ رہنا پسند کرتے ہیں؟ | -3 |
| | | | | | | ہفتے کے دوران (سوموار - ہفتہ) آپ کتنی بار سکول کے علاوہ تفریح کیلئے گھر سے باہر جاتے ہیں؟ | -4 |
| | | | | | | کیا آپ سکول اس لیے نہیں جاتے کہ وہاں جا کر آپ اداس اور پریشان ہو جاتے ہو؟ | -5 |
| | | | | | | آپ سکول اس لیے نہیں جاتے کیونکہ وہاں آپ مختلف لوگوں کے سامنے شرمندہ ہوتے ہیں؟ | -6 |
| | | | | | | آپ سکول میں کتنی بار اپنے والدین کو یاد کرتے ہیں؟ | -7 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 8- جب (سوموار-ہفتہ) آپ سکول میں نہیں ہوتے تو کتنی بار گھر کے باہر کے لوگوں سے ملتے اور بات چیت کرتے ہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 9- کیا آپ سکول میں بُرا محسوس کرتے ہیں اس کے مقابلے میں جب آپ گھر میں دوستوں کے ساتھ ہوتے ہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 10- کیا آپ سکول میں اس لیے جانا نہیں چاہتے کیونکہ وہاں آپ کے زیادہ دوست نہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 11- کیا آپ سکول جانے کی بجائے گھر میں رہنا پسند کرتے ہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 12- جب آپ ہفتے کے دوران سکول میں نہیں ہوتے تو کیا آپ کو مختلف چیزیں کرنے میں مزا آتا ہے؟ (مثلاً دوستوں کے ساتھ مختلف جگہوں پر جانا) |
| | | | | | | 13- کیا آپ چھٹی والے دن سکول کو یاد کرکے خوفزدہ یا پریشان ہو جاتے ہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 14- آپ سکول میں ایسی جگہوں سے دور رہتے ہیں جہاں آپ کو کسی سے بات کرنی پڑے؟ |
| | | | | | | 15- آپ اپنے گھر والدین سے استاد کی نسبت پڑھنا پسند کریں گے؟ |
| | | | | | | 16- آپ کو سکول کی بجائے سکول کے باہر زیادہ مزا آتا ہے؟ |
| | | | | | | 17- اگر آپ سکول کے بارے میں کم بُرا محسوس کرتے تو آپ کے لیے سکول جانا آسان ہوتا؟ |
| | | | | | | 18- اگر آپ کیلئے نئے دوست بنانا آسان ہوتو کیا سکول جانا آپ کیلئے آسان ہوگا؟ |
| | | | | | | 19- کیا آپ کیلئے سکول جانا آسان ہوگا اگر آپ کے والدین آپ کے ساتھ ہو؟ |
| | | | | | | 20- کیا آپ کیلئے سکول جانا آسان ہوتا اگر آگ آپ سکول کے بعد اپنی پسند کی اور چیزیں (مثال کے طور پر دوستوں کے ساتھ ہونا) کرسکیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 21- کیا آپ کو سکول اپنے ہم عمر کی نسبت (ڈر، خوف یا اداسی کی وجہ) سے بُرا لگتا ہے؟ |
| | | | | | | 22- کیا آپ کو سکول میں اپنے ہم عمر بچوں کی نسبت لوگوں سے دور رہتے ہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 23- کیا آپ اپنے ہم عمر بچوں کی نسبت اپنے والدین کے ساتھ گھر پر رہنا پسند کرتے ہیں؟ |
| | | | | | | 24- کیا آپ کو اپنے ہم عمر بچوں کی نسبت سکول سے باہر مزا آتا ہے؟ |

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**Annexures-D**

*Factor Loadings of 95 Items of the School Truancy Scale (STS) with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) through the Varimax Method for the Punctual Sample (N = 559)*

| Items | | M | SD | Two factor | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 39 | 1 | 1.63 | 1.20 | .63 | |
| 17 | 2 | 1.47 | 1.07 | .61 | |
| 46 | 3 | 1.49 | 1.04 | .60 | |
| 60 | 4 | 1.62 | 1.19 | .60 | |
| 37 | 5 | 1.74 | 1.26 | .60 | |
| 16 | 6 | 1.45 | 1.05 | .60 | |
| 76 | 7 | 1.48 | 1.08 | .59 | |
| 58 | 8 | 1.31 | .85 | .59 | -.31 |
| 38 | 9 | 1.89 | 1.37 | .59 | |
| 43 | 10 | 1.39 | .99 | .59 | |
| 22 | 11 | 1.44 | 1.00 | .59 | |
| 56 | 12 | 1.50 | 1.10 | .58 | |
| 59 | 13 | 1.40 | 1.00 | .58 | -.32 |
| 78 | 14 | 1.44 | 1.01 | .58 | |
| 40 | 15 | 1.67 | 1.27 | .58 | |
| 75 | 16 | 1.41 | 1.00 | .58 | |
| 57 | 17 | 1.38 | .94 | .57 | |
| 82 | 18 | 1.58 | 1.14 | .57 | |
| 36 | 19 | 1.68 | 1.29 | .57 | |
| 6 | 20 | 1.48 | 1.10 | .56 | |
| 21 | 21 | 1.54 | 1.09 | .56 | |
| 79 | 22 | 1.36 | .89 | .56 | |
| 2 | 23 | 1.58 | 1.16 | .55 | |
| 19 | 24 | 1.70 | 1.25 | .54 | |
| 15 | 25 | 1.74 | 1.26 | .54 | |
| 44 | 26 | 1.49 | 1.10 | .54 | |
| 20 | 27 | 1.42 | .99 | .54 | |
| 42 | 28 | 1.40 | .98 | .53 | |
| 4 | 29 | 1.64 | 1.31 | .53 | |
| 12 | 30 | 1.76 | 1.32 | .53 | |
| 63 | 31 | 1.47 | 1.03 | .52 | |
| 3 | 32 | 1.44 | 1.06 | .52 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 64 | 33 | 1.50 | 1.10 | .52 |
| 45 | 34 | 1.72 | 1.20 | .52 |
| 65 | 35 | 1.59 | 1.11 | .51 |
| 23 | 36 | 1.64 | 1.23 | .51 |
| 31 | 37 | 2.00 | 1.49 | .51 |
| 35 | 38 | 1.66 | 1.29 | .51 |
| 25 | 39 | 1.52 | 1.16 | .50 |
| 5 | 40 | 1.64 | 1.27 | .50 |
| 34 | 41 | 1.93 | 1.44 | .50 |
| 11 | 42 | 1.72 | 1.34 | .50 |
| 24 | 43 | 1.66 | 1.24 | .49 |
| 14 | 44 | 1.60 | 1.21 | .49 |
| 47 | 45 | 1.46 | 1.03 | .49 |
| 49 | 46 | 1.72 | 1.24 | .49 |
| 55 | 47 | 1.49 | 1.09 | .48 |
| 83 | 48 | 2.07 | 1.43 | .48 |
| 18 | 49 | 1.92 | 1.41 | .47 |
| 92 | 50 | 1.98 | 1.36 | .47 |
| 61 | 51 | 1.60 | 1.18 | .47 |
| 29 | 52 | 2.01 | 1.89 | .46 |
| 1 | 53 | 1.62 | 1.25 | .46 |
| 74 | 54 | 1.48 | 1.10 | .46 |
| 87 | 55 | 1.86 | 1.37 | .46 |
| 9 | 56 | 1.92 | 1.41 | .45 |
| 62 | 57 | 1.56 | 1.17 | .44 |
| 71 | 58 | 1.46 | 1.04 | .44 |
| 68 | 59 | 1.77 | 1.31 | .43 |
| 51 | 60 | 1.74 | 1.24 | .43 |
| 8 | 61 | 1.61 | 1.18 | .42 |
| 13 | 62 | 1.77 | 1.29 | .42 |
| 27 | 63 | 1.73 | 1.30 | .42 |
| 48 | 64 | 1.73 | 1.27 | .41 |
| 67 | 65 | 1.67 | 1.23 | .41 |
| 30 | 66 | 1.94 | 1.39 | .41 |
| 84 | 67 | 2.08 | 1.41 | .41 |
| 50 | 68 | 2.08 | 1.49 | .40 |
| 91 | 69 | 2.06 | 1.37 | .40 |
| 70 | 70 | 1.82 | 1.40 | .40 |
| 7 | 71 | 1.83 | 1.32 | .39 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 52 | 72 | 2.05 | 1.47 | .39 | |
| 85 | 73 | 2.10 | 1.42 | .39 | |
| 41 | 74 | 2.33 | 1.53 | .38 | .33 |
| 89 | 75 | 1.99 | 1.40 | .38 | |
| 26 | 76 | 1.80 | 1.33 | .38 | |
| 10 | 77 | 1.93 | 1.42 | .36 | |
| 69 | 78 | 2.07 | 1.45 | .36 | |
| 86 | 79 | 2.25 | 1.49 | .36 | |
| 54 | 80 | 1.84 | 1.43 | .36 | |
| 66 | 81 | 1.93 | 1.40 | .35 | |
| 80 | 82 | 2.11 | 1.66 | .35 | |
| 95 | 83 | 2.13 | 1.43 | .34 | .33 |
| 72 | 84 | 1.77 | 1.30 | .31 | |
| 88 | 85 | 3.09 | 1.71 | | .45 |
| 90 | 86 | 3.60 | 1.58 | | .38 |
| 28 | 87 | 2.34 | 1.58 | | .35 |
| 94 | 88 | 2.39 | 1.48 | | .35 |
| 93 | 89 | 2.36 | 1.50 | | .33 |
| 81 | 90 | 3.31 | 1.70 | | |
| 77 | 91 | 2.31 | 1.60 | | |
| 73 | 92 | 2.41 | 1.70 | | |
| 53 | 93 | 2.53 | 1.66 | | |
| 32 | 94 | 2.97 | 1.60 | | |
| 33 | 95 | 2.73 | 1.58 | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Eigen Values | 21.04 | 3.39 |
| % of Variance | 22.15 | 3.57 |
| Cumulative Variance | 22.15 | 25.72 |

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