A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUANCY AND THE LEVELS OF
SELF-EFFICACY IN ADOLESCENTS AGES 12-17 YEARS OLD

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ABSTRACT

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUANCY AND THE LEVELS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ADOLESCENTS AGES 12-17 YEARS OLD

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This study examines the relationship between truancy and levels of self-efficacy in adolescents. Results revealed no significant relationship between truancy and levels of self-efficacy. However, when the self-efficacy sums of the General Self-efficacy Survey and the Academic Self-efficacy Survey were analyzed individually with the dependent variable truancy, there was a statistical significant relationship in levels of academic self-efficacy in adolescents ages 12-17 years old who were truant versus those who were not truant.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ................................................................. ii  
**LIST OF TABLES** ........................................................................... v  

## CHAPTER

1. **INTRODUCTION** ......................................................................... 1  
   Statement of the Problem ........................................................... 2  
   Purpose of the Study ................................................................. 3  
   Research Questions and Hypothesis ........................................... 4  
   Significance of the Study ............................................................. 5  

2. **LITERATURE REVIEW** ............................................................. 7  
   Historical Perspective ............................................................... 7  
   Truancy in Adolescents ............................................................. 8  
   Self-efficacy in Adolescents ....................................................... 11  
   Afrocentric Perspective ............................................................. 12  
   Theoretical Framework ............................................................. 13  

3. **METHODOLOGY** ....................................................................... 15  
   Research Design ...................................................................... 15  
   Description of the Site .............................................................. 16  
   Sample and Population ............................................................. 16  
   Instrument .............................................................................. 17
CHAPTER

Treatment Data................................................................. 18
Limitations of the Study................................................... 19

IV. RESULTS........................................................................... 21
    Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Variables............... 21

V. CONCLUSION.................................................................... 26
    Summary of Study .......................................................... 26
    Implication for Social Work ........................................... 27

APPENDIX

A. Clark Atlanta University IRB Approval............................. 29
B. Cobb County Schools Administrative Approval ................ 30
C. Research Assent and Parental Consent.............................. 31
D. General Self Efficacy Survey ........................................... 35
E. Academic Self Efficacy Survey ........................................ 37

REFERENCES...................................................................... 39
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Description Demographic Characteristics of the Sample ........................................ 22
Table 2. Independent T-test of Truancy, Academic, General and Combined Self-efficacy ... 23
Table 3. Logistic Regression Analysis of Academic Self-Efficacy ....................................... 24
Table 4. Logistic Regression Analysis of General Self-Efficacy ....................................... 25
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Compulsory Attendance (GCA) law states that every child between the ages of six and sixteen is mandated to attend school ranging from public to home school (§ 20-2-690.1.). According to this law, any child who has 5 or more unexcused absences is considered truant. Compulsory attendance laws were first enacted Massachusetts in 1852, and by 1918 every state had such laws (Allen-Meares, 2007). These laws were enacted to ensure all children attend school. Therefore, not attending school is truancy and considered to be breaking the law.

When examining causes for truancy, many studies have shown that there is linkage between truancy and self-efficacy among students (Dekalb, 1999). Self-efficacy is an individual belief of perceived capabilities for learning or completing a task (Meece, 2005). More importantly, self-efficacy is considered a type of cognition. Studies have supported the idea that it can impact other characteristics of development, such as social, emotional, and behavioral that is linked to personal, social, and contextual variables (Meece, 2005).

This chapter will define the purpose of the study and focus on the problems associated with truancy. The testable questions will also be presented along with how this knowledge can be of use in the practice of school social workers.
Statement of the Problem

"Education is a basic requirement for survival in a society that is growing more technical. Education also teaches character, and the duties of citizenship, two other requirements essential for survival in society" (Allen-Meares, 2007, p. 78). With the GCA law in place, school social workers are responsible for filing a truancy petition in Juvenile Court while the courts step in as a consequence for the student absenteeism. Sometimes parents must pay a fine. However, the greater issue is the lack of education that the student is obtaining due to their lack of attendance. Across the nation, statistics show approximately 10-15% of students (7.5 million) miss nearly thirty days of school every year, namely 135 million days of missed time in the classroom (Truancy Intervention Project, 2013).

The consequences of truancy for children can be devastating, causing them to be unable to effectively compete in the job market due to lack of education. This could lead to children having difficulty functioning in society and resorting to criminal activity and/or living in poverty. Law enforcement nationwide report that many students who are not in school throughout regular school hours are participating in criminal activities such as vandalism, shoplifting, and graffiti (Dekalb, 1999). Shoplifting arrests dropped by 60 percent when Van Nuys, California officers conducted a three week clearing for adolescents who were skipping school on the streets, (Dekalb, 1999). A longitudinal study of African-American males by Robins and Ratcliff (1978) showed that 75 percent failed to graduate of those students who were often truant while attending elementary and high school (Dekalb, 1999). Furthermore, dropping out of school significantly reduces a
person’s future income. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2011, the annual mean incomes for individuals ages 18–65 not completing high school were $20,936 compared to $32,493 for high school graduates, including those completing a General Educational Development (GED) certificate; $40,907 for those completing an associate degree; and $59,415 for those completing a bachelor’s degree (Wimmer, 2013).

Research has also stated that there are various factors that influence truancy of students. The factors include transportation problems, bad weather, friends trying to get them to skip, having to take care of younger brothers and sisters, uninvolved parents, depression, boring classes, and school work being too hard (Teasley, 2004). The study reported that an adolescents level of self-efficacy plays in part as to a reason why a student is truant. Specifically it focused on the importance of academic levels of self efficacy and general self-efficacy (Teasley, 2004). Therefore it is assumed that the consequence of truancy in adolescents may have long term detrimental effects on an individual’s future socioeconomic status and well-being (Teasley, 2004).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between truancy and self-efficacy among students 12-17 years old in the State of Georgia. The long term goal of this study was to provide school social workers with guidelines regarding the development of programs and/or interventions that decrease truancy by increasing students’ level of self-efficacy. Existing research has focused on analyzing the risk factors that lead to behaviors of truant adolescents to understand and decrease truancy (Bracht, 2011). The present study sought to investigate protective factors, including self-
efficacy in adolescent students, allowing school social workers to have a greater impact on eliminating truancy and absenteeism at school settings.

The present study examined the absenteeism for truancy as well as levels of academic and general self-efficacy among adolescents at the middle and high schools in the state of Georgia. Many studies pointed out that that self-efficacy affects an individual’s task choices, effort, persistence, and achievement (Meece, 2005). In other words, individuals who feel self-efficacious about learning or completing a task in its entirety are more likely to learn more readily, work harder, persevere longer when they come across difficulty, and reach higher levels compared with learners who are uncertain about their capabilities (Meece, 2005).

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The research questions for this study include:

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between levels of self-efficacy and truancy among adolescents’ ages of 12-17 years old?

Research Question 2: What are the factors that predict truancy in adolescents?

The study hypotheses include:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant relationship between truancy and self-efficacy levels among adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Compared to non-truant adolescents, truant adolescents are more likely to have lower levels of academic and general self-efficacy.
Significance of the Study

This study is significant for many reasons. School social workers play a vital role within the school and the community. One of their main duties is the tracking of each student's attendance that falls within the age limit of the compulsory attendance laws. Tracking allows them to be able to easily identify when a student is truant. For those students who are consistently truant, school social workers conduct an array of interventions to encourage the student and his or her parents to attend school daily. Some of these interventions are truancy panels, which may consist of a representative from Juvenile court, a school social worker the student and his or her guardian. Furthermore, after an intervention has been used and a student continues to be truant, then a referral to is made to Juvenile court. These interventions may stop a student from continuing to be truant during that school year, but often times they continue to be absent from school the next school year and the cycle repeats itself. Correlating increased truancy to self-efficacy levels will allow for interventions to be created assisting with ways to increase self-efficacy thereby decreasing truancy among adolescents.

For example, research findings from the National Center of Education Statistics show large school systems in low socioeconomic and urban school districts experience higher rates of absenteeism and truancy compared with suburban and rural school systems (Teasley, 2004). The results of this study would show that students in the inner-city urban schools who are truant have low self-efficacy levels. "One way students acquire self-efficacy is by way of information from knowledge of others' performances through social comparisons. Similar others can offer the best basis for comparison."
Students who observe similar peers learn a task may also believe that they can learn it" (Meece, 2005). However, in an inner-city school system, peers may not be doing as well, or learning tasks efficiently, not to mention that students may not know of anyone from their home environment who completed high school or attended college. Thus making their level of self-efficacy lower than a student who may be in a school environment that is excelling academically and/or coming from a home environment where they know individuals who have completed school successfully.

The above scenario is one example; that shows how the results from this study can be used to assist school socials workers with best practice programs. It is the goal of this study to provide concrete data that shows that truant adolescents have low levels of self-efficacy.

**Summary**

Truancy among adolescents is a social problem that school social workers are addressing in our school systems regularly. The purpose of this quantitative study seeks to examine the relationship of truant adolescents to levels of self-efficacy among 100 adolescents (50 truants and 50 non-truants) at the middle and high school levels. The hypothesis that truant adolescents between ages 12 – 17 years old have low self-efficacy levels, as well as the hypothesis that levels of self-efficacy are a higher predictor of truancy in adolescents 12 – 17 years old will be tested. It is the goal of this study to provide school social workers and other practitioners with data to show the correlation of truancy to low self-efficacy levels so that programs and interventions can be created to assist adolescents with increasing self-efficacy.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Perspective

Since the first compulsory attendance laws were established in 1852, truancy has been a long ongoing issue and over the years many studies have been completed within schools and surrounding communities throughout the world to gather data on truancy factors in order to address the lack of adolescents attending school consistently. Lack of education affects an individual’s life tremendously as stated earlier therefore finding reasons why adolescents are truant and creating interventions to address it is imperative.

Studies that have examined factors associated with causes for truancy suggest that further studies are needed to determine whether truancy is correlated to cognitive or behavioral manifestations in youths (Teasley, Absenteeism and Truancy: Risk, Protection, and Best Practice Implications for School Social Workers, 2004). Based on studies that have been completed, interventions have been designed, and books on instructing school social workers and administrators have been published with tips on evidenced based practices for truancy. It is suggested, in the article Indicated Truancy Interventions for Chronic Truant Students, that in order to address truancy one must start with the behaviors behind the reasons the adolescent is truant (Brandy R. Maynard, 2012). It was found that interventions addressing truancy have a positive effect.
on attendance outcomes as the average improved by 4-69 days over the control group (Maynard, 2012).

School Psychologist Mary B. Wimmer discusses three tiers of programs that are evidenced based in her article Implementing Evidence Based-Practices for School Refusal and Truancy (Wimmer, Implementing Evidence-Based Practices for School Refusal and Truancy, 2013). The first tier being programs within the school monitoring attendance with reward to those adolescents for good attendance, also contacting the parents with home visits; the second tier being a mentor program; and the third tier being Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to address anxiety and depression which could be keeping adolescent away from school, by using deep breathing techniques and healthy self talk (Wimmer, Implementing Evidence-Based Practices for School Refusal and Truancy, 2013). Using CBT speaking to the level of self-efficacy possibly being a factor for truancy among adolescents, however there is a gap in the literature specifically addressing the relationship between truancy and levels of self-efficacy among adolescents.

**Truancy in Adolescents**

Adolescents have reported reasons for missing school from a lack of transportation, taking care of younger siblings, peer pressure, to not understanding what is being taught and having uninvolved parents (Wimmer, Implementing Evidence-Based Practices for School Refusal and Truancy, 2013). In a quantitative study of collected data of 21 schools in the Midwest the question “What is the effect of socio-economic status on truancy,” was posed and it was found that adolescents with lower socioeconomic status
are at greater risks for truancy (Joseph R. Nolan, 2013). In discussing the causes of truancy a mixed methods study on causes of non-attendance and its effects of student achievement was conducted by a researcher who came to the conclusion that there is a negative correlation between student attendance and student achievement meaning basically that the more an adolescent missed school the lower their GPA was likely to be (Bracht, 2011). This same study also examined factors for truancy related to home environment and family background and found that these factors were statistically significant causes of truancy (Bracht, 2011).

A lot is happening to reduce truancy and absenteeism in schools. In reviewing the literature, as well as from knowledge of school social work practices at the school in which the sample population is obtained for this thesis, there are numerous of short term solutions. The most common seem to be the following: presentation of attendance certificates whether at an awards ceremony or during parent teacher conference, parental fines which are paid to the court if an adolescent is referred to the court for chronic truancy, utilization of school social workers to monitor and track attendance (most common in the state of GA), and attendance panels that meet with the adolescent with or without the parent and consider individual cases of truancy (Reid, 2002).

In the article *Involvement or Engagement*, the author talks about the importance of schools engaging the parents of the students rather than simply involving them and how this approach can lead to increasing student attendance and academic performance (Ferlazzo, 2011). He further goes on to state that involvement indicates *doing to* while on the other hand, engagement suggests *doing with* (Ferlazzo, 2011). This article further
states that in order to strive for family involvement, a school must lead with its mouth by recognizing needed projects, and setting goals, then advising parents on ways in which they can participate (Ferlazzo, 2011). A school that only strives for parent engagement often leads with its ears by simply listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about (Ferlazzo, 2011). The article concludes with stating “the goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners” thus increasing attendance and academic achievement (Ferlazzo, 2011).

Lorenzo Trujillo (2005) states that truancy is a “gateway crime” because it is linked to criminal activity in youth as well as noteworthy negative behavior in adulthood (Trujillo, 2005). He further states that teenagers who were frequently truant are more likely as adults to have poor health and mental health, increased likelihood of incarceration, lower paying jobs, an increased chance of living in poverty, more dependence on welfare support, and even have children of their own who exhibit behavior problems (Trujillo, 2005).

In reviewing the literature, it was interesting to find that some data showed that two thirds of students who are truant have underlying psychiatric illness (Casoli-Reardon, 2012). It's further stated that in order to intervene with these students a diagnostic assessment may be needed, or simply being knowledgeable about the behavior as a marker for mental illness can help with reaching out to these students. It also discussed that anxiety disorders such as obsessive compulsive disorder, social phobia, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder can appear at
any age and contribute to students avoiding school and being truant (Casoli-Reardon, 2012).

**Self-Efficacy in Adolescents**

When discussing adolescents and their levels of self-efficacy, there are many facets to this concept. Important implications of self-efficacy have to do with individual motivation and perseverance (Rayner, 2001). It is believed that these aspects of self-efficacy influence an individual’s approach to learning. A longitudinal study was completed where the researchers wanted to establish the capacity of youths self-determined motivation in decreasing the intent to drop out of school over time taking into consideration performance academically and socio-economic status (Lucici, 2011). The results of this study showed that youths levels of self-determined motivation was directly associated to the perception of teachers support as the best indicator of the plan to drop out of school (Lucici, 2011). Self-efficacy also had a direct impact on academic performance and self-determined motivation (Lucici, 2011). Drop out behavior was not assessed in this study only the intent to drop out which proved to predict the action of drop outs a year later.

In reviewing literature on self-efficacy and how it relates to adolescents in their academic environment, one could assume that this could in fact contribute to truancy. Simply put when an adolescent has a low level of self-efficacy with their perception on being able to accomplish a task i.e. school work they are more likely to be find ways to avoid the task by not attending school and therefore being truant. Along with acknowledging other factors that contribute to being truant in the adolescent’s personal
life, perseverance is associated with self-efficacy and if the adolescent struggles to persevere through personal setbacks in life this two a low level of self-efficacy can contribute to truancy.

According to (Putwain, 2013), academic self-efficacy in study related skills that deal with associations with knowledge related emotions states that academic self-efficacy is one of the many ways of views about the beliefs youth may have about their personal competencies, which it’s defined as a confidence or belief that displays an individual could reach a specific academic goal or even accomplish a meticulous outcome on a precise academic task. Essentially, studies showed that one of the core components of self-regulated learning is academic self-efficacy and considered to be as crucial in the judgment of achievement, at the same time more pleasant learning and evaluation related emotions are directly related to higher academic self-efficacy (Putwain, 2013).

Afrocentric Perspective

Afrocentric perspective initially was designed when African-American families. It is an ecological/social system, “strengths” approach to the study of African-American families and represents the perspective for viewing social problems, particularly those of a physical and emotional nature. However, currently this is a lens that is used when working with all races because of the strengths approach. It allows for the practitioner to work with all clients from a holistic perspective rather than an individual perspective. For the study issues in this research when discussing truancy and levels of self-efficacy it is very crucial to view youth from a holistic perspective. Also exploring how family and the environment around adolescents play a part in either helping or harming with regard to
their attendance in school and their level of self-efficacy. A practitioner should also be able to identify with youth any past trauma that may contribute to truancy related issues from an Afrocentric Perspective e.g. any oppression they may have experienced as an African American that contribute to their levels of self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

The study issues that are being examined in this research deal with an individual’s behavior. Therefore the Behavioral Theory is the framework for this study. The behavioral theory is also known as behaviorism and was initially created by John Watson (Woolfolk, 2001). It is Watson’s belief that thoughts and intentions are internal and could not be observed and felt they could not be studied. He felt only observable behaviors were of interest to scientific study. B. F. Skinner then developed the operant conditioning behavioral theory, which is thought to be learning in which voluntary behavior is increased or decreased based on consequences or antecedents (Woolfolk, 2001). Consequences are either reinforcing of the behavior or punishment for the behavior. Antecedents are what happen before the behavior.

Truant adolescents make a choice to not attend school and there may be antecedents to this behavior such as home environment and issues at school. Their levels of self-efficacy could contribute as to their belief in how they can achieve in school, this could also be seen as an antecedent. The consequences of truancy are well spoken of throughout this research and are not limited to just the consequences the school systems may give an adolescent but also the lifetime consequences of not receiving an adequate education.
High self-efficacy creates a sense of control through beliefs that positive outcomes are possible resulting in challenge rather than threat, when joined with other factors like avoidant coping style the income is amplified anxiety (Putwain, 2013).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between truancy and self-efficacy among students 12-17 years old in the State of Georgia. This thesis is seeking to prove that truant adolescents between ages 12 – 17 years old have low self-efficacy levels. It also seeks to show that levels of self-efficacy are a higher predictor of truancy in adolescents’ ages 12 – 17 years old. By studying the relationship of truancy and levels of self-efficacy interventions can be created to assist with ways to decrease truancy among adolescents.

Chapter three is a review of the research method and design. The sample population and how it was obtained will be discussed in this chapter. This chapter will also discuss the instrument used for measurements and data analysis. Limitations of the study will be discussed as well to show what obstacles may have affected the outcomes of the research.

Research Design

The research design used for this thesis was a cross-sectional quantitative study. The data from the sample population was only collected at one point in time seeking to examine the relationship between truancy and levels of self-efficacy in adolescents. A quantitative design is best for this study for generalizing purposes so that the results of this study can be used in a variety of ways to create interventions. Simple random
sampling was used to collect data from no more than 300 adolescents within a county public school system in Georgia. However only 96 adolescents participated in the study.

Approval from the IRB within Clark Atlanta University was granted on March 13, 2015 for this study. Due to the sample population being adolescents from public school systems, permission from the Office of Accountability and Research for this particular county of schools needed to be sought. An application was completed and submitted to propose research within this county. Permission for this study was granted on April 28, 2015 by the Office of Accountability and Research.

**Description of the Site**

The adolescents were pulled at random from the schools attendance database. Access to this database was through the school social worker who assisted in the data collection for this study by identifying the adolescents based on the number of absences they had. The surveys were completed in the school social worker’s office at the school in which the participant attended.

**Sample and Population**

Participants were from three public schools of the public school system that the principal researcher was the school social worker intern. Three hundred participants were selected based upon their attendance, 150 being students who were considered truant by having 5 or more unexcused absences, the other 150 were students who had 4 or less unexcused absences. The database within the public school system that tracks attendance also had demographic information. The researcher used the information in order to select
an equal number of male and female participants for the purposes of generalizing. Participants were selected at random from the ages of 12-17 years old. These adolescents were selected from three schools grade levels between 6th and 12th. All adolescents were given consent forms to have signed by their parents in order to participate in the study. Only 96 of the selected participants returned a consent form and were able to participate in the study.

**Instrument**

The two variables being measured in this study are truancy and self-efficacy levels. The tool used to measure truancy was the attendance record of the participants. The attendance record is a valid form of measurement because it is created by the student’s daily attendance. To measure the levels of self-efficacy two tools were used. The first is the academic self-efficacy scale, which measures an adolescents self-assessments of their ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically. The reliability of this scale is alpha .85 with eight items with responses ranging from 1= not very well to 5= very well. This scale was created by Peter Muris in 2001 (Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). This tool has been used in various scholarly articles to assess an adolescent’s level of self-efficacy such as *Evaluation of the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children in Two Samples of American Adolescents* from the Journal of Psychoeducation. The evaluation supports the use of the academic self-efficacy scale (Shaffer & Suldo, 2007). The other tool used to measure self-efficacy levels is the General Self Efficacy (GSE) scale created by Ralf Schwarzer & Matthias Jerusalem. The
GSE reliability is an alpha .80 with ten items with responses ranging from 1= not at all true to 5= exactly true. The GSE reflects an optimistic self-belief (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992). This is the idea that an individual can complete difficult tasks, or deal with hardship in various realms of human functioning. Professed self-efficacy make possible goal-setting, perseverance in the face of difficulties and recuperation from setbacks. It is considered a positive resistance resource factor (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992). The GSE has its weaknesses. Due to it being a general measure it does not touch on specific change. However it is suitable to be applied to a wide range of variables and has been internationally used over several decades.

**Treatment of Data**

The independent variable is truancy, which is measured nominally, either the participant is truant or they are not. The dependent variable is levels of self-efficacy which is measured intervally due to the ranges of the questions. These two measurements create an independent T-test. This type of testing helps to determine whether two groups have different average values. In this study it is used to determine whether the truant adolescents levels of self-efficacy are significantly different from the non-truant adolescents levels self-efficacy. The data was analyzed using the SPSS software to calculate the answers from the questionare. The levels of self-efficacy are identified and then the researcher calculated the average to determine if one group over the other has higher levels of self-efficacy. A logistic regression test was also conducted to determine
if levels of self-efficacy are more of a predictor of truancy over other variables such as age, gender, ethnicity and grade.

**Limitations of Study**

The method used for this study to survey adolescents is simply a questionnaire. The questionnaire comes from the academic self-efficacy scale and the GSE. Due to the wide age range in which the participants are there were limitations in the the comprehension levels of the adolescents when reading the questionnaire. Therefore their answers could have caused the data to be skewed. There was not sufficient literature on this particular study, however there is much literature on the two variables as separate entities.

There are also limitations due to the external validity of this study. Such as environmental factors relating to the adolescents being absent from school on the day the questionnaire was distributed. When discussing the research design the limitations that exist with the instruments used and the questions being asked are to the individuals own perception of their ability to complete a task. Another limitation of this study was the fact that parents consent need to be obtained. Some of the parents did not consent and majority of the participants simply did not return the forms to the researcher timely to participate in the study. This caused the researcher to lose participants in the study and the number of the sample population to decrease. This lower number of participants heavily effected the generalizability of the study. To attempt to prevent this from happening once parental consent forms were distributed to the identified population of
participants the researcher did send email reminders to the teachers to remind the students to return the consent forms. This was not as effective.

In conclusion, the methodology of this thesis is simple. The researcher stayed away from making the experiment process difficult since the sample population is adolescents being polled at their respective schools. The research is a quantitative cross sectional methods design in which the researcher only met with participants at one point in time.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study examined the association of truancy with levels of academic and general self-efficacy, among adolescents at the middle and high schools in the State of Georgia. The study hypothesized that (1) there will be a significant relationship between truancy and self-efficacy levels among adolescents and (2) truant adolescents are more likely than non-truant adolescents to have lower levels of academic and general self-efficacy, respectively.

Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Variables

Table 1 shows the description of demographics of the adolescent participants. A total of 96 middle and high school students participated in this study. A majority of the participants were female (57.3% vs. 42.7%) with a mean age of 14 years old (SD=1.831). Most of the participants were African Americans (56.3%), whereas 27.1%, 14.6%, and 2.1% were Hispanic, White, and Multi-cultural. During the time of this study, 16.7% of the participants were in the 6th grade, 24% in the 7th, 7.3% in the 8th grade, 21.9% in the 9th grade, 13.5% in the 10th grade, 10.4% in the 11th grade, and 6.3% in the 12th grade.

Table 1 also shows the descriptive demographic characteristics of the sample by truancy. Based on the criteria of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance (GCA) Law, 35.4% of the participants were truant while 64.6% were non-truant. The mean age of
truant adolescents was higher than the mean age of non-truant adolescents (15.4 vs 13.8) both truant and non-truant adolescents were female and African American dominant. However, a majority of truant adolescents were high schools students (88.2%) while majority of non-truant adolescents were middle school students (67.7%).

Table 1.

Descriptive Demographic Characteristics of the sample (N=96)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full Sample (N=96)</th>
<th>Mean (SD) or N(%)</th>
<th>Truant (yes) (n=34)</th>
<th>Non- Truant (n=62)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.38 (SD=1.831)</td>
<td>15.41 (SD=1.328)</td>
<td>13.81 (SD=1.827)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55 (57.3%)</td>
<td>22 (64.7%)</td>
<td>33 (53.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41 (42.7%)</td>
<td>12 (35.3%)</td>
<td>29 (46.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>54 (56.3%)</td>
<td>21 (61.8%)</td>
<td>33 (53.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>26 (27.1%)</td>
<td>5 (14.7%)</td>
<td>21 (33.9%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-cultural</td>
<td>2 (2.1%)</td>
<td>1 (2.9%)</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>14 (14.6%)</td>
<td>7 (20.6%)</td>
<td>7 (11.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>46 (47.9%)</td>
<td>4 (11.8%)</td>
<td>42 (67.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>50 (52.1%)</td>
<td>30 (88.2%)</td>
<td>20 (32.3 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bivariate Analysis Hypothesis Question 1: There will be a significant relationship between truancy and self-efficacy levels among adolescents.
Table 2 shows the results from the Independent T-test of Academic, General, and Academic-General combined self-efficacy, respectively. The results revealed that the mean score of academic self-efficacy for truant adolescents was significantly lower than one for non-truant adolescents (p=.007). The results also showed that the mean score of general self-efficacy for truant adolescents was higher than one for non-truant adolescents (p=.232) with no significant mean difference between them. For the combined self-efficacy, there was no significant difference by truancy (59.1 vs 61.2, p=.278).

Table 2.

*Independent T-test of Truancy and, Academic General, and Combined Self-efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Truant</th>
<th>Non-Truant</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=34)</td>
<td>(N=62)</td>
<td>P value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SD) or N (%)</td>
<td>(SD) or N (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>27.41 (SD=5.252)</td>
<td>30.53 (SD=5.349)</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ranging 8-40)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>31.71 (SD=3.713)</td>
<td>30.63 (SD=4.949)</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ranging 10-40)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>59.12 (SD=7.579)</td>
<td>61.16 (SD=9.357)</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ranging 18-80)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Logistic Regression Analysis Hypothesis 2: Truant adolescents are more likely than non-truant adolescents to have lower levels of academic and general self-efficacy.

Table 3 shows the results from logistic regression analysis of academic self-efficacy on truancy controlling for demographic variables, including age, gender, and ethnicity. Based on the results of the Logistic Regression test academic self-efficacy and grade are significant predictors due the p value being lower than .05. The exponential value also showed that grade is 1.311 times more likely to be a predictor of truancy, while levels of academic self-efficacy are -.124 times more likely to be a predictor of truancy. It was found based on this test alone that the ASE p value is .014 and grade p value is .001, meaning that there is a relationship of best predicting truancy in adolescents, see table 3.

Table 3.

*Logistic Regression Analysis of Academic Self-Efficacy score (N = 96)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>-.251</td>
<td>.390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.957</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>-.218</td>
<td>.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>1.311</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Self-efficacy</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, it was found in the Logistic Regression analysis of general self-efficacy alone on truancy controlling for demographic variables, including age, gender, and ethnicity that the GSE p value is .570 meaning that there is no relationship of GSE being
the best predictor of truancy in adolescents. Again in this test grade has a p value of .001. Also the exponential value shows that grade is 1.282 times more likely to be a predictor of truancy.

Table 4.

Logistic Regression Analysis of General Self-efficacy score (N=96)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>-.218</td>
<td>.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.976</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>-.192</td>
<td>.406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>1.282</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Self-efficacy</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>.570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results of the data that was collected there is not a significant relationship between levels of self-efficacy in adolescents who are truant versus those who are not. Also low levels of self-efficacy are not a predictor of truancy in adolescents in this study. It was determined, however, that academic self-efficacy can play a small statistical part in adolescents being truant.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This quantitative study examined the relationship of truancy and levels of self-efficacy among 96 adolescents (32 truants and 64 non-truants) at the middle and high school level.

Summary of Study

The following questions were tested in this study: 1. Is there a relationship between levels of self-efficacy and adolescents who are truant between the ages of 12-17 years old? 2. Which factors are going to best predict truancy in adolescents; levels of self-efficacy, gender, age, grade, or ethnicity? There were many limitations to the study that the researcher encountered. The main limitations was that not all 300 participants who were contacted for the study brought back a signed consent form from their parents, only 96 adolescents returned parent consent forms. Within the 96 participants, there were not even numbers of truant adolescents’ vs those who were not truant. There were more non-truant adolescents. These limitations threaten the validity of the data analyzed. As mentioned in Chapter IV, this study revealed that there is not a significant relationship between levels of self-efficacy in adolescents who are truant vs those who are not. Also low levels of self-efficacy are not a higher predictor of truancy in adolescents in this study. It was determined however that academic self-efficacy can play a small statistical part in adolescents being truant based on the data analyzed.
Implication for Social Work

For future social work practice it is important to continue to explore underlying causes to truancy to assist with addressing the issue not just locally but nationwide. This research study can be used for future research in other ways to identify best practice interventions to tackle truancy among our nation’s adolescents.

There are also well known evidence based programs that have been effective with increasing attendance and overall prevention of dropout rates nationwide. One program called the Early Risers Skills for Success targets elementary level student’s ages 6-12 yrs old and assign them a “family advocate” that facilitates after school friendship groups and summer day camps to expand on learning (Lynn Bye, 2010). This program was designed to target mental health issues but it also increased attendance and academics. Another program is WhyTry, created for student’s grades k-12. The program addresses issues related to attendance, behavior, substance abuse, and low academic achievement with a 20 week curriculum covering topics on opposing peer pressure, problem solving, decision making, motivation to succeed, and building a support network (Lynn Bye, 2010). This is another example of a tier 2 program. Those who completed the WhyTry program spiked up grade point averages, increased attendance, and increased graduation more than those who did not participate in the program from the control group (Lynn Bye, 2010).

Research for more effective interventions nationwide should continue as truancy continues to be a problem. In order for school social workers to be effective in their jobs
it would be helpful to have programs and interventions that have been tested and prove to be beneficial for adolescents who are truant.
APPENDIX A

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs

March 13, 2015

Ms. Jasmine West <Jaswest86@gmail.com>
School of Social Work
Clark Atlanta University
Atlanta, GA 30314

RE: A study of the relationship between truancy and self-efficacy levels in adolescents

Principal Investigator(s): Jasmine West
Human Subjects Code Number: HR2015-3-575-1

Dear Ms. West:

The Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your protocol and approved of it as exempt in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Your Protocol Extended Approval Code is HR2015-3-575-1/A
Type of Review: Expedited.

This permit will expire on March 12, 2016. Thereafter, continued approval is contingent upon the annual submission of a renewal form to this office.

The CAU IRB acknowledges your timely completion of the CITI IRB Training in Protection of Human Subjects – "Social and Behavioral Sciences Track". Your certification is valid for two years.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Georgianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404) 880-6979 or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829.

Sincerely:

[Signature]

Paul I. Musey, Ph.D.
Chair
IRB: Human Subjects Committee

cc. Office of Sponsored Programs, "Dr. Georgianna Bolden" <gbolden@cau.edu>
April 28, 2015

Ms. Jasmine West  
223 James P Brawley Drive, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30314

Dear Ms. West,

Your application to conduct research in Cobb County School District has been administratively approved and a copy of your proposal titled, *A Study of the Relationship Between Truancy and Self Efficacy Levels in Adolescents*, sent to the principal of each proposed school. You may now contact the individual schools/departments about their participation in the study. Listed below are the schools identified in your application, along with the name and phone number of the principal. A copy of the *Principal Agreement to Participate Form* is included. After gaining approval from school principals, submit the original form to the Office of Accountability & Research. Once the form has been received in the Office of Accountability and Research, a final letter of approval will be sent to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PRINCIPAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lindley</td>
<td>770-819-2495</td>
<td>Lisa M. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindley 6th Grade Academy</td>
<td>770-819-2414</td>
<td>Travis Joshua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pebblebrook</td>
<td>770-819-2521</td>
<td>Zinta Perkins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, submit changes in writing to the Office of Accountability and Research. If you have any questions regarding the final approval process, contact our office at (770) 426-3450.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Allen, MPA  
Manager, Research & Grants Administration  
Office of Accountability & Research
APPENDIX C

Research Assent Form

What is a research study?

Research studies help us learn new things. We can test new ideas. First, we ask a question. Then we try to find the answer.

This paper talks about our research and the choice that you have to take part in it. We want you to ask us any questions that you have. You can ask questions any time.

Important things to know...

- You get to decide if you want to take part.
- You can say ‘No’ or you can say ‘Yes’.
- No one will be upset if you say ‘No’.
- If you say ‘Yes’, you can always say ‘No’ later.
- You can say ‘No’ at anytime.
- We would still take good care of you no matter what you decide.

Why are we doing this research?

We are doing this research to find out more about why some students do not attend school daily.

What would happen if I join this research?

If you decide to be in the research, we would ask you to do the following:

- Questions: We would ask you to read questions on a piece of paper. Then you would mark your answers on the paper.
APPENDIX C Continued

Could bad things happen if I join this research?
Some of the questions might be hard to answer. Nothing bad will happen.

Could the research help me?
We think being in this research may help you because we will be able to identify reasons students miss school and put a program in place to help them attend school daily.

OR

This research will not help you. We do hope to learn something from this research though. And someday we hope it will help us create a program to help kids attend school daily.

What else should I know about this research?
If you don’t want to be in the study, you don’t have to be.

It is also OK to say yes and change your mind later. You can stop being in the research at any time. If you want to stop, please tell the researcher

You would not be paid to be in the study.
You can ask questions any time. You can talk to Jasmine West. Ask us any questions you have. Take the time you need to make your choice.

Is there anything else?

If you want to be in the research, please write your name below. We will write our name too. This shows we talked about the research and that you want to take part.

Name of Participant

_________________________________________ Date

(To be written by child/adolescent)

Signature of Researcher

_________________________________________ Date
APPENDIX C Continued
Parental Consent Form

My signature below indicates that I have read the information provided and have decided to allow my child to participate in the study titled A Study of the Correlation Between Truancy and Self-Efficacy Levels to be conducted at my child’s school. I understand that the signature of the principal.

I understand the purpose of the research project will be to examine the correlation of truancy to levels of self-efficacy among 300 adolescents at the middle and high school level and that my child will participate in the following manner:

1. Complete a survey answering 18 questions on paper about their ability to complete tasks and reach goals.

Potential benefits of the study are:
The researcher will provide me with a copy of my child’s self efficacy level for my records.

I agree to the following conditions with the understanding that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time should I choose to discontinue participation.

- The identity of participants will be protected. All identifying information will remain confidential and will not be published.

- Information gathered during the course of the project will become part of the data analysis and may contribute to published research reports and presentations.

- There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved to my child participating in the study.

- Participation in the study is voluntary and will not affect either student grades or placement decisions. If I decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, I will notify the school of my decision.

If further information is needed regarding the research study, I can contact Larry Riley School Social Worker and researcher Jasmine West at 770-656-5143.

Signature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
APPENDIX D

First and Last Name ___________________________

Circle the answer that best shows how true each item is for your

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
<th>Hardly true</th>
<th>Moderately true</th>
<th>Exactly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX D Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
<th>Hardly true</th>
<th>Moderately true</th>
<th>Exactly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
<td>Not at all true 1</td>
<td>Hardly true 2</td>
<td>Moderately true 3</td>
<td>Exactly true 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part two is on the back please turnover to complete.
APPENDIX E

Circle the answer that best shows how well you do in each of the following situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on your schoolwork?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. How well can you study a chapter for a test?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. How well do you succeed in finishing all your homework everyday?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. How well can you pay attention during every class?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX E Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. How well do you succeed in passing all your subjects?</td>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How well do you succeed in satisfying your parents with your school work?</td>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How well do you succeed in passing a test?</td>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


20-2-690.1., Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law.