

	<b>GOMAL UNIVERSITY</b> <b>JOURNAL OF RESEARCH</b> Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan ISSN:1019- 8180 (Print) ISSN: 2708- 1737 (Online)				
Website	<a href="http://www.gujr.com.pk">www.gujr.com.pk</a>	HEC Recognized	Social Sciences	CrossRef	DOI:10.51380

## PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION AND FRIENDSHIP: PREDICTORS OF TRUANT BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENTS

Rubab Ali<sup>1</sup>, Shahnila Tariq<sup>1</sup> & Sidra Mushtaq<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Applied Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore. Pakistan

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Parent-Child Communication, Friendship Functions, Truancy, Predictors, & Adolescents	The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between parent-child communication, friendship functions & truancy among adolescents. It was hypothesized that there is likely to be relationship between parent-child communication, friendship functions, and truancy. Furthermore, the parent-child communication and friendship function will likely predict the truancy in adolescents. In this regard, to conduct this study, correlational research design and purposive sampling technique were used to recruit the sample of (N= 300) school and college students in the age range 13-19 years. For this purpose, the Parent-Child Communication Scale, McGill Friendship Questionnaire–FF and Truancy Questionnaire were used for the study. The results discovered significant positive relationship between parent-child communication, truancy and also amid friendship functions and truancy in the adolescents. Furthermore, parent-child communication and friendship functions positively predicted truancy in adolescents. The results of study provide significant information in extracting the desired information, reaching conclusion and making suitable decisions about the research issues underconsiderations. The findings can increase parents' awareness regarding importance of communication with their children to reduce truancy.
<b>Article History</b> Date of Submission: 22-11-2025 Date of Acceptance: 24-12-2025 Date of Publication: 31-12-2025	 <b>2025 Gomal University Journal of Research</b>
Corresponding Author	Shahnila Tariq: <a href="mailto:Shahnila.tariq@umt.edu.pk">Shahnila.tariq@umt.edu.pk</a>
DOI	<a href="https://doi.org/10.51380/gujr-41-04-06">https://doi.org/10.51380/gujr-41-04-06</a>

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a combination of deliberate and purposeful acts and activities with formative and intervention effects on behavior and character of an individual. The truancy is any intended, unjustified, unapproved, or illegal absence from obligatory education (Hasan, Helal, Younos, Mukta & Zahid, 2023). Its deliberate absence of the student by his/her own will (Baskerville, 2021). Its adverse influences are related to behavior of learner including juvenile delinquency, substance usage, conduct disorder, further disruptive behavior, poor performance in school

and school dropout (Holtes, Bannink, Joosten, Raat & Broeren, 2015). In this connection, for the parents and children, both, communication during adolescent time period is a noteworthy challenge that primarily stems from relationship fluctuating nature (Branje, Mastrotheodoros & Laursen, 2021). It is implied by cognitive model that communication between parents and adolescents may be weakened due to relationship change because the adolescents and parents necessarily go through a time period in which they face the same conversations in a different manner.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The truant behavior in adolescents is defined as unexcused absences from school or repeated skipping of scheduled classes, is the complex phenomenon rooted in interplay of individual, familial, and social factors. The parents till feel hurdles in getting involved in school such as lack of time, shortage of comprehension of each other style of communication, misperceptions of lecturers regarding abilities of parents (Santos, Simões, Branquinho & Arriaga, 2023). The stressed parent-teacher relationships, limited resources in family and beliefs of teachers that parents do not respect the teachers' efforts are seen as barriers to participation (Pelemo, 2022). These domains shape how young people interpret expectations, cope with stress, and choose their daily behaviors, including attendance at school. Therefore, it has been determined that communication problems within the family are more likely to cause behavioral problems in schools (Saleem, Zahra, Subhan & Mahmood, 2021), and that active communication between parents and children contributes to the academic successes as well as healthy development of adolescents.

The Pakistani culture contains many social taxes and religious customs. Families, especially parents, are very important because they not only help and support children in terms of the nutrition and sustenance, but parents continue to bear all educational expenses until children enter a career, sometimes longer than this (Wati & Shahid, 2022). Support outside the family is provided by friendships. Parent-child communication functions as both buffer and risk factor. When communication amid parents and adolescents is open, supportive, and characterized by mutual trust and respect, youth are more likely to internalize parental expectations and school values (Alegana, Pezzulo, Tatem, Omar & Christensen, 2021). During hard times, friendships are very important as they offer a sense of belongingness and gives relief from anxiety, stress and depression. There is link amid closeness feelings in friendships and augmented resilience (Vaughn, Maynard, Wright, Perron & Abdon, 2013). Young people with high-quality helpful friendships are likely to participate in school learning and get higher grades than other young people.

Similarly, the young people who participate in extracurricular activities with friends are more likely to themselves get involved and participate in extramural activities (Heath, Anderson, Turner & Payne, 2022). In this linking, Aboud and Mendelson identified the six friendship functions, include stimulating companionship, help, intimacy, reliable alliance, self-validation and emotional security. According to Yusuf, Rahim and Yusof (2023), there are many reasons behind truancy, including the family factors, student variables, school factors, peer factors and

economic influences (Shah, Abdullah, Aizuddin, Hassan, Safian & Amin, 2012). Thus, in such environments, adolescents feel heard and understood, in turn supports their willingness to comply with the school attendance and engage proactively with academic tasks. For academic path of adolescents, friendships may be specifically influential since they must make decisions about their participation and efforts in the school, and these decisions are made in their social context.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study comprised of (N=300) male and female participants from different government and private schools and colleges, with age range 13-19 years and from 9th to 12th grade. Prior to any data collection process, permissions from the author of the scales were taken through e-mail. A letter of permission to collect data from various public schools and colleges, was taken from the Department, duly signed by the supervisor and Dean from the concerned institution. In this linking, the written permission was taken from the principals of schools and colleges and time was taken from them so that data could be collected on the questionnaires from the students. The participants were assured about the privacy and confidentiality of data collected from them. The purpose of current research was completely explained to the participants and informed consent was signed by them. In this regard, the assessment measures were given to the participants as participants were asked to fill them completely. It hardly took 15-20 minutes to completely fill the questionnaires. The collected data was scored quantitatively as per scoring guidelines.

Consent Form was comprised of aim of the research as well as written consent of participants to agree to participate in the research. The demographic sheet. demographic information sheet was consisted of important demographic information. Demographic questionnaire included details like age, gender, number of siblings, birth order, family system, father alive, mother alive, occupation of father and mother, total family income, most attachment with, time spent with parents, socioeconomic status, do you find easy to talk with your parents, number of friends, time spent with friends, restricted time with friends, activities with friends, how often get absent from school and willing get absent from school. Parent Child Communication Scale (PCCS). It was developed by McCarty et al. in 2003. In this regard, PCCS involves a 20-item measure measuring children's perceptions about their parents' openness to communication on the 5-point scale ranging from 1 = almost never, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and 5=almost always. Thus, it is comprised of two subscales: parent communication and child communication.

Only the child communication subscale was used which includes 10 questions. The reliability of the child communication sub-scale is the  $\alpha = .81$ . McGill Friendship Questionnaire-Friend's Functions (MFQ-FF). It was developed by Mendelson and Aboud, (1999) to assesses the degree to which a friend fulfills the six friendship functions (5 items each). Response rate of each item was on a 9-point scale (0 - 8), which was labeled as (0 = never, 2 = rarely, 4 = once in a while, 6 = fairly often, and 8 = always). Truancy Questionnaire (TQ). Truancy Questionnaire (TQ) was developed by (Suleman et al., 2017). There is total 45 items, with response on five-

point Likert scale for example SA (Strongly Agree=5), A (Agree=4), UD (Undecided=3), DA (Disagree=2) and SDA (Strongly Disagree=1). The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is  $\alpha = .86$ .

## RESULTS OF STUDY

The results of the current research represent the relationship of parent-child communication, friendship functions and truancy among adolescents in order to extract desired information to conclusion.

**Table 1**

*Inter-Correlation among Parent-Child Communication, Friendship Functions and Truancy*

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Communication	33.42	6.08	-	.04	.17**	.02	.09	.07	-.02	-.01
2	Friendship	121.8	25.10		-	.13**	.09	.12**	.15**	.14*	.02
3	Electronic Media	12.77	3.98			-	.35***	.31***	.34***	.10	.23**
4	Family	32.51	8.04				-	.32***	.39***	.32***	.37***
5	School related	28.87	8.63					-	.72***	.42***	.64***
6	Student related	26.20	7.77						-	.40***	.59***
7	Peer related	12.06	3.83							-	.51***
8	Teacher related	20.34	6.83								

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

At first, Pearson product moment correlation analysis has been used to examine correlation among study variables. The parent child communication has positive significant relationship with media related truancy. Whereas friendship function has positive significant relationship with the media related factors, school related factors, student related factors and peer related factors. In this regard, Multiple Hierarchical Regression analysis was performed as the main analysis. Thus, it was performed to estimate the extent to which Demographics, parent child communication and friendship function predicting electronic media truancy in the high school students.

**Table 2**

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Truancy (N=300)*

Variables	Media Factors		Family Background		School Related	
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 1	.05*		.04*		.02	
Gender		-.17**		-.02		.05
Number of Siblings		-.06		-.10		-.07
30k Monthly Salary		-.01		-.04		-.07
50k Monthly Salary		.02		-.06		-.04
1 Lac Monthly Salary		-.01		.02		-.14
Often get absent from School		.07		.01		-.05
Willingly get absent from School		.09		.18**		.04
Step 2	.04**		.01		.02*	

Parent Child Communication	.15**	.02	.09
Friendship Function	.14*	.07	.12
Total R2	.09	.05	.04

**Table 2A***Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Truancy (N=300)*

Variables	Student Related		Peer Related Factors		Teacher Related	
	$\Delta R^2$	B	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	B
Step 1	.07**		.10**		.02	
Gender		.03		.03		.06
Number of Siblings		-.18**		-.04		-.04
30k Monthly Salary		-.08		.02		-.07
50k Monthly Salary		.05		.13		.01
1 Lac Monthly Salary		-.13		.13		-.09
Often get absent from School		.04		-.17**		-.07
Willingly get absent from School		.06		.19**		.01
Step 2	.03*		.02		.01	
Parent Child Communication		.06		-.02		-.01
Friendship Function		.15**		.13*		.03
Total R2	.10		.12		.03	

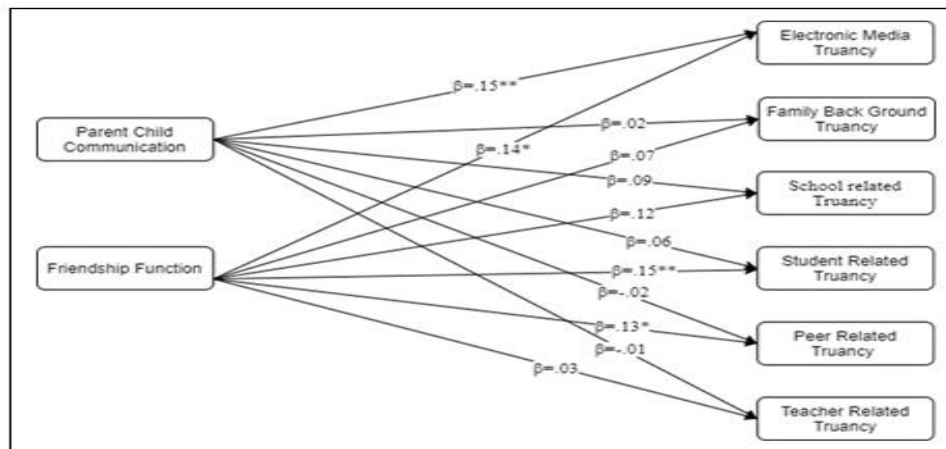
Multiple Hierarchical Regression analysis was performed to find the important predictors of truancy. The step 1 explained 5% variance on electronic media truancy  $F(7, 292) = 2.27, p < .05$ . In step 1 only gender significantly predicted electronic media truancy in high school students. No other variable significantly predicted the electronic media truancy. The step 2 explained 4% explained change on truancy  $F(9, 290) = 3.40, p < .001$ , in step II parent child communication and friendship function found significant predictor of electronic media truancy. Total variance explained in electronic media was 10%. MHR analysis was performed. Result show that step 1 explained 4% variance upon family background truancy  $F(7, 292) = 2.11, p < .05$ . In step 1 only willingly get absent from school variable significantly predicted family background truancy in high school students. Step 2 explained 1% explained variance on family background truancy  $F(9, 290) = 1.85, p > .05$ , in step II no variable found significant predictor of the family background truancy. This analysis was performed to estimate the extent to which Demographics, parent child communication and friendship function predicting school related truancy in high school students.

The result showed that step 1 explained 2% variance on school related truancy  $F(7, 292) = 1.06, p > .05$ . In step 1 no variable significantly predicted school related truancy in the high school students. Step 2 explained 2% explained variance on school related truancy  $F(9, 290) = 1.60, p > .05$ , in step II in step II no variable found significant predictor of school related truancy. Total variance explained by both steps in school related truancy was 4%. Moreover, analysis was performed to estimate the extent to which Demographics, parent child communication and friendship function predicting student related truancy in school students. Result showed that step 1 explained 7% variance upon student related  $F(7, 292) = 3.30, p < .01$ . In step 1 no of

siblings predicted student related truancy in high school students. No other variable predicted the student related truancy in high school students. Step 2 explained 3% explained variance on student related truancy  $F(9, 290) = 3.68, p < .001$ , in step II friendship function variable found significant predictor of student related truancy. Total variance explained in the student related truancy was 10%. It was performed to estimate extent to which demographics, parent child communication and friendship function predicting peer related truancy in high school students.

The result showed that step 1 explained 10% variance on peer related truancy  $F(7, 292) = 5.00, p < .001$ . In step 1 often get absent from school or willingly get absent from school significantly predicted peer related truancy in school students. No other variable significantly predicted the peer related truancy in high school students. On the other hand, Step 2 explained 2% explained variance on the peer related truancy  $F(9, 290) = 4.52, p < .001$ , in step II friendship function variable found significant predictor of peer related truancy. Total variance explained in peer related truancy was 12%. Current analysis was also performed to estimate the extent to which Demographics, parent child communication and friendship function predicting teacher related truancy in high school students. Result showed that step 1 explained 2% variance on teacher related truancy  $F(7, 292) = .92, p > .05$ . In the step 1 No other variable significantly predicted the peer related teacher in high school students. On the other hand, Step 2 explained 1% explained variance on teacher truancy  $F(9, 290) = .74, p > .05$ , in step II no variable found predictor of teacher related truancy. Total variance explained in teacher related truancy was 3%.

**Figure 1**  
*Emerged Model*



## DISCUSSION

Present study was designed to examine the relationship between parent-child communication, friendship functions and truancy in adolescents. Significant positive relationship was found



amid parent-child communication, friendship functions and truancy in adolescents. Results of the study supported the hypothesis. Parent-child communication was significantly positively correlated with electronic media factors behind truancy and friendship functions also had positive significant relationship with the media related factors, school related factors, student related factors and peer related factors in truancy. Whereas, correlation was not found between parent-child communication and friendship functions. In this connection, through research, it is known that during the adolescence, the peers are extremely influential through the truancy parents to correct, redirect early absentee patterns before they escalate into entrenched truancy (Baskerville, 2021). These findings agree with research reported by Froiland, (2021) that there were some parents who didn't take interest in their child's studies and hardly checked their homework.

They did not understand problems & tensions of their children which resulted in mishandling them. The truants mostly come from broken homes in which separation, divorce and mixed siblings are included in norms and from families where authority figure of father is usually away from home for longer time periods and who live with overcrowded conditions. In one of the study it was cited that family-relationship has positive relationship with truancy. These variables include family attitudes toward education, parental knowledge of truancy, parental situations, parenting skills, and child abuse and neglect (Aman et al., 2021). The adolescents, along with their friends, cut class which results in their disengagement from school and other problem behaviors which raises truancy issues in adolescents they skip their classes, smoke, consume alcohol and take other substances as well (Seidu et al., 2022). Second hypothesis was that Parent-child communication will likely to predict truancy. Results revealed that Parent-child communication was positive predictor of truancy related to electronic media factors and media habits change markedly in adolescence, parents tend to loosen monitoring (Meng et al., 2025).

According to Conaway (2024), chronic absenteeism, which refers to the unexcused missing of class by a student, may be correlated with parents/caregivers who do not provide the necessary support (financial or physical) to deal with their child showing truant behavior. Research showed that the causes of truancy may be broadly classified as family factors, school factors, economic factors, and student factors (Yusuf et al., 2023). Third hypothesis states that Friendship functions are likely to predict truancy in adolescents. This study also shows similar results as friendship functions had positive significant correlation with truancy (media related, school related, students related and peer related). Existing researches also support the idea. Friends play a significant role in influencing students' school adjustment, attitudes, and behaviors (Kurt, 2022). Fourth hypothesis stated that gender differences are likely to predict truancy in adolescents. Current study showed that there was a significant difference on the basis of gender in truancy with medium size effect. Truancy cases are more prevalent in boys. Research revealed that boys were facing absenteeism because of the social factors (Boccio et al., 2025). Male adolescents are prone to truancy than the female adolescents (Barthelemy et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

This present study was conducted to examine relationship amid parent-child communication, friendship functions and truancy in adolescents. The results of above-mentioned researches are in favor of our present study. On whole results calculated prove our hypothesis and also corresponds to the researches done on these variables. Hence, it was proved that parent-child communication significantly positively correlated with truancy. The friendship functions also positively correlated and predicts truancy in adolescents. While addressing issue of truancy among adolescents, parent-child healthy communication patterns, child's friendships should be taken into account, thoroughly worked in order to deal effectively with behavioral issues in adolescents.

## Implications

The research can give grounds to more studies in future. Through this research, seminars can be conducted about how parental communication is effective in children behavior patterns especially in academics and how truancy can be reduced. Parents could get awareness of how media is becoming the major cause behind raised truancy rates. Over this research, principals, teachers and school staff can get help in form of seminars in controlling student truancy and drop-out.

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