

ABSTRACT

An Investigation into the Students' Perceptions on the Reasons They Commit Acts of Truancy at School X

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This case study investigated Form Four students' rationale for engaging in truancy at a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. Data were collected through interviews with three students who were habitual truants. Four themes emerged from the study: 1) teacher/student relationship, 2) teaching strategies, 3) peer influence, and 4) domestic situation. The findings of the study revealed that: a) the students felt that their relationships with their teachers, and the manner in which their teachers interacted with them, impacted their classroom attendance; b) all of the participants indicated that they disliked attending boring classes and longed for variety in classroom instruction; c) while all of the students enjoyed spending time with their friends who sometimes stayed away from classes, which encouraged them to do likewise, two of them expressed resentment when teachers picked on their friends and skipped those teachers' classes as a sign of solidarity; and d) domestic issues such as abuse, fatigue, anger, and lack of basic necessities affected the students' ability to concentrate on their lessons, thus causing them to evade classes.

Keywords: Secondary school students; Student attitudes; Truancy; Student attendance; Student behaviour; Perceptions; Social factors; Absenteeism; Trinidad and Tobago