

## EFFECT OF TOKEN ECONOMY THERAPY ON PUPILS TRUANT BEHAVIOUR IN ADO-ODO/OTA LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

**Rafiu Akanni Akeem**

07065589151

[rafiuakeem552@gmail.com](mailto:rafiuakeem552@gmail.com)

**Prof. Yakubu Mallum**

08037170824

**Prof. Susan A. Kolawole**

08037000289

Department of Educational Foundation

Faculty of Education

University of Jos

### **Abstract**

The study examined the effect of token economy therapy on pupils' truant behavior in Ado-Odo/Ota local government in Ogun state, Nigeria. Two research questions and hypothesis were raised to guide the study. The study adopted true experimental pre-test post-test design. The population of the study comprised 11247 primary six pupils in the local government while the sample of the study was 64 primary six truant pupils. The instrument that was used for data collection is pupils truant behavior questionnaire (PTBQ) and was validated by experts from research, measurement and evaluation. Reliability index of the instrument is 0.87 obtained using Kendall tau coefficient. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis. The result obtained from the study showed that token economy therapy was indeed significantly effective in treating truancy among primary school pupils. Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers, school principals and counsellors should be trained and retrained on how to use token economy to address truancy behavior.

**Keywords:** Token Economy Therapy, Pupils, Truant Behavior.

### **Introduction**

Primary education is the foundation upon which other levels of education are built. The objectives of primary education are to enable children to learn arithmetic, numeracy, and other basic skills needed for further education. Pupils are expected to come to school from morning till afternoon, after which they are to close. Most of the children usually come alone, and they go back on their own. Available evidences show that some primary school pupils hardly come to school, hence they are involved in menial jobs which take them away from school, and this is referred to as truancy.

The term truancy has been defined in various ways by scholars and educational researchers. Alhassan, Iwuala, and Kenku, (2023) defined truancy as any unauthorized absence from school that disregards the school rules and regulations. This can manifest in various forms, such as frequently missing an entire day of school. Kelechi (2024) equally defines truancy as a deliberate pattern of behavior characterized by avoiding school without a valid justification. Omolekan, and Ajayi, (2023) see truancy as a situation where pupils establish a persistent habit of staying away from school without the knowledge of parents and teachers, that is, it involves taking matters into one's hands by not attending school for a specific period. It can be observed

that truancy is an unexcused absence by the pupils from school for two days in a week or eight days in a month, which constitutes 30% absence. Though there is a contentious debate among academics regarding the frequency and reason a pupil must be absent from school in a term before being labelled as truant. Truancy refers to pupils who are absent without genuine reasons, regardless of whether it is known to or approved by the parents or school authority. The absence from school may range from once a week to twice a week (Esther, Momoh, & Yakubu, 2023).

Every registered pupil is expected to be in school and must be present in school, engage in class attendance and activities regularly to achieve academic excellence and sound education. While some pupils are punctual, some are not, hence skipping the class without good reasons. The ability of a child to stay out of school without a parent's authority is called truancy. The person who habitually stays away from school without good reasons is a truant. There is no doubt about the fact that when a pupil attends school regularly, their academic achievement improves, and this puts them on the path to success. Learners get to access consistent educational support for their academic achievement, and when learners attain academically sound knowledge, they recognize their identities and inter-subjective awareness of their social and individual capabilities. Regular school attendance is a commitment to classroom time and activities right from enrolment to finalization of a full academic programme. School attendance is an important factor that influences the academic achievement of pupils and also indicates that regular school attendance could help pupils to achieve academic success (Isah & Tijani, 2022).

There is no doubt that one major challenge that public primary schools, both in urban and rural are facing these days is truancy. Truancy is highly ranked as one of the most global acts of delinquency associated with primary school pupils in Nigeria. It has been observed that most pupils may come to school without participating in school activities or programmes such as attending morning assemblies, afternoon assemblies, classes and other extra-curricular activities mapped out for them. Also, these truants are perhaps fond of hiding away in the corners of the school or skipping out of the school surroundings, either meeting with their bad friends or engaging in some anti-social activities. Often, these truants stay away from classes using unnecessary excuses, such as fake sickness or false suspension by the class teacher or school authorities (Isah & Tijani, 2022).

Truancy is an undesirable behavior whose effect on primary school pupils do not only affect their academic achievement, but also involve other kinds of abnormal behaviors namely, drug abuse, examination malpractice, fighting, stealing, lateness to school, bullying, insubordination, teenage pregnancy, assault of any kind, cultism, uncontrollable anger and school dropout and so on. Pupils who do not always stay at school fall behind their peers in the classroom and have poor attendance, which leads to high school dropout. This may result in low self-esteem as well as dropping out of school.

Pupils who are constantly absent from school or classes will eventually drop out of school. It is very serious, as rightly observed by Komakech (2015), that when pupils experience school failure, they become frustrated and end up alienated and experience exclusion, leading to

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eventual dropout. There is no doubt about the fact that pupils who stay away from school without permission will not only be left out in the learning process but they may also probably end up engaging in anti-social behavior such as drug abuse, gangsters', bullying, alcohol consumption, free and unregulated sex, gambling and loitering with their negative consequences and experience. Truants are likely to perceive schooling as a kind of punishment, whereas some attend classes just to meet their truant friends or to please their parents and guardians. Students who skip school are unable to meet the learning standards mapped for them by the school.

Truant behavior has both short-term and long-term effects. The short-term effect ranges from maladjustment, poor academic achievement, school dropout, substance use, delinquency and teenage pregnancy, while the long-term effect includes violence, marital instability, job instability, children's criminality and incarceration by Komakech (2015). If not for any other reason the above listed problem serves as justification while truant behavior needs to be addressed by all so that he can experience peace and tranquility in the society and for better academic achievement in the long run among primary school pupil in Ado-odo/ota local government because no society can develop without the active participation of the youth in the education.

The relationship between attending class and academic achievement has been a debatable issue, and many believe that attending class is a good predictor of academic achievement. Attending classes regularly is important in providing pupils with an opportunity to achieve a desired learning outcome. However, it is equally worthy of notice that when the material covered in the class was not available in the course textbook, pupils who attend classes benefit from interactions with the teacher and classmates and do better in the examinations. Pupils who attend classes will also be able to take class notes, and such note-taking has been shown to have positive learning benefits.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Available shreds of evidence shows that 20% of primary school pupils in Ado-odo/ota local government hardly attend school, and those that attend usually leave the school before the closing hour, and these are what constitute truancy, which is an educational, social and psychological problem. Truancy among primary school pupils jeopardizes their chances of achieving academic success in school. Truant behavior is endemic in the primary schools in Ogun state, as shown in the school documents, such as the school register attests to the case of truancy among primary school pupils. Truant behavior is a common problem among primary school pupils simply because they find it difficult to stay away for a long period of time from their loved ones particularly mother and father. Truant behavior affects all areas of pupils' functioning and also has negative consequences on the social, intellectual and psychological life of the pupils (Omenebele & Jude, 2023). Many steps had been taken but none has yield total positive result and that is why the researcher intend to use token economy.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The followings objectives guided the study:

1. To find out the difference in the truant behavior of pupils exposed to token economy in the experimental and control groups.
2. To determine the difference in the post-test truancy behavior mean score of male and female pupils.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the difference in the truant behavior of pupils exposed to token economy in the experimental and control groups?
2. What is the difference in the post-test truancy behavior mean score of male and female pupils?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the truant behavior of pupils exposed to token economy in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference in the post-test truant behavior mean score of male and female pupils.

### **Methodology**

The research design that was adopted for the study was true experimental design of randomization control group pre-test post-test design. The population of the study was 11,247, while the sample was made up of 64 primary six truant pupils and their selection was based on the class attendance register. Purposive sample technique was used to select the school and the sample of the study consisted of 64 pupils from two primary school in AdoOdo/Ota LGA of Ogun State. Oke Ore Methodist primary school with a sample of 32 was used as experimental group while Idi Ota with a sample of 32 was used as control group. The primary school pupils used were identified to be exhibiting truant behavior through their class register.

The instrument that was used for data collection is a self-design pupils' truant questionnaire. The content validity of the PTBQ were estimated after subjecting the instrument to experts scrutiny from the unit of guidance and counseling and research measurement and evaluation all of the department of educational foundations faculty of education university of Jos. Reliability index of the instrument is 0.87 obtained using Kendal tau coefficient. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the difference in the truant behavior of pupils exposed to token economy in the experimental and control groups?

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation on truant behavior of pupils between the experimental and control group

Group		N	X	X	Mean Loss	Mean Loss Difference	Post-test Mean Difference
<b>Experimental</b>	Pre –test	32	37.72	6.01			
	Post –test	32	26.90	8.34	-10.82		
<b>Control</b>	Pre –test	32	38.03	4.94		-10.16	11.79
	Post –test	32	38.69	5.85	-0.66		

The results of the analysis from table 1 revealed that the experimented group had pre-truant behavior mean score of 37.72, SD=6.06 and a post truancy mean score of 26.90, standard deviation =8.34, with mean loss of -10.82 while the control group had a pre- truancy mean score of 38.03, with standard deviation of 4.94 and a post-truancy mean score of 38.69, SD=5.85 with mean gain of 0.66. The result indicates a post-test mean difference of 11.79. This implies that token economy helps to reduce truant behavior of primary pupils more than conventional method.

**Research Question Two:** What is the difference in the post-test truancy behavior mean score of male and female pupils?

**Table 2:** Mean and standard deviation analysis on truant behavior of male and female pupils in the experimental group

Group		N	X	SD	Mean Loss	Mean Difference	Post-test Mean Difference
<b>Male</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	17	36.96	5.00			
	<b>Post-test</b>	17	26.87	7.59	-10.09		
<b>Female</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	15	37.84	7.99		1.31	0.43
	<b>Post-test</b>	15	26.44	12.79	-11.4		

Table 2 represents the result of the analysis on the pre-truancy mean score of male and female pupils. The result shows that male had a pre-truancy behavior mean score of 36.96 and standard deviation of 5.00 and a post-truancy mean score of 26.87 and standard deviation of 7.59 with mean loss of - 10.09 while the control group had a pre-truancy mean score of 37.84 and standard deviation of 7.99 and a post-truancy mean score of 26.44and standard deviation of 12.79 with a mean loss of - 11.40.The2 result indicates a mean difference in the post truancy mean score between the male and the female of 0.43 in favor of females although the difference is very low, hence it can be concluded that token economy help to reduce truancy behavior among males than females.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the truant behavior of pupils exposed to token economy in the experimental and control groups.

**Table 3:** Summary of ANOVA analysis on the truant behavior mean score of pupils in the experimental and control groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	3423.258	3	1141.086	19.482	.000	Significant
Within Groups	7262.710	124	58.570			
Total	10685.969	127				

Table 3 reveals the ANOVA result of the pre-test and post -test truancy behaviors mean score of pupils in the experimental and control groups. The result yielded  $F(124) = 19.48$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Since the P-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Indicating that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test truant behaviors mean score of pupils in the experimental and control groups. It shows that token economy helps to reduce truant behavior of primary pupils more than conventional method.

**Table 4:** Scheffe Post Hoc result on truancy behavior mean score of pupils in the experimental and control groups

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Pre-test experimental	Pre-test control	-4.156	1.913	.199
	Post-test experimental	-13.937*	1.885	.000
	Post-test control	-5.171	1.945	.075
Pre-test control	Pre-test experimental	4.156	1.913	.199
	Post-test experimental	-9.781*	1.885	.000
	Post-test control	-1.015	1.945	.965
Post-test experimental	Pre-test experimental	13.938*	1.885	.000
	Pre-test control	9.781*	1.885	.000
	Post-test control	8.767*	1.917	.000
Post-test control	Pre-test experimental	5.171	1.945	.075
	Pre-test control	1.015	1.945	.965
	Post-test experimental	-8.767*	1.917	.000

Table 4 presents the post hoc result on the differences in the pre-test and post -test truancy behaviors mean score of pupils in the experimental and control groups. The result indicated that significant difference lies between the pre-test and post-test truancy behavior mean score of the experimental group, pre-test mean score of the control group and post-test mean score of the experimental group, post-test mean score of the control group and post-test mean scores of the experimental group ( $P < 0.05$ ). It further indicates no significant difference between pre-test truancy behaviors mean scores of the experimental and control groups and pre-test and posttest mean scores of the control group ( $P > 0.05$ ).

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in the post-test truant behavior mean score of male and female pupils.

**Table 5: Summary of ANOVA analysis on post-test truant behavior mean score male and female pupils in the experimental group**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	3648.586	3	1216.195	9.276	.061	Insignificant
Within Groups	1857.898	60	30.965			
Total	5506.484	63				

Table 5 reveals the ANOVA result of the pre-test and post-test truant behavior mean score of male and female pupils in the experimented group. The result yielded  $F(3, 60) = 9.27$ ,  $P > 0.05$ . Since the P-value of 0.061 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was retained. It indicated that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test truant behavior mean score of male and female pupils in the experimental group. It shows that token economy helps reduce truant behavior of both male and female primary pupils. This implies that there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test truant behavior mean score of male and female pupils in the experimented group.

### Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that token economy therapy helps to reduce truant behavior among primary six pupils and does not affect pupils attendance based on their gender. This corroborated in line with Ogunleye and Alabi (2022) and Umeh (2020) that token reinforcement improves pupils' task-oriented behavior across gender groups, emphasizing that motivation through reward systems operates uniformly among children. Similarly, Kazdin (2013) observed that token economy therapy's effectiveness lies in its structured reinforcement pattern, not the learner's demographic background. However, Okon and Nwagu (2021) reported a slightly higher behavioral response among female pupils, attributing it to greater compliance tendencies in female learners during structured interventions. The absence of such gender-based variance in the current result could be due to the uniform application of the reward system or the neutral nature of the reinforcement tokens used, which minimized gender preference effects.

Adebayo and Musa (2021) observed that token-based reinforcement improved students' punctuality and class attendance in mixed classrooms, showing no significant gender difference. Similarly, Kazdin (2013) emphasized that the reinforcing power of tangible rewards in behavioral modification operates effectively across gender boundaries. However, the finding slightly contrasts with Okonkwo and Eze (2020), who reported that female pupils tend to respond more consistently to reward-based attendance interventions due to higher compliance and social approval tendencies. The difference in this study may be attributed to equal exposure to reinforcement conditions and uniform token distribution, which neutralized potential gender-based variations in responsiveness.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusion were reached and that is token economy therapy is aimed at addressing truancy behavior in a modern time like nowadays and therefore the study conclude that token economy therapy can be used in reducing behavior among primary six pupils in Ado-Odo local government area of Ogun state.

## Recommendations

It was recommended that:

1. Teachers, school principal and counsellor should be train and retrained on how to use token economy to address truancy behavior.
2. Funds should be set aside to take of the items that are to be used for token economy.
3. Government should support the advocacy of using token economy therapy in addressing truant behavior among primary school pupils.

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