

# Using Positive Behavioural Support to Curb Truancy and Improve the Academic Performance of Basic Seven Learners at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community of Ghana's Eastern Region

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## Abstract

The study explored the effectiveness or otherwise of using Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) to curb the prevalence of truancy and improve the academic performances of learners in Basic Seven Classes at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample seventy-nine (79) learners for the study. The researchers used a combination of observation and teacher-made-test as instruments for the data collection exercise. The data gathered for the study were obtained from researchers' observations and learners' test scores. To ascertain any difference between the learners' pre-test and post-test scores, the data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study concluded that the school attendance of the Basic Seven learners at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community improved after the learners had been taken through the interventional activities. Also, the study found an improvement in learners' academic performances after they had been taken through the intervention activities. In light of its findings, the study recommended that teachers at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community should implement mechanisms to identify at-risk learners at the early stage to prevent truancy from degenerating into absenteeism and finally school dropout. Also, class teachers need to pay attention to the needs of individual learners so that the necessary guidance and counselling services can be rendered to deserving learners as early as possible.

**Keywords:** Truancy, Learner, Academic Performance, Basic School, Intervention, Observation

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## 1. Introduction

School truancy is a severe problem affecting adolescents' educational outcomes and well-being. School truancy is skipping classes without purpose, not showing up at class and not attending school at all (Heyne et al., 2019). Previous studies among adolescents have reported that high-income countries have a lower truancy prevalence than low- and middle-income countries (Seidu et al., 2021), ranging from 59% in Zambia, 36.6% in Mozambique, 31% in Ghana, 30.8% in Malaysia, 25.7% in Tanzania, and 22% in Swaziland to 12.0% found in the USA (Osborne et al., 2024). Truancy carries significant consequences for individuals and society. It is associated with lower academic achievement, increased risk of dropping out, and reduced future employment opportunities for adolescents. Truants are also more vulnerable to risky behaviours like substance abuse and delinquent activities. On a broader scale, high truancy rates can impede educational development goals, weaken social cohesion, and hinder economic progress (Osborne et al., 2024).

According to Gerth (2020), truancy and poor academic achievement have long been grouped as part of a larger deviance or problem-behaviour syndrome. Truancy remains one of the most serious anti-social discipline issues confronting basic school education in developing countries of which Ghana is no exception. Some students' notoriousness is not only confined to smoking cigarettes, marijuana, fighting with each other, or behaving obscenely but also involve running away from home, engaging in illicit sexual activities, and mingling. According to Javier et al. (2020), students are now willing to join terrible syndicates and become gangsters,

murderers, burglars with or without firearms. They also engage in rape, prostitution, gambling, vandalism, drug abuse, alcoholism, and pornography.

Madaraka (2020) believes that various behavioural disorders such as stealing, violence, drug abuse, examination malpractice, sexual abuse, and truancy have so undermined effective teaching and learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of imparting knowledge to learners. Research literature, including Ampofo et al. (2022) have showed that students' class attendance has a good correlation with their academic success. Thus, truancy is harmful to students' academic achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem, and employment potential (Zheng et al., 2020). Students who miss school frequently are unquestionably behind their counterparts in the classroom in terms of academic performance. As a result, low self-esteem develops, increasing the possibility of students dropping out of school.

Previous researchers overwhelmingly showed that school truancy is negatively associated with students' academic achievement (Kirksey, 2019). For instance, studies have found that children who are more frequently absent in early kindergarten obtain lower working memory and cognitive flexibility scores in early childhood (Ansari & Gottfried, 2021) and receive lower literacy and grade point average scores at the age of fifteen (Gottfried & Ansari, 2021). Additionally, truancy at the basic school level is associated with lower academic achievement (Smerillo et al., 2018). Overall, students who are frequently absent from school miss out on teacher-led lessons, peer interactions, or other activities that may stimulate their learning and development process (Kirksey, 2019), possibly leading to detrimental consequences for student's academic achievement.

According to Desocio et al. (2007), truancy is ranked among the top ten challenges facing schools across the world. Ampofo et al. (2022) observe that a truant child absents him or herself persistently from school and often roams about the street to join friends to engage in undesirable behaviours. With this particular child, the behaviour does not occur occasionally but occurs several times in the term. Therefore, truancy is one of the behavioural challenges in basic schools across the country, and public basic schools in the Asokore Community are no exception.

## **2. Perceived Problem**

The researchers are teachers in the Asokore Community and have been observing that the School Management Committee (S.M.C) members, Parents and Teachers Association (P.T.A) executives, and opinion leaders in the community frequently meet public basic school teachers to discuss appropriate interventions to encourage students to attend school regularly and improve their academic performances.

### *2.1 Problem diagnosis*

Observation of the class attendance registers showed that several learners were frequently absent from school. These learners would be absent once or twice a week, then three to four times as the academic term progresses. There were instances where the researchers observed that some students were absent from school for more than a week. Also, observation of the class exercise books of the identified truants revealed that they scored low marks in all the subjects they studied at school.

### *2.2 Evidence of the problem*

An examination of learners' class exercise books showed that the majority of learners in the Basic Seven Classes of Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community had poor handwriting and could not spell simple words correctly. Also, the learners in the Basic Seven Classes of Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community could not solve simple addition and subtraction problems involving integers. The observation is worrisome since the learners performed poorly in-class exercises in almost all subjects in class.

### *2.3 Causes of the problem*

The causes of truancy among learners in the Basic Seven Classes of Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community are discussed under the family, personal, environment, and school factors. Firstly, adverse socio-economic conditions of families are among the most significant reasons leading to absenteeism; especially, financial difficulties have a substantial impact in this regard (Marfo, 2018). Secondly, there are personal reasons such as dislike of school, academic failure, lack of purpose, lack of self-confidence, and health challenges that lead students to play truant (Akkus & Cinkir, 2022). Also, the student's social environment is a significant determinant of absenteeism. Students in a group of friends who are unsuccessful, addicted to substances, and commit crimes are highly prone to absenteeism. Thoughts that spending time with friends is more enjoyable than school are also among the reasons for students' absenteeism (Ampofo et al., 2022). In addition, the quality and effectiveness of teachers, guidance specialists, and school administrators are associated with absenteeism. Truancy among school pupils is caused by a variety of factors including distance to school, school punishment, family background, and school location (Kachana et al., 2019). Therefore, to effectively curb the prevalence of truancy among learners, there is the need to look at the solution/intervention from varied factors points of view.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

Effective basic education is fundamental to achieving the literacy and numeracy levels required for sustainable economic growth. The Ghanaian basic school education system is characterized by truancy, effective teaching and learning, inadequate management, and insufficient community participation. This results in learners performing abysmally in-class exercises and examinations (Donkor & Alhassan, 2018). To gain undue advantage to excel, these learners engage in all forms of examination malpractices with the view of achieving success (Marfo, 2018). A long-term observation of basic school students in the Asokore Community of the New Juaben North Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana revealed that the majority of the students frequently stayed away from classes and loitered around the community. An examination of class attendance registers of the basic schools in the study area over three months revealed that about four-eight per cent of the students were absent from school more than three times a week. If this goes unchecked, such behaviours can constitute impediments to meaningful classroom learning along with bringing the school's growth and development under question. Therefore, there is the need to explore through research, the effectiveness or otherwise of using Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) as an intervention to curb the prevalence of truancy and improve the academic performances of learners in Basic Seven Classes at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to;

1. determine the effectiveness of using Positive Behavioural Support to address truancy among Basic Seven learners at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community.
2. examine the effect of using Positive Behavioural Support on the academic performances of Basic Seven learners at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community.

### 5. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the effectiveness of using Positive Behavioural Support to address truancy among Basic Seven learners at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community?
2. What is the effect of using Positive Behavioural Support on the academic performances of Basic Seven learners at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community?

### 6. The Ecological Systems Theory

The study is underpinned by the theoretical contributions of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the contributions of early childhood pioneers like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. The Ecological Systems Theory is a theoretical framework that Bronfenbrenner developed in the 1970s. The theory posits that human development is influenced by a complex interplay of various environmental systems, ranging from the immediate micro-system (for example, family, school, peer groups) to the broader macro-system (for example, cultural values, economic conditions, political systems). As a pedagogical strategy, Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the multiple environmental factors that affect a learner's development and learning outcomes. By considering the different systems that interact with a learner, teachers can create a more holistic and inclusive approach to teaching and learning (Crawford, 2020). For example, in an educational setting, teachers can use Ecological Systems Theory to understand the impact of the learner's family, community, and cultural background on their school attendance and learning experiences. By recognizing and responding to the contextual factors, teachers can create a more effective learning environment that supports the learner's development and enhances their learning outcomes. Crawford (2020) explored the impact of a teacher training program that was designed to promote the application of Ecological Systems Theory in classroom teaching. The study found that teachers who received the training showed significant improvements in their ability to incorporate contextual factors into their teaching practices, leading to learner's improved class attendance and better learning outcomes for their students. Thus, teachers who are knowledgeable about the Ecological Systems Theory will strive to create a congenial atmosphere in their classroom to ensure learner's improved class attendance and effective learning process.

### 7. Concept of Truancy

Different people and agencies have defined truancy in various ways. Truancy, according to Bassey (2020), is a student's wilful departure from school without his or her parents' knowledge or approval, for which no fair or acceptable cause is presented. This meaning significantly broadens the notion, making it synonymous with unexcused absence. Antrobus et al. (2019) define truancy as students who have been registered with a school but have been discovered as failing to attend when the law requires them to. This includes missing classes. Truancy, according to Keppens et al. (2019), is defined as a circumstance in which a learner is absent from school for no reason. Keppens et al. (2019) went on to remark that many students skip a single class or even an entire day of

school at some point during their academic careers. This is because they may wish to attend a particular event, prepare for a promotion night, or simply take a "mental wellness day," as it is known in the workplace. This one-time occurrence (truancy) is fairly common and is likely to cause issues, which can result in a variety of bad and even dangerous effects. Similarly, Onyele (2018) describes truancy as a delinquent act in which a youngster frequently misses school for no apparent cause. According to Heyne et al. (2019), students who are absent from school spend their time away from home and conceal their absence from their parents.

Truancy has been conceptualized from different perspectives of different scholars. Truancy means staying away from school without the permission of parents and school authorities by students. According to Baskerville (2019), truancy is defined as a deliberate absence from school without parental knowledge. In the same vein, Farrington (2002) said that truancy is when a student stays away from school without permission. A student who absents himself/herself from school without permission from school and home is a truant. Fowowe (2011) observed that irregular school attendance is interchangeably used with truancy which occurs when students fail to attend school without permission from the school. Similarly, Nwankwo (2011) stated that truancy among students is abnormal and leads to absenteeism. Truancy may refer to students who attend school but do not go to classes. Heilbrun (2003) observed that truancy is practiced by some students who fail to attend school, rather prefer to be with their friends. Globally, truancy is regarded as cankerworm that has caused set back and deficiency for attainment of viable educational pursuit by students. Truancy is one of the externalized behaviour disorders which seriously and negatively affects students' educational progress in schools (Animasahun, 2008). Likewise, Huizinga (2005) considered truancy as a deliberate absence from school on the part of students without the knowledge and permission of parents; absence of the students from school for which no reasonable or acceptable excuse is given. Collins (2010) conceptualizes truancy as students who have been registered in a school, but identified as not attending school as the law says they should. Truant students typically spend time out of school and away from their homes and tend to conceal their absence from their parents. Many students are absent from school for no legitimate reason.

#### *7.1 Types of truancy*

Ezeani (2006) categorized truancy into three types, which are habitual truancy, occasional truancy, and causal truancy. First, habitual truancy is regarded as the specific number of consecutive unexcused absences from school without the knowledge or consent of parents and school authorities. It occurs when a student (truant) constantly and continuously is been absent from school without the due knowledge or consent of his parents and school authority. It refers to mainly those students who miss numerous full days of school academic activities. Second, occasional truancy occurs when a student does not constantly and continuously absent himself/herself from school, it is irregular non-attendance of school. It is when a student is kept at home to help take care of his/her younger brother/sister. That is, it is when a student is absent from school with the consent of parents to help the family and it is not regular. Also, casual truancy occurs when students' absence from school is by chance and not regular. For instance, the student who remained lurking within the sound of the school bell, so that he/she could attend those lessons interested to him/her. That is, students tend to attend the classes of lessons that they are interested in.

### **8. Truancy and Academic Performance**

Educational success is usually linked to three primary factors: ability, aspiration, and opportunity, all of which are intertwined Green et al. (2018). Academic performance, according to Kulgemeyer and Riese (2018), is what a student can achieve when assessed on what he or she has learned. It refers to how well a student meets the requirements set forth by an educational institution. It suggests that a student's academic achievement is determined after he or she has completed specific academic subjects or curriculum. Poor academic performance is defined by Cao et al. (2018) as any performance that falls below a desired standard. A student who does not meet the minimum requirement is considered to have poor academic achievement in school. According to Cao et al. (2018), some people blame students, while others blame the government, and still others blame teachers for students' poor academic performance. Several studies have found that students' attendance has a positive correlation with their academic success. Lateness was more common among female students than male students, according to Warne et al. (2020). This happens as a result of their parents' involvement in household chores. High truancy rates have impact on overall school accomplishment by decreasing the rate of instruction, which is detrimental to all students, since it can also be an early warning sign of educational failure (Hoff, 2019). In fact, students with higher truancy rates have low academic achievement and are more likely to drop out, indicating that there is a link between student attendance and academic achievement (Gottfried, 2019).

Feniger et al. (2019) discovered in their study that truants repeat classes as a result of their absence from school and that even when they do not repeat, they do not feel better because they believe they are under qualified or

under accomplished for such a class. Their degree of achievement, according to Feniger et al (2019), is often low due to their lack of interest in studying. The majority of truants see schooling as a kind of punishment, while some go to school to satisfy their parents and guardians. Students who do not attend school will most likely be unable to complete the school's program. As a result, these students' total scores and performances are typically low. Students in south-western Nigeria, according to Ayinde and Olasehinde-Williams (2020), have a favourable association between truancy and academic performance. According to Robinson et al. (2018), truancy hurts children's educational attainment. Similarly, Vercellotti (2018) claims that the link between attendance and achievement may be understood simply by using common sense, as children who do not attend school struggle to understand what is taught. Students who miss school risk learning challenges, according to Nightingale et al. (2019).

### **9. Effects of Truancy**

According to Keppens and Spruyt (2020), the effects of truancy are extensive, with negative ramifications at numerous levels of society. Truancy has been linked to maladaptive behaviour, poor academic performance, school dropout, substance misuse, criminality, and teenage pregnancy. Evidence shows that truancy is a predictor of bad adult outcomes such as aggression, marital instability, employment instability, adult criminality, and incarceration in the long run. Furthermore, due to its link to delinquency, criminality and other bad adult outcomes, truancy has a detrimental impact on the community. The most evident consequence of persistent absenteeism is student dropout (Bauer et al., 2018). The most consistent finding about truancy and dropout rates is the link between the behaviour and high delinquency rates (Gerth, 2020). Substance addiction, gang membership, and later involvement in adult criminal conduct such as burglary, auto theft, and vandalism are examples of delinquency that lead to jail. In the United States, one out of every ten male dropouts, or one out of every four black male dropouts, is incarcerated or institutionalized on any given day (Peguero et al., 2019). Childhood truancy has been linked to negative social and health outcomes later in life.

Adults who were truant as teenagers are more likely than their counterparts who were not truant as adolescents to experience marital or employment instability, as well as psychological maladjustment (Seidu et al., 2021). Absenteeism, for example, has been shown to hurt a student's achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem, and employment prospects. Students who miss school are obviously behind their classmates in the classroom. As a result, low self-esteem develops, increasing the possibility of at-risk students dropping out of school (Gao et al., 2019). Jeffries (2020) found that the majority of students who are frequently truant in high school and primary fail to graduate in a longitudinal study of African-American boys. Failure to graduate is unquestionably linked to lower earning potential in adulthood and other negative outcomes. School absenteeism, according to Khan et al. (2019), leads to poor academic performance or underachievement. Achievement is harmed because truanting students disrupt the learning process and miss key classwork. Poor attendance causes students to lose confidence, since they are unable to comprehend the work assigned. As a result, disruptive behaviours become a means of gaining attention. This is because most adults today engage in the act of truancy throughout their school days, which has contributed to inactivity, joblessness, unemployment, and underemployment. Robinson (2020) discovered that truancy has a direct impact on students' academic achievement. Robinson, claims that when parents have too many children in the household and the father's financial situation is dire, he makes the decision not to send his children to school on a regular basis.

### **10. Positive Behaviour Support as Intervention Strategy for Curbing Truancy**

According to Kincaid et al. (2015), Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is an approach to behaviour support that includes an ongoing process of research-based assessment, intervention, and data-based decision-making focused on building social and other functional competencies, creating supportive contexts, and preventing the occurrence of problem behaviours. PBS relies on strategies that are respectful of a person's dignity and overall well-being, and that are drawn primarily from behavioural, educational, and social sciences, although other evidence-based procedures may be incorporated. PBS may be applied within a multi-tiered framework at the level of the individual and the level of larger systems (for example, families, classrooms, schools, social service programs, and facilities).

Over three decades, Positive PBS has increasingly become the model of choice in supporting people whose behaviour poses challenges to services. While there are several existing descriptions of PBS available (Allen et al., 2005; Carr et al., 2002; LaVigna & Willis, 2005), a definition by Gore et al., (2013) sought to bring together the fundamental elements of PBS in a way that could usefully inform future service, policy and research developments in the UK. PBS is a multi-component framework for supporting people with intellectual disabilities who engage in behaviour commonly described as challenging (Gore et al., 2013). PBS is one of many applications of the science of behaviour analysis. Like other natural sciences, Konstantinidou et al. (2023)

believe that behaviour analysis has three interconnected branches: the conceptual analysis of behaviour (radical behaviourism), the experimental analysis of behaviour (EAB), and the application of the science, applied behaviour analysis (ABA).

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is the science in which tactics derived from the principles of behaviour are applied systematically to improve socially significant behaviour, and experimentation is used to identify the variables responsible for behaviour change (Cooper et al., 2019). PBS utilises ABA-based procedures to focus on developing a functional assessment of the social and physical context within which challenging behaviour occurs; including direct behavioural observations, interviews, record reviews, and behaviour rating scales; the inclusion and involvement of key stakeholders, including the family, friends, other family members, care staff and/or therapists; developing, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of comprehensive person-centred systems of support aimed at enhancing the quality-of-life of the person using procedures; a clear description of the targeted behaviour, triggers or antecedents of the behaviour, maintaining consequences, and the function of the problem behaviour; strategies to reduce the probability of the problem behaviour, including environmental arrangements, personal support, changes in activities, prompts, and changes in expectations; teaching of skills to replace the problem behaviour, use positive reinforcement for promoting appropriate behaviour, and ensuring behaviour generalizes and is maintained via developing friendships and getting involved in the community (Konstantinidou et al., 2023).

Gore et al. (2013) emphasise that PBS is a multi-component framework for developing an understanding of behaviour that challenges rather than a single therapeutic approach, treatment or philosophy. It assesses the broad social and physical context in which the behaviour occurs and it is used to construct socially valid interventions, which enhance the quality-of-life outcomes for the persons and their caregivers. The framework has ten elements grouped into three overarching themes; values, theory/evidence base, and process. It is important to stress that these elements do not represent a ‘menu’ of options. Rather, the effective implementation of PBS necessitates a combination of the elements.

**Table 1: Key Components of Positive Behavioural Support**

Values	1. Prevention and reduction of challenging behaviour occur within the context of increased quality of life, inclusion, participation, and the defence and support of valued social roles.
	2. Constructional approaches to intervention design build stakeholder skills and opportunities and reject aversive and restrictive practices.
	3. Stakeholder participation informs, implements, and validates assessment and intervention practices.
Theory and Evidence-Based	4. An understanding that challenging behaviour develops to serve important functions for people.
	5. The primary use of constructional principles and procedures from behaviour analysis to assess and support behaviour change.
	6. The secondary use of other complementary, evidence-based approaches to support behaviour change at multiple levels of a system.
Process	7. A data-driven approach to decision-making at every stage.
	8. Functional assessment to inform function-based intervention.
	9. Multicomponent interventions to change behaviour (proactively) and manage behaviour (reactively).
	10. Implementation support, monitoring and evaluation of interventions over the long term.

Source: Gore et al. (2013)

According to the Positive Behavioural Support Coalition (2015), there are four main reasons to recommend Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) as an approach to support individuals with challenging behaviour.

1. PBS has been developing within a variety of settings in the United Kingdom over the past three decades, and there is now a strong practice base for its use.
2. The values underpinning PBS are entirely congruent with those within national policy and frameworks for people with intellectual disability.
3. There is a strong scientific evidence base for the technology that underpins PBS. Practitioner-researchers have been using single case experimental designs to evaluate intervention effectiveness for several decades. These have in turn been subject to several systematic reviews and meta-analyses. The

- most recent of these (Heyvaert et al., 2012) included over 250 single case design studies and confirmed that behavioural interventions deliver positive outcomes for individuals whose behaviour challenges.
4. PBS is recommended as best practice within professional practice documents (Royal College of Psychiatrists, British Psychological Society & Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists, 2007) and in national policy statements. In England, for example, this includes Meeting Needs and Reducing Stress (NHS Protect, 2013) Positive and Proactive Care (Department of Health, 2014), Ensuring Quality Services (National Health Service, 2014) and A Positive and Proactive Workforce (Department of Health, 2014), all of which champion the role of PBS in providing effective support to people with challenging behaviours.

### 11. Methodology

The researchers employed the action research design to conduct this study. Action research is a type of research design in which the researchers work hand-in-hand with other people to solve classroom problems. Action research design enables both researchers and learners to engage in activities to solve a classroom-related difficulty. The research design was employed specifically to help the Basic Seven learners at selected Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community of the New Juaben North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana to improve their class attendance and academic performances. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample the seventy-nine (79) learners of the Basic Seven classes for the study. The researchers took the learners through six weeks of intervention. The researchers used a combination of observation and teacher-made-test as instruments for the data collection exercise. The data gathered for the study were obtained from researchers' observations and students' test scores on three core subjects (English language, Mathematics, and Social Studies). To ascertain any difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores, the data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables of frequency count, percentages, mean scores and range.

### 12. Results

Table 2 presents the performance of the learners in the English comprehension exercise before the intervention was administered.

**Table 2: Learners' Pre-test Scores on English Comprehension Exercise**

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
10	0	0
9	0	0
8	0	0
7	9	12
6	7	8
5	16	20
4	14	18
3	12	15
2	10	13
1	11	14
Total	79	100

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 2, eleven, representing fourteen percent of the respondents scored one mark in the exercise; ten, representing thirteen percent of the respondents scored two marks in the exercise; twelve, representing fifteen percent of the respondents scored three marks in the exercise; fourteen, representing eighteen percent of the respondents scored four marks in the exercise; sixteen, representing twenty percent of the respondents scored five marks in the exercise; seven, representing eight percent of the respondents scored six marks in the exercise; and the remaining nine, representing twelve percent of the respondents scored seven marks in the exercise.

Table 3 presents the learners' pre-test scores for mathematics exercise before the intervention.

**Table 3: Learners' Pre-test Scores on Mathematics Exercise**

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
10	0	0
9	0	0
8	0	0
7	0	0
6	9	12
5	17	22
4	15	19
3	14	18
2	13	16
1	11	14
Total	79	100

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 3, eleven, representing fourteen percent of the respondents scored one mark in the exercise; thirteen, representing sixteen percent of the respondents scored two marks in the exercise; fourteen, representing eighteen percent of the respondents scored three marks in the exercise; fifteen, representing nineteen percent of the respondents scored four marks in the exercise; seventeen, representing twenty-two percent of the respondents scored five marks in the exercise; and the remaining nine, representing twelve percent of the respondents scored six marks in the exercise.

Table 4 presents the performance of the learners in Social Studies exercise before the intervention was administered.

**Table 4: Learners' Pre-test Scores on Social Studies Exercise**

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
10	0	0
9	0	0
8	3	4
7	7	9
6	15	19
5	18	23
4	13	16
3	6	8
2	7	9
1	10	13
Total	79	100

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 4, ten, representing thirteen percent of the respondents scored one mark in the exercise; seven, representing nine percent of the respondents scored two marks in the exercise; six, representing eight percent of the respondents scored three marks in the exercise; thirteen, representing sixteen percent of the respondents scored four marks in the exercise; eighteen, representing twenty-three percent of the respondents scored five marks in the exercise; fifteen, representing nineteen percent of the respondents scored six marks in the exercise; seven, representing nine percent of the respondents scored seven marks in the exercise; and the remaining three, representing four percent of the respondents scored eight marks in the exercise.

Table 5 presents the performance of the learners in English comprehension exercise after the intervention has been administered.



**Table 5: Learners' Post-test Scores for English Comprehension Exercise**

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
10	9	12
9	12	15
8	14	18
7	13	16
6	18	23
5	9	12
4	4	5
3	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
Total	79	100

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 5, four, representing five percent of the respondents scored four marks in the exercise; nine, representing twelve percent of the respondents scored five marks in the exercise; eighteen, representing twenty-three percent of the respondents scored six marks in the exercise; thirteen, representing sixteen percent of the respondents scored seven marks in the exercise; fourteen, representing eighteen percent of the respondents scored eight marks in the exercise; twelve, representing fifteen percent of the respondents scored nine marks in the exercise; and the remaining nine, representing twelve percent of the respondents scored ten marks in the exercise.

Table 6 presents the performance of the learners in Mathematics exercise after the intervention has been administered.

**Table 6: Learners' Post-test Scores for Mathematics Exercise**

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
10	11	14
9	14	18
8	13	16
7	17	22
6	18	23
5	6	8
4	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
Total	79	100

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 6, six, representing eight percent of the respondents scored five marks in the exercise; eighteen, representing twenty-three percent of the respondents scored six marks in the exercise; seventeen, representing twenty-two percent of the respondents scored seven marks in the exercise; thirteen, representing sixteen percent of the respondents scored eight marks in the exercise; fourteen, representing eighteen percent of the respondents scored nine marks in the exercise; and the remaining eleven, representing fourteen percent of the respondents scored ten marks in the exercise.

Table 7 presents the performance of the learners in Social Studies exercise after the intervention has been administered.

**Table 7: Learners' Post-test Scores on Social Studies Exercise**

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
10	13	16
9	15	19
8	14	18
7	18	23
6	11	14
5	8	10
4	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
Total	79	100

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 7, eight, representing ten percent of the respondents scored five marks in the exercise; eleven, representing fourteen percent of the respondents scored six marks in the exercise; eighteen, representing twenty-three percent of the respondents scored seven marks in the exercise; fourteen, representing eighteen percent of the respondents scored eight marks in the exercise; fifteen, representing nineteen percent of the respondents scored nine marks in the exercise; and the remaining thirteen, representing sixteen percent of the respondents scored ten marks in the exercise.

### 13. Discussion

The researchers observed through the class attendance registers that the learners' attendance to classes had improved significantly after the intervention (Positive Behavioural Support) had been administered. The finding confirms the conclusion by Konstantinidou et al. (2023) that behavioural interventions deliver positive outcomes for individuals who exhibit challenging behaviours. Also, the finding supports the view of Kincaid et al. (2015) that Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) is an effective intervention for preventing the occurrence of problem behaviours.

From Table 2, sixteen, representing twenty percent of the learners scored marks above the average fifty percent mark; sixteen, representing twenty percent of the learners scored the average mark of fifty percent; and the remaining forty-seven, representing sixty percent of the learners' scored marks below the average fifty percent mark. The learners' pre-test scores on reading comprehension exercise had a mean score of 3.9 marks. However, from Table 5, sixty-six, representing eighty-four percent of the learners scored marks above the fifty percent average mark; nine, representing twelve percent of the learners scored the average fifty percent mark; and the remaining four, representing five percent of the learners' scored marks below the average fifty percent mark. The learners' post-test scores on reading comprehension exercise had a mean score of 7.3 marks. The finding supports the conclusion of Jeffries (2020) that the majority of students who are frequently truant in school fail to graduate. Also, the finding agrees with the view of Khan et al. (2019), that school absenteeism leads to poor academic performances among learners. On the other hand, when learners are regular and punctual at school, they enjoy maximum instructional time and are for that reason, likely to perform creditably in their academic work.

From Table 3, nine, representing twelve percent of the learners scored marks above the average fifty percent mark; seventeen, representing twenty-two percent of the learners scored the average fifty percent mark; and the remaining fifty-three, representing sixty-seven percent of the learners scored marks below the average fifty percent mark. The mean score of learners' pre-test in mathematics exercise was 3.5 marks. On the other hand, from Table 6, seventy-three, representing ninety-two percent of the learners scored marks above the fifty percent average mark, and the remaining six, representing eight percent of the learners scored the average fifty percent mark. The learners' post-test scores on mathematics exercise is a mean score of 7.6 marks. The finding is in line with the discovery by Robinson (2020) that truancy has a direct negative impact on students' academic achievement. Similarly, the finding confirms the claim by Vercellotti (2018) that the link between attendance and achievement may be understood simply by using common sense, as children who do not attend school regularly struggle to understand what is taught. Thus, when learners attend school regularly, they are less likely to struggle to understand what is taught, leading to improved academic performances among learners.

From Table 4, twenty-five, representing thirty-two percent of the learners scored marks above the average fifty percent mark; eighteen, representing twenty-three percent of the learners scored the average fifty percent mark; and the remaining thirty-six, representing forty-six percent of the learners scored marks below the average fifty percent mark. The mean score of learners' pre-test scores on Social Studies exercise was 4.4 marks. On the contrary, from Table 7, seventy-one, representing ninety percent of the learners scored marks above the fifty percent average mark, and the remaining eight, representing ten percent of the learners scored the average fifty percent mark. The learners' post-test scores on Social Studies had a mean score of 7.7 marks. The finding coincides with the conclusion by Gottfried (2019) that students with higher truancy rates have low academic achievement and are more likely to drop out of school. Also, the finding corresponds with the view of Hoff (2019) that high truancy rates have impact on overall school accomplishment by decreasing the rate of instruction, which is detrimental to all students, since it can also be an early warning sign of educational failure. Contrary to the views of Gottfried (2019) and Hoff (2019), learners who demonstrate less truant behaviour are likely to enjoy an increasing rate of instruction which will lead to improved academic performances.

#### 14. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the observation made by the researchers, it can be concluded that the school attendance of the truant Basic Seven learners at public basic schools in the Asokore Community improved, after the learners had been taken through the interventional activities. Also, comparing the mean scores of the learners' pre-test scores and post-test scores, it can be concluded that PBS as an intervention for checking truancy, improved learners' academic performances.

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Teachers at Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community need to put in place mechanisms (for example Positive Behavioural Support) to identify at risk learners at the early stage to prevent truancy from degenerating into absenteeism and finally school dropout.
2. Class teachers need to pay attention to the needs of individual learners so that the necessary guidance and counselling services could be rendered to deserving learners as early as possible.
3. Authorities of Public Basic Schools in the Asokore Community needs to collaborate with other stakeholders including government, teachers, parents, opinion leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and learners to ensure that learners attend school regularly and remain in school till graduation.

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