School Refusal or Truancy Challenges: A Special Need for the Collaboration?

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Abstract

School has an important role in determining the quality and students' indication as well as the success factors of a student. Students who achieve high success in academic fields are led by teachers with effective leadership and learning skills. Indeed, the success of a student requires the cooperation of various special needs parties with good and superior characters. Selection and intervention procedures of a school should follow a verified method. The whole process needs to go through the phase of validity and reliability to ensure the quality and height of the quality of any interventions given towards outstanding academic and personality of a person. Punishments directly according to absenteeism data, warning letters and parental consultations are very helpful and improved in terms of the requirements of counselling guidance units to provide early prevention to prevent chronic and alarming conditions. Numerous studies have shown that, apart from school factors, teachers or credibility counsellors, parents, peers should also be together in providing cooperation towards achieving this school refusal or truancy challenges. This paper will discuss in terms of the needs and interventions of school refusal or truancy who are effective as well as a more objective mechanism framework through the interventions that can be applied to teachers or counsellors who will help spearhead the personality development of student towards later.

Keywords

Collaboration, Education, School Refusal, School Truancy, Malaysia

1. Introduction

School refusal or truancy symptoms are one of the serious problems faced among students. School refusal not only implicates the process of learning at

school but also at risk for students to engage in delinquent cases (Baier 2016). Truancy is one of the increasingly significant disciplinary problems. There are various factors that cause students to engage in truancy which is attributed to teachers, student attitudes, peers and parents where they greatly influence students engaging with school refusal symptoms.

Truancy problems should not be underestimated because it is likely that school refusal students will be used by negative elements to do something harmful to society. This problem should be overcome immediately to avoid the onset of various other adverse symptom strings from skipping behavior. What are the causes that cause students to take action not to attend school or called school refusal? Truancy is a type of school presence problem that is often associated with absence in schools. The ideal solution for school to collaborate with other stakeholders in dealing with the issue of truancy is still at its infancy (Ingul, Havik, & Heyne, 2019; Rocque et al., 2017).

Students are involved with heavy disciplinary misconduct, having a not good record of academic achievement can lead to further cases of hanging and disposal of schools if not.

2. Interventions for School Refusal/Truancy

Intervention program means interventions related to psychological aspects in education in particular being used to educate or guide students with behavioral problems or learning problems. The education intended here includes giving and sharing information so that the students can handle their lives better (Ahmad, 2013).

Effective guidance increases a person's motivation at least to one higher level of change, increased level of self-ability and decision consideration. The intervention approach gives a different effect depending on the length of time of treatment, guidance and rehabilitation to a person (Nosen & Woody, 2013).

Recommendations through research are indispensable, should not take into account all truancy students without any specific clusters being used as targets based on counselling sessions exclusively for records on the absence of pupils in schools as well as the intervention of school administrators and disciplinary units in particular (Keppens et al., 2019). The needs of parties involved with truancy teenagers should implement interventions that are appropriate to the needs of truancy teenagers to reduce school refuse behavior of school teenagers (Hashim, 2016).

Interventions through the *T-Trace Method* in increasing the attendance of students to school and increasing the number of student attendance to school including by using the approach "*Talking Token Chips*", "*Token Race Ranking*" *and* "*Token Target*". However the approach used to increase students' attendance to school cannot rely solely on the use of tokens instead of intrinsic motivational methods to increase the attendance of students to school should be implemented (Jenny & Yusof, 2016).

Disciplinary misconduct and students are a synonymous and undeniably most

pupils will be involved directly and indirectly and stemming from various factors and are believed to have a consequence later on. Overseas and local studies have proven that prevention is said to be the best way to provide interventions to pupils involved with disciplinary misconduct. Early prevention with careful planning is expected to help teachers and facilitators in realizing the wishes of the ministry, education department, education office, even schools to achieve target and KPI declining skipping symptoms, as stated:

"*The most effective model for truancy intervention is prevention. Attendance monitoring, enhancing school culture and community, ensuring welcoming schools and school environments, increasing student and family engagement, and mentoring students for academic success are effective in-school strategies for preventing truancy.*"

(*Catalog of Truancy Intervention Models*, 2018)

3. Collaboration of Various Stakeholders

Collaboration of various stakeholders contributed slightly to the reduction of truancy rates. Teaching style is one of the factors that can contribute to the level of truancy in a school. Teaching style influences pupils to school refusal (Nawawi et al., 2016). Chronic truancy issue is a very noticeable problem in schools. The school's climate may play an important role in influencing chronic rates of school refusal issues among students. The role of various parties and effective prevention and interventional approaches is necessary to improve the school's climate and reduce chronic truancy issues (Eck et al., 2017).

In Malaysia, Table 1 displayed the statistics of top five behavioral misconducts done by school pupils over five years period (2015-2019), in which school refusal/truancy top the table (in numbers and percentage).

It can be seen that the number of students who commit truancy is high, and the number of students requiring counselling sessions is also public and requires strong cooperation among well-trained and accredited counsellors to handle the sessions best. Hence, it can be seen in the need to prepare an intervention in dealing with the symptoms of students' disciplinary misconduct especially

Table 1. Top five behavioral misconduts done by Malaysian school pupils (2015-2019).

Types of Disciplinary Cases	Year, Number of Cases, Percentage				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Vandalisme	91 (0.42%)	147 (0.88%)	157 (1.06%)	100 (0.52%)	90 (0.45%)
Smoking	447 (2.10%)	534 (3.19%)	518 (3.49%)	370 (1.91%)	633 (3.19%)
School Refusal/Truancy	7900 (36.58%)	4990 (29.80%)	5044 (33.95%)	8745 (45.09%)	9587 (48.28%)
Criminal Behaviors	562 (2.60%)	635 (3.79%)	477 (3.21%)	425 (2.19%)	422 (2.13%)
Rude Behaviors/Savage	1994 (9.23%)	1667 (9.15%)	1287 (8.66%)	1504 (7.75%)	1478 (7.44%)

Source: Sistem Salah Laku Disiplin Murid (SSDM), Ministry of Education.

truancy which is become worsened. Truancy and issues related to absenteeism to schools are serious problems nationwide, while school-based punishments cause harm to more students instead of not helping in the effort to reduce those symptoms (Mallett, 2016).

In order to address the problem of truancy, there are several strategies that have been carried out such as active vision of parents, modification of school environment and implementation "leverage points" to reduce the issue of school refusal (Gase et al., 2016). Several factors associated with the causes that led to the onset of absenteeism and school refusal were due to poor peer relationships, perceptions related to the teacher's teaching atmosphere in the classroom, the factors of the stability of the individual and the families of the students (Havik, Bru, & Ertesvåg, 2015).

Truancy is a major social issue linked to a variety of lifelong adverse effects, including achievements in weak fields of education, drug and alcohol abuse, and antisocial behavior. Intervention requirements aimed at reducing school refusal problems which receive collaboration from school-based police officers to programs that reward good attendance to community-based interventions (Mazerolle et al., 2017). Students' truancy are negatively related to academic self-perception, attitudes towards teachers and schools, assessment of goals, motivation and self-regulation, and academic performance. There are also factors that students' absence is different in comparison to the level of education and income of parents (Balkıs, Arslan, & Duru, 2016).

Community sharing helps to expand early identification programs to track teenagers at risk of absence to school (Chu et al., 2018). The concept of voluntary absenteeism realizes the motivational factors affecting the presence of students, this happens when considering an unattractive school environment that is often equated to failure, some students can choose to avoid not being present at school intentionally (Birioukov, 2016). School climate may play an important role in influencing chronic rates of absenteeism in schools (Eck et al., 2017).

In the context of increasing student self-discipline, students engaged in disciplinary misconduct especially school refusal and absenteeism, the students have not yet achieved a level of awareness of the importance of attendance and involvement in school activities as well as teaching sessions in their schools. The Ministry of Education Malaysia is able to slaughter energy and resources in order to achieve important objectives in various ways towards the incidence of students. In the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, the teaching quality also states that the quality of teaching is the most effective platform for the success of government initiatives in order to enhance the students' success by implementing and developing 21st century skills, critically-minded and creative, as well as promoting the personality development of students as a whole and consistently.

In addition to the policies set out in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, specifically in the sixth shift of encamping Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (JPN), Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah (PPD) and schools to provide specific

needs-based solutions for which each PPD will be able to customize the support provided to the school, from the presence of students to the placement of principals or headmasters and teachers, the ninth shift in cooperation with parents, communities, and the private sector is widely demonstrated which can be shown that such involvement leaves a significant impact and benefits including higher grades and low students absences, and in the tenth shift, in turn, created a desire to maximize succession.

The implications and effects of continuous truancy without any prevention can contribute to the issue of dropouts in the education system. Hence, some actions to be taken in the effort to improve students' self-discipline such as consistent planning in improving self-concept, self-esteem and students' self-confidence while providing motivational impetus in lessons, changing the stigma of parents who don't care about children's education, changing the inspiration and expectation of too high parents beyond their children's capacity, making the child's ability, increasing the sense of belonging to students towards school as well as increasing student engagement in organizing activities devoted to school for its students. Feared this misconduct also allows the student to lose their responsible nature, will lag behind in lessons and may be involved in negative activities

4. Proposed Interventions' Conceptual Framework

Intervention is a very wide and most interested field to do research and research but this aspect is most difficult to understand. Not an easy thing to determine the best and effective intervention features. Preventive interventions remain an implicit concept. Discussion on interventions focuses heavily on the cooperation of various parties based on various changes in thought, emotion and behavior. Nevertheless, discussions based on one's self-concept factors are increasingly the focus of discussion on behavioral changes to more positive, there are spiritual and physical elements to respond to behavior to achieve self-satisfaction; self-concept factor became one of the factors that influenced the formation of vandalism behavior among students (Gan, 2015); positive relationship between non-academic self-concept with students achievement motivation (Bakar, Daud, & Azmi, 2016); positive self-concept is important for students to direct their behavior according to discipline (Reski, Taufik, & Ifdil, 2017); psychological well-being is often associated with increased levels of self-esteem (Andrade, Redondo, & Razdan, 2018); self-concept and self-esteem are seen from a development perspective that can provide them with individual general adaptation and quality of life (Alsaker & Kroger, 2006).

Students are those who are dripping in their youth, they are also the successors for the development of the country and the determinant of the fall in the wake of the next generation. Nevertheless, there were too many grievances that teenagers engaged in various unhealthy activities such as social symptoms and criminal acts that led them to tend to commit various disciplinary misconduct in schools (Kamil, 2013; Ward, Sylva, & Gresham, 2010). This predision is attri-

butable to various factors that cause the student to be considered to be at risk. Among them are:

1) Related to school factors covering school organizations, school climate, teaching systems, curriculum content and teacher culture.

2) Related to the students themselves include the self-concept of students, students' aspirations and expectations of his future and belief in their academic capabilities.

3) Community-related factors include community views on risky students and community cooperation with the school.

4) Family-related factors include socioeconomic status, parents' aspirations and expectations for children as well as the determination of parents to accept the fact that their child is a risky student.

Thus, extensive reading and literature surveys have opened up a team and the minds of researchers in an attempt to form a framework of intervention concepts to help school refusal students in behavioral, emotional and thoughtful changes through the formation of the students' own self-concept. Past studies using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) emphasize on the sharing of three fundamentals that support each other i.e. 1) basic thought influences behavior, 2) the thought process can be controlled and modified and 3) the desire to alter behavior can be influenced by changing thinking. For counselling purposes, it can identify eight components that make up a self-concept, i.e., Self-identity, Self-satisfaction, Self-sufficient behavior, Physical-self, Moral-self, Ethical-self, Personal-self, Family-self, and Social-self.

5. Conclusion

In a nutshell, efforts to assist truancy students should be done by school counsellors, taking into account the mental, emotional and self-concept aspects of this student in school. Specific interventions or treatments are also required to see the effects on the increase in the self-concept of these truancy students after the interventions are given. There are many factors associated with truancy issues in terms of themselves, family, peers, electronic media, school environment and teacher teaching style in class. Therefore, counselling interventions and psychological factors are also important in the personality formation programmes such as implementing guidance programmes, providing information, identifying self-ability, making changes, decision making, determining goals and so on. The field of education and disciplinary misconduct cases are intertwined with each other. Disciplinary cases are important issues that need to be addressed to see the success and incidence of students in academic and personality development (Rahim, Yasin, & Tahar, 2016).

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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