

Research Article

Impact Factors of Student's Abandon Learning Activities: Case Study in Dili

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Abstract.

This research aims to explore the factors causing the problem of abandoned learning and gather perspectives to solve the problem of abandoned learning activities. This is a case study with a qualitative approach. This study was conducted in 18 schools, where the informants were 82 people from June to December 2021. The result of this study discovered internal and external factors. The internal factors included students' interest and motivation, discipline and attitude, disinterest, and physiological. The external factors were family, teachers, school, and peers. While dealing with these factors, researchers concluded that school conditions and the quality of teachers promoted non-violent education. The results suggested that schools must design and reinforce the control instruments and implement school counseling. The Ministry of Education recruits competent and professional teachers; parents and society in general establish a co-operative spirit, paying attention to the students to obey the rules. The next research needs to involve another subject, schools at different levels.

Keywords: factors, abandon, learning activities

1. Introduction

A school is a place where formal education activities or learning activities take place in addition to being a formal institution to increase students' knowledge, and skills. It is also a second home for students to spend time [1]. Therefore, schools need to prepare in good conditions so that students feel comfortable participating in learning activities because learning outcomes are determined by reactions to intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli from the surrounding environment [2], [3], [4], so it can shape and change a person's situations.

Indeed, a learning activity can be carried out when there are components such as teachers and students because these two subjects are the protagonists in the teaching-learning activities. Success or not learning activities are not only determined by teacher

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interventions but also because of student participation in these activities. This participation reflects proactive and willingness to participate in the teaching-learning activity [5]. Students who are interested in learning will actively participate, while students who are not interested will leave out learning activities.

Truancy has recently caused concern to both academics and education professionals. This concern arises because truancy is an unproductive act [6], it will imply the students' academic success [7], especially weakening the ability to acquire knowledge, innovation, and ability to achieve personal and professional goal [8], causing school failure and school dropout [9], and mainly, causing failure in the study [10]. It is considered that this educational phenomenon is very complex [11] and serious, so the attention of the family, school, and relevant minister is essential. Ignorance of these problems can affect the future of students and the future of the State of Timor-Leste, mainly causing socioeconomic problems because it does not train qualified young people to contribute to national development.

Simply, truancy is action leaving the process of teaching learning at school with invalid and inconsiderable reasons [12], [13], [14]. This act is performed by being absent from school all day [15] or by not attending some classes [16] with false reasons and without justification [16].

Student absence in the teaching-learning process is classified into two main components: intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. Intrinsic factor arises from the student's own personality, especially related to behavior, internal conflict, sadness, immaturity, or lack of motivation [17], also including lack of interest in any subject.

The phenomenon of truancy is a phenomenal case and occurs at all levels of education [18]. There are many studies related to this phenomenon, mainly studies on the level and factors that cause truancy. For example, in the Middle East context, Randa conducted a study in Turkey and the results showed that in 2012 there was 89.6% of truancy in one month. Meanwhile, Bazhouni [19] carried out a study in Lebanon, which involved many students, and the results showed that family factors, student interests, teaching modalities and teaching content were the causes of truancy. This study also confirms that improving teaching strategies can reduce this behavior.

In the European context, a study carried out by the International University of Valencia, Spain, showed that in 2015 there were 28% of cases [20]. Baier [21] conducted a study in Germany, focusing on school factors, the results showed that bullying attitudes, teachers, and peers, made students afraid to attend class and on the other hand, the respect of teachers and social issues between students prevented them from truancy.

In the region where Timor-Leste is located, Asia region, Damayanti and Setiawati, through your studies in Indonesia, reports that in 2013 the case of students truancy of secondary school in the city of Surabaya reached 59.6% [22] and in the city of Padang reached 53.33% [23]. Other studies [6], [24], [25], in Pakistan and Malaysia, shows that internal factors, especially student personality [26], and external factors, especially socio-economic conditions of the family, student parks, teachers, and school environment affect truancy behavior.

Truancy is a big problem and attracts a lot of attention from governments, academics, and researchers to find out, causes, types, and solutions to the problem. Many studies have been done to prevent this problem. The results of the study show that this problem can be prevented by home visits [27], creating a program of transforming collaboration between the school and the community and creating relationships, and increasing the frequency & quality of communication with parents [27], [28], way or strategy of teachers, implement the way of discipline tracking and continuous monitoring and evaluation [29], give rewards to students [30], collaboration between school and communities and early identification through the effort of school screening [31].

According to Micheal, five alternatives can be used to prevent truancy, such as the need for parental involvement in school activities, forming prevention programs in schools, forming specific rules for students who like to practice truancy, motivating parents to care about this problem, and involving law enforcement [32]. Rivers mentioned that there are four things that can be used to drastically minimize the problem of truancy, such as intervention from schools, compartmental support, family and community interventions, and intervention from mentors [33].

In addition, there are also programs designed to minimize these problems. A cooperative transformation program between schools and the community is a good way to prevent truancy [34]. Cardwell [35] also designed a program to prevent the truancy problem known as the ability school engagement program. This program demonstrates the additional benefits of preventing this anti-social behavior [36]. Beyond the program, many countries implement laws on truancy and legal contracts as a way to avoid this attitude. These countries are the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Singapore, Bahamas, Malaysia, and another country in the United States [37], [38].

Viewed from the context of Timor Leste, especially in Dili, it shows that many students do not actively participate in learning activities. A dilemmatic question arises: why do students have to act truant is it because the students themselves do not have the desire to learn, or because of other factors?

Based on preliminary observation in schools in Dili it showed that in 2017 there were 13 cases of ESG18, 246 cases of ESG15, and 46 cases of ESG4. In 2018 there were 23 cases of ESG18 and 201 cases of ESG15. In 2019 there are 15 cases of ESG18, 247 cases of ESG15, 28 cases of ESG5, 157 cases of ESG14, and 366 cases of ESG8. On the other hand, the World Bank reported that in 2003 the biggest and most serious problem in education was student absenteeism from school, and this problem reached about 2.2 percent per day for all levels of school with reason, sick and helping families [39], tired of studying, does not understand the material, is late for school, does not do homework, and lacks concentration in class [40].

One way to avoid students from this situation is to have maximum control from the school, the teacher must approach students. Because, according to [41] teachers must find ways to involve students in situations or conditions created by teachers. In addition, teachers must also create a learning environment that does not make students feel bored to learn.

Based on the art study discussed, indicates that there have been many studies on the intensity of abandonment of learning and the factors that stimulate the attitude of abandonment of the learning process, which usually includes the student, family, school, peers, and school environment component, but these studies only performed in the context of Malaysian [6], [24], Indonesia [22], [23], Pakistan [25], Lebanon [19], United State of America [42], [43], Germany [21], and Spain [20]. There is no research that focuses on the dropout phenomenon in the context of Timor-Leste, especially on the factors that lead students to drop out and how to minimize this problem.

This research will fill that gap, with the aim of (1) exploring the factors/reasons that cause the phenomenon of abandoning learning activities, and (2) gathering perspectives to solve the problem of abandoning learning activities.

2. Methods

Considers that the aim of this study is to explore the factors that lead students to abandon learning activities and explore the perspectives of strategies to minimize the behavior of abandoning learning activities, so the descriptive qualitative approach is more relevant. According to [44] the objective of the qualitative study is to describe and understand very well the phenomenon or reality of the problem studied. The case study aims to study intensively on the basis of the problem, situation, and position of an event that is happening, and also the interaction of the social environment [45]. This

study started on the 12th of July to the 16th of August 2021, involving 82 informants from 18 schools. These schools are 5 public schools and 13 private schools.

3. Result

Based on the research conducted, it was found that there are various factors that causeschool truancy, which are generally classified into two types of factors, namely internal factors and external factors.

The internal factors found consisted of psychological factors, such as student disinterest in the material, interests and motivations, student discipline and attitude, addiction to digital technology, and physiological factors, such as the student's health condition

The following is the informant's explanation:

"Sometimes I like to be late for school, lazy to take lessons, and also lazy to study [S58, ESG1]".

"Students nowadays like to abandon learning activities because, in this city of Dili, all schools, especially public schools, are mostly students who are not afraid of their teachers [D9, ESG14]".

"Because I play games more, WhatsApp, Facebook, especially at night, so that during school hours I often feel sleepy, so I have to skip class [S47, ESG11]".

"I often skip class and I am too lazy to go to school because there are some materials that I don't like, such as mathematics because there are too many calculations and multimedia technology material because there is no practice [S54, ESG3]".

"Sometimes I skip class because I'm on my period (menstruation) [S61, SG8]".

External factors consist of:

a) School factors such as high numbers of students, high hours, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, unfavorable school environment, extracurricular activities, education system, and legal framework.

The following is the informant's explanation:

"Because our class has too many students, around the eighties, so it's too noisy and makes it impossible to concentrate and there is no motivation to participate in learning activities [S29, ESG1]".

"Skip the class because sometimes the subject matter lasts too long [S26, SG8]".

"Because in our school, every class table and chair is not enough, so we can't sit down, so we just skipped the class. Besides that, our school also has all the toilets

broken. So if we want to urinate or defecate, sometimes we have to go to people's homes, if not, we just go home [S11, ESG15]".

"Because our school is an open environment, there are people and transportation that go in and out so that it interferes our learning concentration, and this open environment is also very easy to skip class [S6, ESG2]".

"Actually, our school used to have extracurricular activities, but not anymore, so there are students who are lazy to come to school and are lazy to participate in learning activities [S27, ESG5]".

"In my opinion, because our education system does not have an authentic system that requires what way to educate our children. But we only adopt systems from other countries [M3, ESG16]".

"This problem is now very trending, because of the regulations implemented by the Ministry of Education, which prohibit not hitting and punishing students, so this is a very good opportunity for students to do things freely [Ad2, ESG18]".

b) Teacher factors such as weak teaching methods or strategies, overwork, bullying, and teacher attitude & indiscipline. The following is the informant's explanation:

"Because they don't like the teacher's way of teaching, because the teacher only orders photocopies, but doesn't do explanations, such as physics material, sometimes there are teachers who tell us to copy the material and he goes out and relax with other teachers outside [S24, ESG9]".

"In our school, sometimes teachers are not very active, so we also choose to just go home [S17, ESG15]". "Because I don't like teachers who like to hit, be rude, and like to scold [S50, ESG17]".

c) Family factors, such as lack of financial support, support for the family economy, lack of family education, and support for the household chores. The following is the informant's explanation:

"Students often skip school, because some have to go home to help their families work and earn a living [D9, ESG14]".

"Because of the lack of education in the family, students do things that are inappropriate to do, such as being lazy to take lessons [Ad2, ESG18]".

d) Peer factors such as bullying, and peer influence. The following is the informant's explanation:

"Sometimes I don't take part in learning activities because of the influence of my friends [S44, ESG7]". "Because at our school, there are friends who are rude, like to beat and ask for money [S8, ESG4]".

In addition to the problems presented by the informants, there are perspectives to prevent and reduce these problems, such as improvement to school conditions through improving facilities and equipment at school, improvement of school infrastructure, and school environment improvement. The following is the informant's explanation:

"We ask the Ministry of Education to facilitate materials such as computers so that we can practice on multimedia technology subject matter, and build school fences [S54, ESG3]".

"We ask the school to reduce the number of students in each class so that we can study well and that we can focus if too many students make noise and we can't concentrate. To the ministry of education to build more classrooms [S29, ESG1]".

"We ask the Ministry of Education to pay attention to our school, move the people who occupy the school land, and build a school fence so that there is no longer any interference from outside [S5, ESG8]".

Improving the quality of teachers through improving the manner and method of teaching, pedagogical training improves teacher recruitment, and improving the disciplined attitude of teachers. The following is the informant's explanation:

"Ask the teacher, when teaching, we have to give a lot of explanations and explain properly and correctly, don't just tell us to write and make photocopies. Because of a good explanation, we will understand, so that during the exam we do not face any problems. [S50, ESG17]".

"I request the Ministry of Education to provide training to teachers, and recruit qualified teachers to teach

[S53, ESG10]".

"Suggests the school to choose the teachers who serve to teach and the teachers to come full time, don't come it's up to you [S44, ESG7]".

"To the Ministry of Education to replace teachers who are not qualified and do not know how to teach well. Because most teachers only like to leave the subject matter and ask for photocopies until the lesson ends, they only come to take attendance and also some teachers who tell us to give money to get grades [S31, ESG7]".

Promotion of non-violence education. The following is the informant's explanation:

"Teachers should continue to teach according to the method, but when students do not understand, please explain well, teach well, because there are students whose mentality is still weak. Therefore, when teaching, don't shout at students, please explain well, for sure students will concentrate on the material [S14, ESG5]".

4. Discussion

The factors that cause students to do truancy cannot be separated from internal and external factors. According to [46] internal factors are factors that come from students. The results obtained show that the factors included in the internal factors are psychological factors, such as student disinterest in the material, interests and motivations, student discipline and attitude, addiction to digital technology, and school culture shock. The second factor is the physiological factor, such as the student's health condition. Lubis [47] in their research found that the factors included in the internal factors were laziness to study, not concerned with learning and incorrect thinking about learning. In addition, there are also other research findings on internal factors such as student motivation [48], student interest [49], student attitude [50], social media [51], learning materials [52] and physiological conditions [53].

The next factor is the external factor. According to [46], external factors are factors that do not come from students. In connection with these external factors, the factors found in this study are a) School factors such as high numbers of students, high hours, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, unfavorable school environment, extracurricular activities, education system, and legal framework. b) Teacher factors such as weak teaching methods or strategies, overwork, bullying, and teacher attitude & indiscipline. c) family factors, such as lack of financial support, support for the family economy, lack of family education, and support for the household chores. d) Peer factors such as bullying, and peer influence.

Previous studies have also explained that family factors, peers, school facilities, school environment [54], learning models and strategies, teacher feedback [55] and academic, social, and emotional development problems, all what are the risks faced by students who are often involved in truancy [56]. In addition, there are research results that are not much different from previous studies. This study also found different triggering factors for truancy that have not been described in previous studies, namely: the legal framework which is included in the external factor, and the school's cultural shock which is included in the internal factor.

Besides finding the factors that cause truancy, several perspectives were also found to overcome these problems, such as (1) infrastructure improvement, (2) improvement of facilities and equipment, (3) improving the school environment, (4) improving the manner and method of teaching, (5) promotion of non-violence education, (6) recruitment of professors on merit, (7). formation of pedagogy, (8) improved communication skills, and (9) improved attitude and discipline.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, it is concluded that, in general, the factors that cause students to do truancy are internal and external factors. The internal factors discovered are (a) psychological factors such as students' interest and motivation, students' discipline and attitude, disinterest in the subject, school culture shock, and addiction to digital technology. (b) Physiological factors such as the health status of students. External factors are (a) School factors such as high numbers of students, high hours, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, unfavorable school environment, extracurricular activities, education system, and legal framework. (b) Factor of teachers with, weak teaching methods or strategies, exaggerated tasks, bullying attitude, and teachers' attitude & indiscipline. (c) Family factors such as lack of financial support, supporting the family economy, lack of family education, and supporting domestic chores. (d) Peer factors such as bullying, and peer influence. Based on the factors found, there are also several perspectives from the informants on how to prevent or reduce the phenomenon of abandoning learning activities such as (1) Improvement of school conditions, through improvement of school facilities and equipment, improvement of school infrastructure, and improving the school environment; (2) Improving the quality of teachers, through improving the manner and method of teaching, training in pedagogy, improving the recruitment of teachers, and improving the disciplined attitude of teachers; and (3) Promotion of non-violence education.

Recommendation

Based on the research results and conclusions, the researchers would like to recommend to:

1. Schools, to develop and strengthen the implementation of instruments to control, observe, and guide students to prevent and reduce the problem of abandoned learning activity.
2. The Ministry of Education, to recruit competent and professional teachers in order to improve the quality of learning so as to prevent disciplinary behavior in schools.
3. Parents and society in general, must establish good relations with schools and keep trying to nurture children so that they are not involved in violating the rules and norms that apply at school.
4. The next researcher, is to conduct research involving subjects from all levels of education and also apply it to schools in rural areas. So that it can gather a broad

perspective on abandoned learning activities. In addition, it is also possible to research to determine the level of the problem of abandoning learning activity and its effect on students' academic achievement.

Conflicts of interest

In this study, the authors state that there is no conflict related to research activities, the writing process, and the publication process.

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