Differences in Students' Truancy in Terms of Gender and Age

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Article Info	Abstract
	Truancy is a situation in which students violate the rules and regulations at school. Based on this background, the present study investigated 3 vocational schools in Rembang Regency. It aimed at determining differences in truancy in terms of gender, determining truancy in terms of age, and determining school, personal and family factors underlying this violation. To do so, cross-sectional design was employed. The cluster technique divided the population into subgroups, where the subgroups consisted of the same elements in 248 samples. Following the grouping, the samples data were collected using a truancy scale. Then, the *Microsoft excel* software was used to generate the respondents' characteristics. Based on the chi square test, there were differences in truancy between gender and age.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is not only limited to reproductive maturation, but also other developments regarding the relationship between emotional maturity, cognitive abilities and decision making. Here if adolescents' emotional management, cognitive maturity and decision making are still considered low, their development can be said as insignificant (Riswanto, 2019). In education, there are also obstacles that often occur in the student's learning process, namely truancy (Majid, et al., 2021).

Truancy often occurs in the Indonesia education. Based on Baskerville (2021) truancy is a long-term serious educational problem that has not been resolved in schools and positions truants as outsiders. Truants have various reasons to defend themselves to avoid severe punishment or receive disciplinary letters.

Hariyanto (2019) states truancy is deviant behavior that violates the rules. If this is not immediately resolved, it will have a bad impact. Truancy can also be said as the absence of students without a proper reason. Students' truancy habits will have a negative impact on them, including being punished, suspended, not being able to take exams, or even getting expulsion from school.

Minarni (2017) states several school factors causing truancy, namely personally strict regulations, truancy sanctions and assignments or homework at school. Personal factors here are related to the child's basic nature, including decreased motivation or loss of academic interest. Besides, family factor may influence it, such as disharmonious relationships with parents, incomplete families, parental parenting patterns and lack of parental participation in children's education. Actually, the worst factor comes from friends and environmental which facilities that make students feel comfortable just hanging out in that place, such as closed parking and stalls around the school.

According to Fatchurahman et al., (2018) truancy is certainly influenced by various factors, including family, the school environment, and factors from within.

Khadijah et al., (2016) state factors that cause students to engage in truancy are such as lack of parental supervision and control, children living independently and lack of learning discipline. Parental support in the learning process is significant in reducing students' truancy. This can be done by talking over or communicating gently and intensely regarding their learning progress and attendance at school. Parents and students can be warmer in openness and parents can monitor students' progress in the learning process both at school and at home at the same time.

Ahmad (2019) in his study found maladaptive behavior carried out by truants that can make them being enablers. Truancy will have a negative impact on students, namely decreasing interest in class, less success in academics, falling behind in class, understanding of subject matter lagging behind other friends, being expelled from school.

Suhid, et al (2012) consider truancy among students as a serious problem in several schools in Malaysia. This has an impact on the academic achievement of the students involved. Finally, it directly contributes a negative impact on human resources for the country's development. Apart from that, this problem of truancy will give rise to other social ills.

According to Fahiroh (2020) truancy in middle and high school is seen as a bad act, lying to oneself, lying to parents, showing laziness, causing someone to be disadvantaged, losing knowledge that should be obtained. Besides, truancy triggers a fear of being punished.

Keppens & Spruyt (2017) state that truancy is not understood as an individual phenomenon, but as a complex process of interaction between adolescents and their parents, peers, teachers and school staff. In relation to this, the preliminary study done by the researchers found students felt a lack of social ties, causing them to be free to consider skipping school. Shockingly, skipping class is often considered as the shortest and easiest way to satisfy basic needs and desires of adolescents who lack social ties may deviate from society's expectations, norms, and rules.

Nisa et al., (2020) in their study found several students who did not attend class, showed by the attendance list from the school counselor was resulted from the lack of self-control.

Damayanti & Setiawati (2013) in their study synthesize truancy factors and patterns into two, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include low motivation, low interest in learning, low emotional management, and low intellectual level. Meanwhile, the external factors include many things, namely family problems such as broken homes, mother discrimination, and physical abuse.

Based on all the descriptions above, the aim of this study was to determine differences in truancy behavior in terms of gender and age. It was hoped that the findings will give betterment to guidance and counseling services in schools.

METHODS

This study used a cross sectional design with the population of students at 2 vocational schools, totaling 869 students. By referring to Isaac and Michael's 5% error rate, the sample size obtained 248 students. They were then sampled using the cluster random sampling technique. Finally, it resulted 248 students with the age between 15-18 years as the samples.

In this study, the researchers used one instrument, namely the truancy scale. Data regarding the presence of truant students were measured using a truancy scale consisting of 40 items with each item has five scaling options (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). In terms of validity test, 34 of 40 items tested were valid. Meanwhile, the instrument gained alpha reliability coefficient of 0.824. Further data were analyzed using Spearman rho test analysis with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics 26.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' truancy data are explained in the following table 1. The number of students who skipped the classes for less than three days were 204 students with a percentage of 82.3%. The number of students who skipped the classes for four until thirteen days were 31 students with a percentage of 82.3%. Lastly, the number of students who skipped the classes for more than 14 days were 13 students with a percentage of 82.3%.

Table 1. Truancy Trends

Category		Truancy Frequency			X^2	p
		<3 day	4-13 day	>14 day		
Gender	Male	53	21	13	50.00	<0.01
	Female	151	10	0		
Age	15-16 years	149	22	9	8.68	>0.05
	17-18 years	55	9	4		
Total	f	204	31	13		
	%	82.3	12.5	5.2		

Table 1 shows that there are gender differences in students' truancy (X^2 (2)=50.00, p < 0.01). There were 53 male students and 151 female students who had a truancy frequency of less than 3 days. Then there were 21 male students and 10 female students who had a truancy frequency of 4 to 13 days. Then there were only male students, namely 13 male students who had a frequency of truancy for more than 14 days.

Based on table 1, 149 students aged 15-16 years had a tendency to truant, and 55 students aged 17-18 years had a frequency of truancy of less than 3 days. In addition, 22 students aged 15-16 years, and 9 students aged 17-18 years had a frequency of truancy of 4 to 13 days. There were also 9 students aged 15-16 years, and 4 students

aged 17-18 years whose truancy frequency was more than 14 days. Overall, the results of the X2 analysis for age indicated that there was no difference in age on students' truancy tendency ($X2 (6)=8.68$, $p > 0.05$).

Based on the findings, it was known that truancy could be practiced by both male and female students. However, there found no tendency for students to skip school at school in terms of age.

Tripathy & Sahu (2020) revealed that truancy is a behavioral problem associated with students in schools at all levels of education. An approach between students and teachers is needed to overcome the problem of it.

In this study, it was found that both male and female students engaged in truancy. It is in line with a study done by Supriatna & Rohaeti (2022) that truancy is not only played by male students, even many female students also engage in truancy.

In this study, the frequency of truancy among male students was higher than female students. This is in accordance with a conclusion in Irena's study (2011) that male students have a high frequency of truancy from school than female students. This means that some students who engage this behavior do not pay attention to school rules, so they tend to ignore and behave as they please. Male students tend to feel more active so they feel freer and looser in opposing the rules and moral values they adhere to regarding what is good and bad in society.

Another finding was female students showed a frequency of skipping school in the low category. This showed the hesitation of female students to break existing rules, so they never skipped school. These students were able to control themselves not to skip school because according to some students skipping school is a detrimental behavior. If they continue to skip school, they will definitely continue to miss their lessons and will have a big influence on their promotion.

At every age, adolescents are equally at risk of truancy. The vocational school age range is 15-18 years. In this study, the results found that every age group in the 15-18 years range had the same opportunity to engage in truancy. It is similar to the opinion of Listiara (2011) who revealed that Vocational High School students are easily assessed by the public as risky students because they are less enthusiastic about carrying out work practices, often play truant, and are involved in student fights. An at-risk student describes a student or group of students who is likely to fail or drop out of school. Grades, absenteeism, and disruptive behavior are indicators of at-risk students. Forced self-involvement is the essence of the experience that is interpreted as attending school by vocational school students who are categorized as at risk. Going to school is understood as a boring activity, but it is a way that must be done to make it easier to find work after graduating.

Rahayu & Fatimah (2020) state that students at the vocational school level are included in adolescence because they are generally aged between 15-17 years. The formation of self-concept in adolescents is very important because it will influence personality, behavior and understanding of oneself. If the formation leads to a negative one, the personality and behavior of them will be negative, for example, juvenile delinquency, particularly truancy.

Students' truancy is influenced by several factors, including school factors, personal factors, and family factors. It is similar to that of Fatchurahman et al., (2018) who state that truancy is certainly influenced by various factors, including family factors, school environmental factors, and factors from within the individual. This negative practice must be handled seriously since it can affect learning achievement, a deviation from school rules and damage the student's own morality.

School can be a factor in students' truancy due to unpleasant locations, inadequate school facilities, less conducive school atmosphere, and lack of school counselors for students both in groups and individually, inconsistent policies regarding truancy, minimal interaction between people, covering the student's parents and the school, non-supportive teachers, and less challenging school assignments.

Minarni (2017) believes that the major cause of truancy lies in school factors, including personally strict regulations, policies regarding truancy sanctions and school assignments. The second dominant factor is personal factors which are related to the child's basic nature, decreased motivation or loss of academic interest. The third factor is family factors which include disharmonious relationships with parents, incomplete families, parental parenting patterns and lack of parental participation in children's education. Lastly, there are friends and environmental factors that provide facilities that make students feel comfortable just hanging out in that place, such as closed parking and stalls around the school.

Khadijah et al., (2016) mention some factors influencing truancy, namely lack of parental supervision and control, children living independently and lack of learning discipline. Here, parental support is important in the learning process to reduce students' truancy. This can be done by asking talking over gently and intensely regarding their learning progress and attendance at school. Parents and students can be warmer in openness so that the monitoring process of school progress can be done. During the discussion, there can also be instilled the perceptions of learning discipline, because when students have a positive perception of learning discipline, it is hoped that there will be fewer students who truant at school because they know the disadvantages.

Based on the findings, the future researchers can increase or expand the study subjects, for example, elementary, junior and high school level.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, it can be concluded that gender and age contribute to vocational high school students' truancy. In terms of frequency, male students truant more than the females. Meanwhile, based on the age, students aged 16 years truant the most.

Regarding the findings, recommendations are given to several related parties. First, school counselors are encouraged to concern more on students' truancy by inspecting further its underlying reasons so that solutions can be given. Second, the future researchers are expected to enrich or expand the research subjects, for example elementary school, junior, and senior high school.

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