

The Role of Emotional Comfort and Interpersonal Relationships in Suppressing High School Students' Truthful Behavior

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Abstract: Truancy is a challenge in education. Truancy is not only related to violations of rules but also involves complex psychosocial issues. This article aims to conceptually examine the role of emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships in suppressing truancy in high school students. This article employs a literature review method, analyzing relevant theoretical sources and research findings regarding emotional comfort, interpersonal relationships, and truancy among high school students. The study results indicate that emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships play a significant role in suppressing truancy through student engagement with school. Good well-being improves students' ability to interact with peers and teachers, enabling them to build healthy interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, students with good interpersonal relationships are more likely to be accepted by their peers. These two factors create an effective psychosocial environment in the school environment. When students have good emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships, they will experience an increased and stronger sense of attachment to school, thereby decreasing the tendency to engage in truancy.

Keywords: emotional comfort; interpersonal relationships; truancy behavior; students; guidance and counseling.

INTRODUCTION

Truancy is a challenge in education. Truancy is not only related to violations of rules but also involves complex psychosocial issues. Truancy can result in sanctions such as punishment, failure to take exams, or even expulsion from school (Damayanti & Setiawati, 2013:455). Furthermore, truancy can also lower students' academic achievement and lead to other deviant behavior if not promptly addressed. This is in line with the results of several studies (Mogulescu & Segal in Syakura & Neviyarni, 2025:503), which indicate that 75%-85% of juvenile delinquency is committed by students who frequently skip school.

The phenomenon of truancy among high school students is currently increasingly concerning and requires immediate attention. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Nopiarni et al. (2019:2) at SMAN 3 Kota Sungai Penuh, which showed that truancy among high school students reached 36.6%. Furthermore, research conducted by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:5) at SMAN 1 Dayun showed that students who engaged in truancy were in the 16-17 year age range, with 10th grade students showing the highest scores at 45%, while grades 11 and 12 reached 27.5%.

Truancy occurs due to several factors, one of which is emotional comfort. Students who feel uncomfortable will feel anxious and stressed, so they tend to find ways to avoid the classroom atmosphere by skipping class (Sari & Muis, 2018:28). Conversely, if students feel comfortable in class, they will achieve good grades and have high academic motivation (Gintulangi, 2024:78-72). Furthermore, students can actively participate in the teaching and learning process in class.

In addition to emotional comfort, the quality of students' interpersonal relationships with their peers and teachers is also a crucial factor. Good interpersonal relationships between students and their peers or teachers can have positive impacts, such as encouraging student engagement in class, increasing motivation to learn and improving both academic and non-academic development, and aiding the adaptation process in the school environment, leading to a sense of emotional well-being (Alwi & Fakhri, 2022:129). Conversely, if students experience poor interpersonal relationships, they may feel lazy about learning, lack self-confidence, experience decreased motivation, become passive during the learning process, experience decreased academic achievement, and may increase negative behaviors such as truancy.

Although many studies have examined the factors of truancy behavior, studies related to emotional comfort and interpersonal relationships within a conceptual framework that forms students' attachment to school, thus potentially reducing truancy behavior, are still relatively limited, even though these two factors play a significant role in achieving optimal learning outcomes. Furthermore, understanding students' emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships is crucial for guidance and counseling teachers in providing appropriate and targeted interventions to ensure effective service delivery. Based on this, this article aims to conceptually examine the role of emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships in reducing truancy in high school students. This study is expected to help support the development of guidance and counseling science, as well as become a basic guideline in designing appropriate interventions in creating a school environment that is conducive to student development.

METHODS

This research uses a literature study method. A literature study is a research method that involves collecting library data, reading materials, and notes, as well as organizing research materials relevant to the research objectives (Puspananda in Azzahria et al., 2025:434). The data sources used were books, journals, articles, and other websites published in the last five years, between 2021 and 2025 using the keywords "emotional comfort," "interpersonal relationships," and "truancy." Literature was selected based on established inclusion and exclusion criteria; subsequently, relevant findings were compared and synthesized to construct a conceptual framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emotional Comfort

Emotional comfort is a combination of the words "comfort" and "emotional." Comfort refers to the feeling that arises when someone feels accepted as they are and happy with certain situations and conditions (Sugiarto in Nusi et al., 2023:293). Emotional well-being can be defined as a positive or negative reaction experienced by an individual due to certain situations, such as sadness, anger, anxiety, and happiness (Widodo 2025:598). Therefore, emotional well-being can be defined as a feeling of being accepted as they are by their environment, feeling happy in certain situations, and feeling content under certain conditions. Emotional well-being is one measure of whether an individual's emotional needs are met. Emotional well-being is characterized by positive feelings, a stable emotional state, and the ability to adapt to various situations and environmental conditions.

In a school setting, emotional well-being indicates the extent to which students feel accepted as they are by their peers and teachers, feel content in certain situations influenced by their environment, and feel content in certain conditions stemming from internal factors. Emotional well-being results from two factors: internal and external. Internal factors include an individual's readiness to accept reactions from their environment. When an individual is prepared to face environmental reactions, they will experience a sense of satisfaction or pleasure (Amsari, 2018:53-54).

This means that an individual's readiness to accept environmental reactions is important because it generates positive reactions, enabling them to adapt to their environment. Conversely, if an individual is not prepared to accept environmental reactions, they will feel uncomfortable in that environment. External factors include academic pressure, feelings of being unaccepted by peers, and poor interpersonal relationships between students and their peers and teachers. This aligns with research by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:8), which showed that 28% of students' discomfort in the school environment is caused by a lack of harmony between students and teachers.

Emotional comfort has a positive impact on students, such as increasing student involvement in the learning process in class, so that students more easily grasp the material presented by the teacher, increasing focus and minimizing learning distractions, accelerating student adaptation to new material being studied, and increasing self-confidence in expressing opinions (Nurita, 2025:1). In addition, students who have good emotional comfort can increase student learning motivation, have a positive impact on the ability to interact with peers, and improve student emotional well-being (Mutiyati et al., 2023: 1999-1200). This is in line with the findings of Fajrin (in Novitasari et al., 2026:84) which show that students who are comfortable with their peers make these students have more courage to participate in

class during the teaching and learning process. Conversely, if students lack emotional well-being, they will experience boredom, depression, despair, and a loss of self-confidence (Putri, Pranata, & Novinovrita, 2024:10), as well as a tendency to seek ways to avoid the classroom atmosphere by skipping class (Sari & Muis, 2018: 28). This is further supported by research conducted by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:8), which shows that student discomfort in the school environment can lead to truancy.

Conceptually, emotional well-being plays a crucial role in shaping student behavior and engagement in the school environment. Emotional well-being is not only about feelings of happiness but also about feelings of acceptance, appreciation, and positive treatment from the environment. When students feel emotionally well-being, they will be highly motivated, build good relationships with peers and teachers, and actively engage in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Conversely, when students feel stressed, unaccepted, and neglected, they will experience emotional instability, which can lead to negative behaviors such as decreased class engagement and truancy. Therefore, emotional comfort is important for guidance and counseling teachers to consider when creating a learning environment that supports both academic development and student psychological well-being.

Meanwhile, students' emotional well-being can be formed in two ways: naturally and through the students' own desires and efforts. Natural emotional well-being is formed through a feeling of security in the school environment, social support from those around them, positive interpersonal relationships with friends and teachers, good physical health, appropriate emotional control, positive self-esteem and self-acceptance, and the fulfillment of students' psychological needs. However, emotional well-being can also be formed through the students' own desires and efforts, for example, by increasing and developing their emotional awareness, building positive relationships with those around them, increasing self-acceptance, including accepting their strengths and weaknesses without over-judgment, maintaining physical health, and developing stress management skills. Thus, students can become individuals with good emotional well-being, thereby improving their ability to interact with friends and teachers. This in turn will enable them to create healthy interpersonal relationships.

Interpersonal relationships

An interpersonal relationship is a relationship between two interdependent individuals with a consistent and mutually beneficial reciprocal pattern (Chairunnisa et al., 2024:1). Interpersonal relationships can also be defined as a relationship between two or more individuals that involves emotional experiences and is dynamic in nature, allowing it to change according to the individual's circumstances. Good interpersonal relationships are characterized by feelings of mutual respect, strong social bonds between individuals, acceptance of differences, openness, and a sense of familiarity (Rakhmat in Hermawan, 2019:17).

Good interpersonal relationships will impact an individual's openness to others, and a feeling of being valued and recognized by their environment. Furthermore, students with good interpersonal relationships will be more easily accepted by their environment and can create a comfortable atmosphere during the classroom learning process (Putri et al., 2023:81). This aligns with the results of research conducted by Novitasari et al. (2020: 640), which shows that positive interactions between peers can encourage positive behavior. Furthermore, research by Chih et al. (in Novitasari et al., 2026:84) shows that students who have good interactions with friends can improve high academic achievement. Conversely, students who have bad interpersonal relationships tend to be rejected by the environment, ostracized and isolated from the environment, which causes a major impact in the form of stress because they do not have friends. In addition, students who have bad interpersonal relationships will create distance that makes the classroom atmosphere less effective (Yusuf in Putri et al., 2023:81). And students will also experience obstacles in interacting with others. This is also supported by the findings of research by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:8) which revealed that disharmony in the relationship between students and teachers at school can result in truancy behavior.

Thus, interpersonal relationships can shape social behavior and emotional well-being in the school environment. Good interpersonal relationships can create a comfortable atmosphere, foster feelings of appreciation and acceptance, making it easier for students to adapt to the school environment. Good communication, mutual respect, acceptance of individual differences, openness, and a sense of camaraderie between students and teachers can foster a sense of comfort during classroom learning.

Conversely, poor interpersonal relationships can lead to rejection, ostracization, and isolation, as well as difficulty interacting with others. These circumstances can impact students' emotional stability and lead to negative behaviors such as decreased motivation to learn, a tendency to be passive in class, and even truancy. Therefore, harmonious interpersonal relationships are essential in the school environment to create a positive learning environment that supports student development.

These harmonious interpersonal relationships can be realized through positive interactions between students and their peers and between students and teachers. In schools, good interpersonal relationships between students and their peers include helping each other with group assignments, avoiding favoritism, providing support when facing learning difficulties, and fostering close communication and mutual respect. Meanwhile, a good interpersonal relationship between students and teachers, for example, a student who feels comfortable asking the teacher when experiencing learning difficulties, greets the teacher when they meet, when the student experiences problems the teacher listens and provides support, and when the student succeeds in achieving an achievement the teacher gives awards in the form of praise so that the student feels appreciated and motivated to continue developing. Thus, the interpersonal relationship that is established will be better so that the student will be more easily accepted by the environment.

Student Truancy Behavior

Truancy is the act of students not attending school without a clear reason or explanation (Prayitno in Prayitno & Amti, 2004:61). Truancy takes two forms: absent from school without a specific explanation and not participating in class but remaining on the school grounds, for example in the library, cafeteria, rooftop, etc. (Ardiyanti & Pratiwi, 2018: 80). In line with this, research conducted by Ahmad (in Imansyah, 2021:2) shows that the most common forms of truancy are absent from class (44.10%), being invited to the cafeteria during specific class hours (42.96%), being absent from school without parental knowledge (40.34%), and leaving school without a valid reason (32.30%).

The causes of truancy are divided into two types: internal and external. Internal factors include laziness in studying, lack of parental attention, and poor behavioral control (Damayanti & Setiawati, 2013: 455-456). This aligns with research conducted by Hadi & Zuranti (2025: 832), which showed that students with high self-control can reduce truancy. Meanwhile, external factors include family background, economic status, peer influence, technology, teacher attitudes, and school facilities, which influence the learning process (Damayanti & Setiawati in Setiawati, 2020:102-103). Furthermore, a lack of interest in the current subject (Damayanti & Setiawati, 2013:456) and the labeling of individuals that leads to deviant behavior.

The results of research conducted by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:5) at SMAN 1 Dayun indicate that student truancy is caused by both internal and external factors. Internal factors that had a high dominant influence on truancy behavior were lack of motivation to learn (58%), followed by laziness (48%), arriving late to school (55%), frequently falling asleep in class (33%), health factors due to illness (33%), and pretending to be sick (35%), and not completing assigned assignments (20%). Meanwhile, the most influential external factors were lack of parental attention (68%), economic pressure requiring students to help their parents with work (48%), peer influence (50%), dislike of certain subjects (43%), dislike of the teacher (28%), and the impact of social media (20%).

Truancy behavior violates social norms, impacting not only the individual but also those around them. The impacts of truancy can include decreased academic achievement, punishment, suspension, inability to take exams, or even expulsion from school (Damayanti & Setiawati, 2013:456). Furthermore, truancy can lead to lower grades, anxiety, falling behind in school, failing to submit assignments, and being ostracized by peers (Fauziyah & Muhid, 2021:20). It can also lead to substance abuse, a tendency toward promiscuity, and violent acts.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that truancy is not simply a violation of rules but rather a student's response to problems they experience, both internal and external. Low motivation, feelings of laziness, lack of self-control, and a lack of support from family and school can lead students to avoid the classroom learning process. Furthermore, peer influence, poor relationships with teachers, and feelings of discomfort during the learning process can also lead to truancy. If this behavior is not addressed promptly, it can have negative consequences for students, such as decreased academic

achievement, punishment, suspension, ostracism from peers, inability to take exams, or even expulsion from school. Furthermore, truancy can impact the surrounding community due to other deviant behaviors resulting from truancy. Therefore, attention and cooperation between subject teachers, guidance and counseling teachers and parents are very necessary in understanding the causes of truancy behavior so that guidance and counseling teachers can provide appropriate service interventions according to students' needs.

The Role of Emotional Comfort and Interpersonal Relationships on Truancy Behavior

Emotional well-being plays a crucial role in determining students' attachment to school. Students with good emotional well-being will increase their motivation to learn, positively impact their ability to interact with peers, and improve their emotional well-being (Mutiyati et al., 2023:1999-1200). Conversely, students without good emotional well-being will experience boredom, depression, despair, and loss of self-confidence (Putri, Pranata, & Novinovrita, 2024:10), as well as a tendency to seek ways to avoid the classroom atmosphere by skipping class (Sari & Muis, 2018:28). This aligns with research conducted by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:8), which shows that students' discomfort in the school environment is partly caused by a lack of harmonious relationships between students and teachers, which can lead to truancy in 28% of cases.

Good interpersonal relationships can increase students' sense of attachment to school. Good interpersonal relationships will impact an individual's openness to others, and a feeling of being valued and recognized by their environment. Furthermore, students with good interpersonal relationships are more easily accepted by their peers and can create a comfortable learning atmosphere in the classroom (Putri et al., 2023:81). Conversely, students with poor interpersonal relationships tend to be rejected by their peers, ostracized, and isolated, resulting in significant stress due to a lack of friends. Furthermore, students with poor interpersonal relationships create distance, making the classroom atmosphere less effective (Yusuf in Putri et al., 2023:81). Students also experience difficulties interacting with others. This is further supported by research findings by Agustina & Marnelly (2025:8), which also revealed that disharmony in student-teacher relationships at school can lead to truancy. Therefore, the quality of interpersonal relationships plays a crucial role in minimizing truancy.

Emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships are interconnected factors that influence truancy. A good sense of well-being will enhance students' ability to interact with peers and teachers, enabling them to create healthy interpersonal relationships (Mutiyati et al., 2023:1999). Interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in the development of students' emotional well-being in various social settings (Putri et al., 2023:81). Therefore, good interpersonal relationships will make students more easily accepted by their peers. These two factors create an effective psychosocial environment in the school environment. When students have good emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships, they will experience a stronger attachment to school, thereby decreasing the tendency to engage in truancy.

Based on theoretical studies, emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships are closely related in shaping student behavior in the school environment. Emotional well-being makes students feel safe, accepted, and valued by the environment. Good interpersonal relationships can help students interact with peers and teachers. These two factors support each other in creating a conducive learning environment and increasing student attachment to the school environment. If students feel emotionally comfortable and have good interpersonal relationships, they will be highly motivated to participate in the learning process and actively participate in school activities. Conversely, if students experience poor emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships, they will become isolated, uncomfortable in the school environment, and ultimately seek escape by engaging in truancy. Therefore, reducing truancy involves not only tightening school regulations but also addressing students' emotional well-being and the quality of interpersonal relationships they have with their peers and teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the conceptual study, it can be concluded that emotional comfort and the quality of interpersonal relationships play a significant role in suppressing truancy. These two factors are interrelated in shaping students' attachment to school and are able to create a school environment

conducive to student development. Improving students' emotional comfort and the quality of interpersonal relationships at school can be an important strategy in suppressing truancy. The results of this study can contribute to the development of guidance and counseling science, as well as serve as a basic guideline in designing appropriate interventions to create a school environment conducive to student development. Based on the results of this study, it is necessary to follow up with empirical testing to obtain a stronger level of scientific validity.

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