

Systematic Literature Review on Factors Causing Secondary Students` Absenteeism

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Abstract

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The literature reviews to identify the factors causing secondary student absenteeism which is still scarce and insufficient. The objective of study was to investigate the factors causing absenteeism of secondary school students. The methodology used in this study was systematic literature review. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) were implemented for selection, screening, and reporting. This study reviewed quantitative research released between 2018 and 2022. The databases were used such as Web of Science (WOS), SCOPUS, ERIC and Google Scholar. The most keywords were used secondary students, absenteeism, were the most used keywords. Results of study showed that there were eleven factors of causing secondary students` absenteeism, including mental health, bullying, teacher, school, friends, parents, substance use, physical fight, school climate, technology academic challenges and socioeconomic status. The problem of student absenteeism can be avoided if the school, teachers, parents and students take their respective roles so that this issues no longer happen among school students.

Keywords: *absenteeism, secondary student, systematic literature review, PRISMA*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the disciplinary issues that is gaining increasing attention is school absence. Youthful absences from elementary or secondary school, whether justifiable or not, are referred to as school absenteeism (Kearney, 2008). Unjustified and excessive absenteeism is a problem of major concern that plagues many educational systems around the world, in contrast to excused absenteeism (such as absences due to medical illness or accident), which may be considered as non-problematic. Unauthorized absences from school might have a variety of causes. Mental health issues, high-risk life circumstances, being bullied in school, learning disabilities, living alone, having a bad relationship with teachers, and a school environment that doesn't meet the needs of the students are all factors that have been found to increase the risk of unexcused absences (Havik, & Ertesvg, 2019). Students who frequently miss class without an excuse have a disproportionately high rate of psychopathology, criminality, and substance abuse compared to the general population (Hirschfield & Gaspar, 2011). Additionally, problematic absenteeism from school is linked to a wide range of life-course issues, including



risky externalising behaviour, delinquency, and substance abuse including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs (Seidu et al., 2019).

Teachers, peers, and even parents can contribute to kids' involvement in the symptoms of school absence because there are so many of them that have an impact on pupils. Additionally, the school's infrastructure, management, and environment can contribute to students exhibiting absenteeism symptoms (Gubbels et al., 2019; Mustain & Handrianto, 2020). Teachers think that the student's attitude factor being lazy is the main factor that causes students to be involved in absenteeism symptoms school (Hansen & Dawson, 2020). They also suggested that counselling sessions and motivational camps be held as well hold the Zero Absenteeism program as a way to overcome the problem of absenteeism. In fact, the main reason for the existence of the practice of school absenteeism is due to collapse a student's family institution (Zukdi et al., 2022). The emergence of conflict between mothers and fathers causes their children are ignored. All the actions of their children outside the house and in school is not taken seriously. Lack of love and explosion of pressure on a student coming from troubled families will cause them to try to skip school. This shows the collapse of family institutions affecting discipline problems among students especially the problem of school absenteeism (Crouch, et al., 2019).

The discipline issue of school absence is getting more and more serious among secondary school students (Mohamad Amin et al., 2019). If this truancy problem is not handled and controlled, further disciplinary issues will develop. These incidents will occur as a result of absent pupils abusing their free time. They will be equipped by a group of evil elements such as the *Mat Rempit* group. When they have been caught in this group, they will involve themselves in theft cases motorcycles and illegal racing. The implementation of the national education program plan will be disrupted if this student discipline problem continues (Handrianto, 2013; Min, Brahim & Ramley, 2022). This problem should be curbed as soon as possible because if it is a problem of skipping school is not resolved as soon as possible, it is likely that other students will follow to do the same. The issue of absenteeism in Malaysia's educational system is not a recent development (Mohamad Amin et al., 2019). Even though this issue has never been mentioned, it continues to exist and only gets worse over time. Unfortunate news for Malaysia's current generation, which is regarded responsible for acting as the nation's catalyst, is reports of kids skipping class while studying (Min, Brahim & Ramley, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to perform a literature review in order to investigate the background of the articles, and the factors that causing secondary student absenteeism. What is the background of articles, and what are the factors that causing secondary student absenteeism? is the specific research question (RQ) that directs the study. This study did a systematic literature review (SLR) of empirical studies between 2018 and 2022 using the PRISMA statement's guidelines in order to provide answers to these concerns.

RESEARCH METHODS

The review protocol- PRISMA

The current inquiry was driven by the PRISMA review technique. A set of rules called PRISMA, or Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and

Meta-Analyses, focuses on how writers can ensure that systematic reviews and meta-analyses are thorough and transparent. Although additional materials are available, it does not directly or in-depth address how systematic reviews are conducted (Moher et al., 2009). The authors started their SLR based on this review procedure by coming up with appropriate research questions. The authors then discuss the three components of the systematic search method: identification, screening (inclusion and exclusion criteria), and eligibility. The authors then go on to explain how the data was obtained, organised, and examined before being used in research.

Formulation of research questions

The study's research topic was created using PICO. Authors can develop a strong research topic for their review using the PICO approach. The three key components that support PICO are the population or problem, interest, and context. Based on these concepts, the study's authors concentrated on three key areas: secondary student (the study's population), the factors causing student absenteeism (the interest), and secondary school (the context). What is the background of articles, and what are the factors causing secondary student absenteeism? These questions led to the authors' major study topic.

Systematic searching strategies

The systematic searching methods procedure consists of four primary steps: identification, screening, eligibility, and included.

Identification

Finding synonyms, equivalent ideas, and other spellings of the study's main keywords—attitude, secondary school, absent—is the process of identification. Its objective is to provide the chosen databases with extra options for looking for more relevant articles for the review. The identification process used an online thesaurus, keywords from earlier studies, and keywords provided by Scopus (Nengsih et al., 2022). The keywords were created based on Okoli's (2015) study topic. The authors were able to enhance the current keywords and create a full search string on two major databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WOS), using Boolean operators, phrase searching, truncation, wild cards, and field code functions (Table 1). These databases have the potential to be the top databases in a systematic literature review due to their many benefits, which include advanced searching capabilities, extensive indexing, article quality control, and a multidisciplinary focus, including the use of student absenteeism in studies related to secondary school (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2019). As a backup database, Google Scholar, and ERIC were all selected. When applicable, a combination of keywords using the OR, AND and phrase-searching capabilities as shown in Table 1. ERIC and Google Scholar should be picked as the extra database, according to Gusenbauer (2019), who arrived at the conclusion that the academic search method met all performance requirements. The results of the search in these two databases, Scopus and Web of Sciences (WOS), are shown in Figure 1 which includes a total of 1180 articles.

Table 1. The Search String

Database	Search String
SCOPUS	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((“behavior” OR “behaviour” OR “attitude*” OR “conduct” OR “action” OR “act”) AND (“secondary school” OR “high school”) AND (“skipping” OR “absent” OR “absenteeism” OR “absence” OR “truancy”))
Web of Science	TS= ((behavior’ OR “behaviour” OR “attitude*” OR “conduct” OR “act”) AND (“secondary school” OR “high school”) AND (“skipping” OR “absent” OR “absenteeism” OR “absence” OR “truancy”))

Screening

In this study, all articles were automatically filtered by setting criteria for article selection utilising the database's sorting feature. The research topic should serve as the foundation for the selection criteria, suggest Kitchenham and Charters (2007). Okoli (2015) advised researchers to pick the time periods they can review because it is practically difficult for academics to review all of the currently available published works.

Table 2. The Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2018-2022	<2018
Document Type	Article Journal (empirical data)	Article review, chapter in the book, book series, book, conference proceeding
Language	English	Non-English

Timeline publication limits, according to Higgins and Green (2011), should only be used when it is known that pertinent studies could only have been reported during a specific timeframe. Based on the results of the search in the selected database, it was found that from 2018 to 2022, there were more research related to the factors causing secondary student absenteeism. In addition, only articles written in English and studies with genuine data published in journals are included in the review to minimise understanding (Table 2). 492 articles were dropped because they failed to meet the requirements for inclusion. After screening, 482 articles remained, 10 of which were eliminated due to duplication. 82 articles were used in the eligibility process as a result.

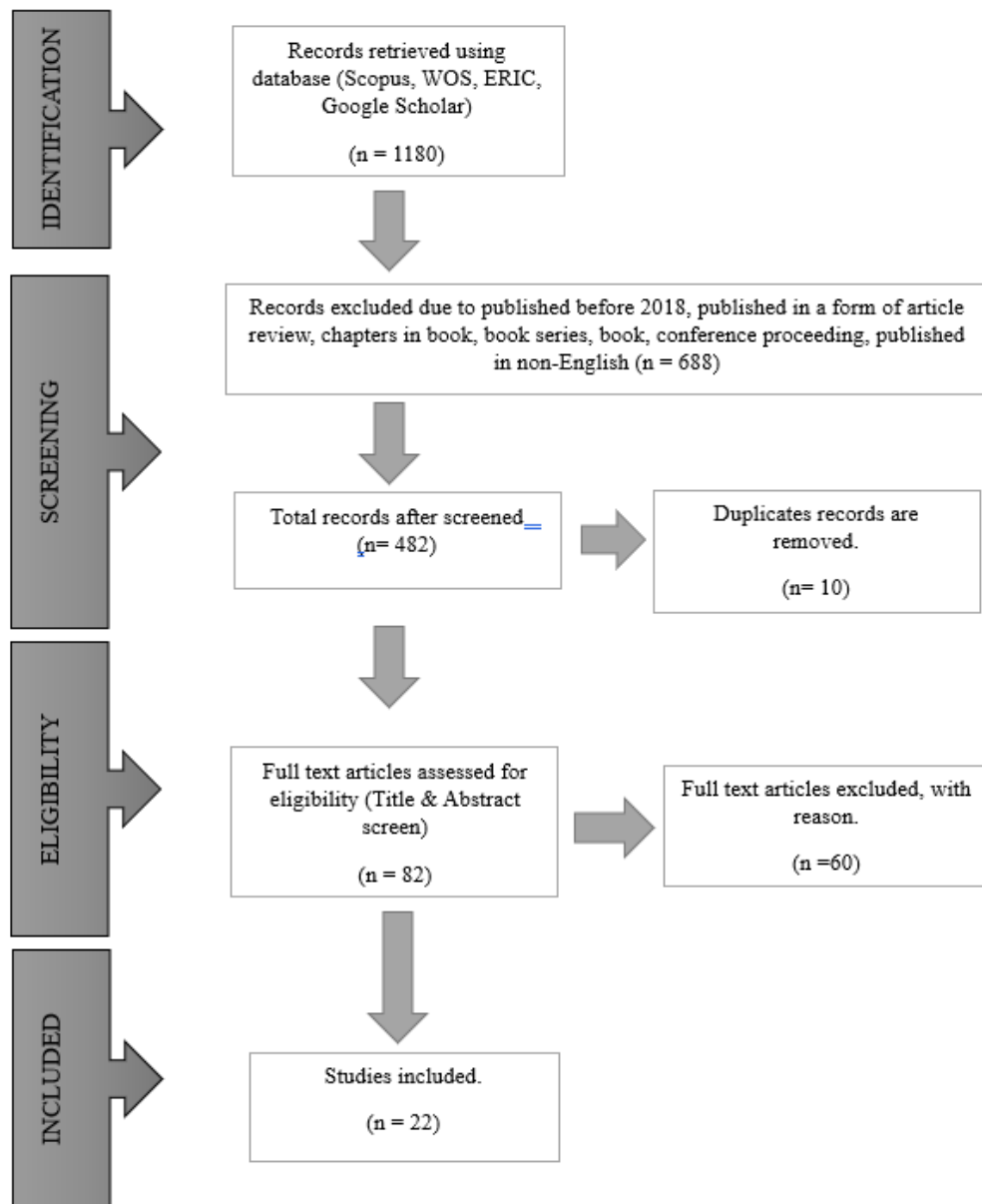


Figure 1. The PRISMA Flow Diagram (adapted from Liberati et al., 2009)

Eligibility

The 82 articles that were left after the screening process satisfied the criteria since the authors manually checked the retrieved articles during the eligibility step. Reading the article abstracts and titles enabled this. 62 articles were left out of the process because of the emphasis on factors causing school absenteeism and the concentration on the secondary school rather than primary school and university students. Thus, a total of 22 articles were picked.

Studied Included

The demographic data from the included studies was retrieved using a spreadsheet in order to construct a data extraction form that includes the title, authors, journal, year of publication, and research duration. The chosen studies' textual descriptions and RQ-related details were then evaluated and categorised using the content analysis method. RQ is not, however, discussed in every article (Saputra et al., 2021). After that, take the relevant responses to the RQ from the studies that were included and record them in the form. After that, related material from the retrieved data was grouped using a frequency analysis based on RQ to determine the factors causing secondary school absenteeism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Background of the Selected Articles

There were 22 papers in total that met the strict inclusion standards (Table 3). According to Figure 1, one study was carried out in each of the following nations: Sweden, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, Japan, Lithuania, Palestine, Romania, South Africa and Spain. Two studies were carried out in Ghana, three in Malaysia and four in USA.

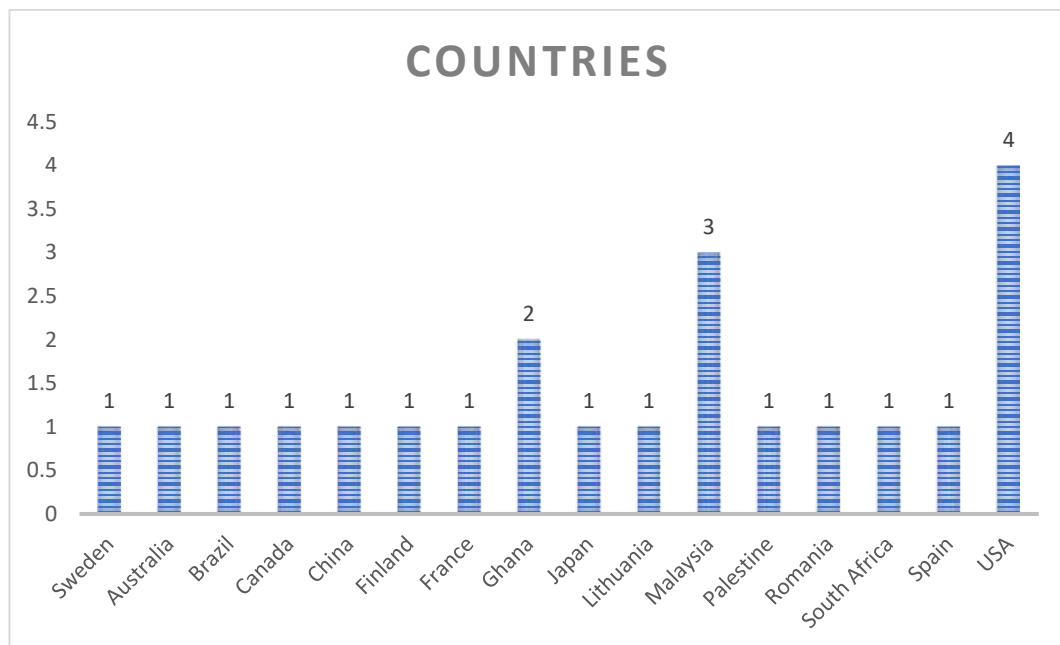


Figure 2. Countries

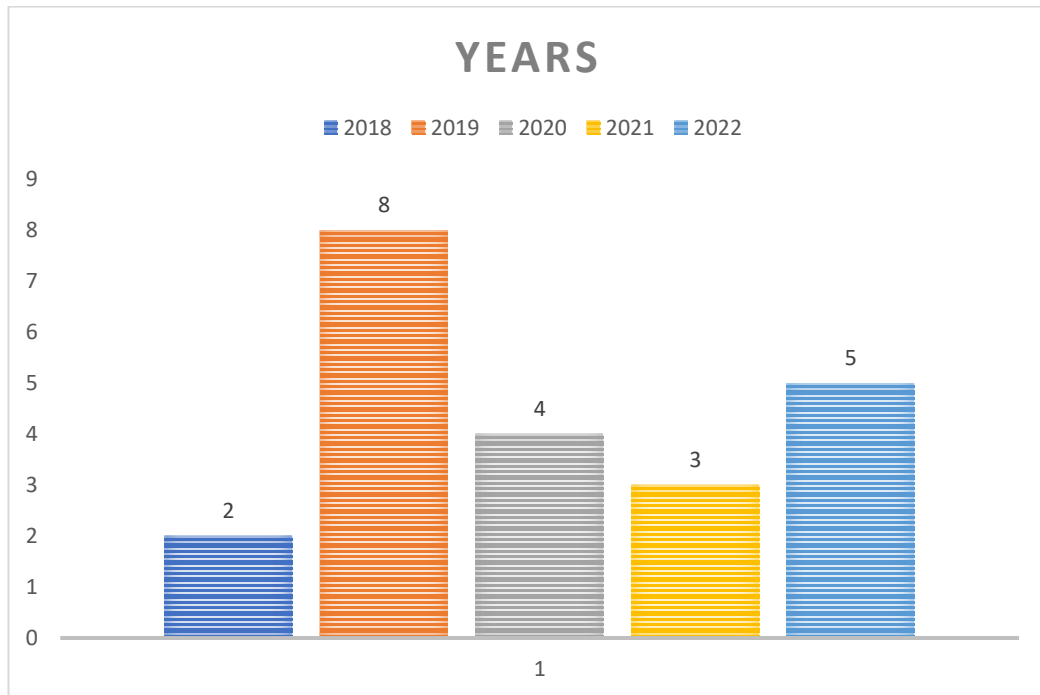


Figure 3. Total Numbers by Years

Using twenty-two papers, two were published in 2018, eight in 2019, four in 2020, three in 2021 and five in 2022 based Figure 3.

Determinants on Secondary School Absenteeism

According to the findings (Table 3), there are 11 factors that causing secondary student absenteeism. Mental health, bullying, teacher, school, friends, parents, substance use, physical fight, school climate, technology academic challenges and socioeconomic status are all factors to consider.

Mental Health

Previous research has examined the connection between student absences from school and mental health issues. According to research, students frequently exhibit externalising issues like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and disruptive behaviour as well as internalising issues like anxiety (Egger, Costello, & Angold, 2003). (Kearney & Albano, 2004). In a community, research conducted by Egger et al. in 2003, absentee teenagers exhibited depression, behaviour problems, and anxiety disorders more frequently than non-absent youths. Several studies also indicate that many young people with school absenteeism do not have psychiatric conditions, despite the fact that absent students have a high percentage of mental health issues (Egger et al., 2003; Kearney, 2008; Kearney & Albano, 2004; Hagborg, Berglund & Fahlke, 2018; Keppens et al., 2019).

Bullying

According to Fried & Fired (2001), bullying is defined as a pattern of violent behaviours (Olweus, 1994), systematic power abuse, and a kind of peer abuse. These three key components are repetition, harm, and power imbalance (Smith, 1994). As a result, someone is said to have been the victim of bullying if they have repeatedly and continuously been subjected to harmful or unpleasant behaviour from one or more other people without being able to protect themselves (Awiria, Olweus, Byrne, 1994). The weaker person will probably end up in danger because of the power disparity between them (Escario, Gimenez-Nadal & Wilkinson, 2022; Marlow & Rehman 2020).

Teacher Factor

A factor that is synonymous with the problem of skipping school is teaching and learning that is not appropriate shown by the teacher in delivering a lesson (Mieziene et al., 2021). This problem can be linked to the use of a teaching medium that is not suitable and causes students to be less interested in learning and feel bored with the teacher's teaching method which causes students to take the easy way out of being in class and the occurrence of school skipping problems (Min, Brahim & Ramley, 2022). Infrastructure facilities in schools also play an important role in attracting students' interest in learning sessions, for example the use of teaching aids such as LCDs. The use of appropriate teaching aids can also attract students' interest and their use will also make the teaching and learning process easier because the use of this medium is more functional than using the "talk and chalk" method, because students prefer if the teaching uses a variety of colors (Bzour, Zuki & Mispan, 2022).

School Factor

Among the factors that can also be linked to the problem of skipping school are school rules that have been misunderstood by students, students who think that these school rules are a heavy rule for them to follow (Hagborg, Berglund & Fahlke, 2018; Sabramani et al., 2021). So, things like skipping school will happen, and if the school rules are followed properly by the students and as long as the students don't break the school rules then the misunderstanding of the school rules as the cause of them skipping school will be avoided accordingly. School rules are actually to help students to improve the level of student thinking and provide guidelines so that students are familiar with discipline practices that are also useful in the future (Chi & Cui, 2020). This can also be changed if the student's mind and thinking can be educated from the beginning so that this problem of school rules no longer occurs, this kind of thinking should not exist in a student because this can be changed by the student himself (Allen, Diamond-Myrsten & Rollins, 2018).

Friends Factor

In addition, the influence of friends is one of the factors that cause the problem of skipping school, because friends are the closest individuals to students at school, even at home. The influence of peers is the most feared thing by the school because with the influence of peers this will cause things that violate the school law by students to happen, but the influence of peers can also be divided into

two, which is influence in a negative direction and there are also peer influence in a positive direction such as a friend invites his friend to do things that can make the school proud and benefit the student himself and other students (Escario, Gimenez-Nadal & Wilinon, 2022). It is not surprising if organizations such as supervisors, student representative bodies and peer mentoring associations are established in all schools in the country, because with the existence of organizations like these they can have an impact on students in schools to not misuse peers as things that lead in a negative direction (Mohamad Amin et al., 2019).

Parents Factor

Among other factors that cause the problem of skipping school is the lack of attention and love from parents towards their children's education (Maeda & Hatada, 2019). Attention from parents is a very important thing in guaranteeing the excellence of students, because the lack of attention from parents also causes the problem of skipping school and the attention of parents in learning can be monitored and seen clearly because often excellent students are from among students which is often given attention by their parents (Allen, Diamond-Myrsten & Rollins, 2018). Apart from parents, teachers are also important individuals in reducing the problem of truancy, because the monitoring shown by teachers at school can give joy to students so that they are happy to learn and like to come to school. Any problem related to students can be solved better if parents and teachers can sit down to discuss how to overcome student problems like the program that is done in all schools (Seidu et al., 2019; Maeda & Hatada, 2019; Sabramani et al., 2021).

Substance Use

In addition to being a risk factor for self-harm and suicide ideation in children and adolescents, school absences are a sign of social marginalisation (Epstein et al., 2020). A small number of studies have shown that using alcohol and other drugs has a number of negative effects, including school absences (Soares, et al., 2019; Hendry & Thornberry, 2010), school disengagement (Hendry & Thornberry, 2010; Handrianto et al., 2021), subpar academic performance (Karen et al., 2017), and eventually dropping out of school (Njoku et al., 2020). In Ontario and Alberta, Canada, hierarchical longitudinal research of students in grades 9 through 12 found a link between frequent binge drinking and a lower likelihood of strong academic achievement and school engagement (Karen et al., 2017). Other research from France (Chau et al., 2016) and South Korea (Park & Kim, 2016) has linked illicit drug use to other detrimental school outcomes.

Physical Fight

Poor peer connections have also been linked to physical fights (Shetgiri et al., 2015). The time spent with peers and the connections made with them represent one of the most crucial elements in shaping and characterising teenage behaviour. Numerous studies have demonstrated that adolescents often behave in ways that are similar to those of their peers, including drinking, smoking, fighting, and/or engaging in sexual activity (Wills, 2001). Many teenagers have at least one buddy who uses drugs, but the likelihood of them doing the same increases if the majority of their classmates indulge in activities like drinking, smoking, or even illegal ones.

While participating in peer groups is common among adolescents, substance use is more prevalent when a person has high peer support but low parental support (Wills, 2001; Bucur et al., 2020).

School Climate

In general, during the early years of puberty, students' emotional and behavioural functioning tends to decline. Their impressions of the school climate deteriorate, their general level of participation diminishes (Janosz et al., 2008), and their absences from school rise (Gubbels et al., 2019). (Wang & Dishion, 2012). Although longitudinal studies on school climate are required (Daily et al., 2020; Wang & Degol, 2016), there is evidence that behavioural outcomes are correlated with changes in adolescents' perceptions of a supportive school climate. For instance, Wang and Dishion (2012) discovered longitudinal relationships between declining student perceptions of the school climate, including social support from teachers and peers, and rising teacher perceptions of student behavioural issues (such as disrespect, misbehaviour, physical fighting, and/or bullying). In recent years, academics have begun to pay close attention to the connections between absenteeism and school atmosphere. Keppens and Spruyt (2019) looked into the connection between class skipping among 15-year-old pupils and an authoritative school climate. They discovered that students skipped class less frequently in authoritative schools with high responsiveness (feeling of school belonging) and demandingness (school disciplinary climate) than in authoritarian and indifferent schools.

Table 3. The Determinants of Secondary Student Absenteeism

				Determinants of Secondary Student Absenteeism									
Authors	Year	Country	Mental Health	Bullied	Teacher Factor	School Factor	Friends Factor	Parents Factor	Substance Use	Physical Fight	School climate	Technology Academic Challenges	Socioeconomic status
Hagborg, Berglund & Fahlke,	2018	Sweden	/	/	/	/							
Escario, Giménez-Nadal, & Wilkinson,	2022	Spain		/			/	/					
Seidu et al	2019	Ghana	/	/				/	/				
Min, Brahim & Ramley	2022	Malaysia			/	/		/					
Osufor	2021	South Africa							/				
Keppens et al	2019	France	/	/									
Bucur et al	2020	Romania							/	/			
Sabramani et al	2021	Malaysia		/		/		/					
Marlow & Rehman	2020	Australia	/										
Virtanen, Pelkonen & Kiuru	2022	Finland									/		
Mieziene et al	2021	Lithuania			/			/					
Williams, Battista & Leatherdale	2019	Canada							/				

Authors	Year	Country	Determinants of Secondary Student Absenteeism										
			Mental Health	Bullied	Teacher Factor	School Factor	Friends Factor	Parents Factor	Substance Use	Physical Fight	School climate	Technology Academic Challenges	Socioeconomic status
Mireles-Rios, Rios & Reyes	2020	USA	/	/	/								
Mohamad Amin et al	2019	Malaysia			/		/	/					
Gakh et al	2019	USA							/				
Allen, Diamond-Myrsten & Rollins	2018	USA	/	/		/		/		/	/		
Piscitello et al	2022	USA				/							/
Seidu et al	2019	Ghana							/		/		/
Bzour, Zuki & Mispan	2022	Palestine			/	/							/
Chi & Cui	2020	China				/		/	/	/			/
Soares, Farias & Monteiro	2019	Brazil							/				
Maeda & Hatada	2019	Japan				/		/					

Technology Academic Challenges

The sophistication of technology in this era of globalization is also the cause of the catalyst towards the phenomenon of truancy that often occurs in schools, because technology will make students careless with the virtual world and neglect valuable time if that time is used as best as possible to review lessons and make things which is beneficial, this can also be avoided if the students themselves are good at managing and good at utilizing technology as a useful platform (Seidu et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2022). School absenteeism will occur if students are unable to make the best use of technology as an assistant in learning, because smart students can control the use of technology without being influenced by things that allow other problems to occur such as playing games on mobile phones late at night and making it difficult for students to wake up morning and will cause students to not attend school the next day (Allen, Diamond-Myrsten & Rollins, 2018).

Socioeconomic Status

Finally, the low economic role of the family is also the cause of behavioral disorders such as school absenteeism (Mohammad Amin et al., 2019). The economic role is always associated with problematic students and is always used as a cause for students, but the low family economic role can also be used as a catalyst for students to change their life patterns in the future and can also change the family economy so that they are no longer burdened with financial problems in a way study hard to excel in studies and succeed in getting a job that can give pleasure to family (Chi & Cui, 2020). As we know that life requires money, but money is not used as an obstacle for a student to succeed and is used as a cause for them to ignore their studies because the opportunity to study at school is a very limited opportunity for every human being (Piscitello et al. 2022).

CONCLUSION

The analysis in this article is an approach for generating interest and raising awareness in school absenteeism investigations, particularly in the secondary school. It seeks to examine the issues related to the secondary school absenteeism among period, from 2018 to 2022. According to the data above, USA has the most publications on the secondary school absenteeism. Altogether, only twenty-two studies were identified, including studies on eleven factors of causing secondary student absenteeism, including Mental health, bullying, teacher, school, friends, parents, substance use, physical fight, school climate, technology academic challenges and socioeconomic status. The conclusion of the problem of student behavior disorder is the problem of skipping school can be avoided if the school, teachers, parents and students take their respective roles so that things like skipping school like this no longer happen among school students, because this is not only a big problem for the school but it will also be closely related to the students themselves itself and parents if early prevention is not done so that the problem of skipping school can be dealt with in every school. The most prominent factor in the problem of school truancy is the role of parents in ensuring that their children continue to be given proper attention so that they do not do things that harm themselves and do things that violate school rules and the law, because of the attention and monitoring of students not only rest on the shoulders of the teacher one hundred percent, but the attention and monitoring by parents of their children can also control their children from doing things that are not beneficial.

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