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RSSS003 – STUDENT AND SUBJECT TEACHER ATTITUDE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO TRUANCY AMONG STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

School truancy is one of the issues currently being discussed within society. This study is a case study conducted at a daily secondary school in the Kuala Muda District, Sungai Petani, Kedah. It explores the influence of student's and subject teacher's attitudes as contributing factors to truancy at SMK Sungai Pasir Kechil, Sungai Petani, Kedah. The study involved 35 out of 100 Form Five students who were enrolled in the Economics subject for the year 2025. A quantitative research method was employed in this study. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores, with the assistance of E-Views software Version 20.00. The findings revealed that the overall mean score for student attitude factors was at a moderate level (mean = 3.58), while the mean score for teacher-related factors was high (mean = 4.25). Furthermore, the role of subject teachers in contributing to truancy also showed a high mean score of 3.73. Additionally, the findings indicated that teachers did not utilise teaching aids (ABM) and instructional materials (BBM) in line with 21st Century Education (PAK-21), with a high mean score of 4.45. This suggests that teacher-related factors significantly impact school truancy. In conclusion, both parents and teachers must work together to address and reduce truancy among students.

Keywords – Student attitude and teacher attitude, School truancy

INTRODUCTION

Truancy has increasingly emerged as a significant behavioral and disciplinary issue within the education system. Azizi Yahya et al. (2007) define truancy as absenteeism from school without valid justification over a specified period. Between 1994 and 2023, the incidence of truancy among Malaysian students has escalated, becoming a more pressing concern. Data from the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2018) indicate a steady rise in truancy cases, particularly within secondary schools. The problem is most prevalent among students aged 14 to 16, with male students contributing disproportionately compared to their female counterparts. Wee Ka Siong classifies truancy as a serious form of misconduct, comparable to fighting and bullying. This perspective aligns with Johari et al. (2010) and Arsathamby et al. (2014), both of whom identify truancy as a major social issue

in Malaysian education. Similarly, Yahya B. Buntat et al. (2010) describe it as absenteeism without reasonable justification. Multiple factors underpin truancy among secondary school students, including family circumstances, peer influence, student–teacher conflicts, and environmental conditions. Nevertheless, research consistently highlights family-related and school-related issues as the dominant determinants.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research indicates that multiple factors contribute to student truancy, with parental and teacher-related influences being particularly significant. This study seeks to identify the factors associated with truancy among Form 5 students. Evidence suggests that truancy is more prevalent among students from rural areas, where challenges related to living conditions, socio-economic background, and peer interactions are more pronounced. Patterson (1996) emphasized that negative attitudes and destructive family environments are unlikely to improve without intervention from responsible parties. Parental influence is often highlighted as a major determinant. Parents who are preoccupied with work or material pursuits may have limited time to engage with their children, thereby weakening parental supervision and emotional support. Such conditions can foster disengagement and contribute to truancy. At the same time, school-related factors also play an important role. Conflicts between students and teachers, particularly when disciplinary actions are perceived as unfair or excessively punitive, may intensify student resentment and encourage absenteeism. Thus, while parental factors are central to the issue of truancy, teacher-related dynamics within the school environment likewise exert considerable influence, suggesting that truancy results from the interaction of both family and school contexts rather than a single contributing factor.

OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

a) General Objective

To analyze parental and teacher-related factors contributing to the truancy problem at SMK Sungai Pasir Kechil, Sungai Petani, Kedah.

b) Specific Objectives

- i. To identify and explain the parental factors contributing to the truancy problem at SMK Sungai Pasir Kechil, Sungai Petani, Kedah.
- ii. To identify and explain the teacher related factors contributing to the truancy problem at SMK Sungai Pasir Kechil, Sungai Petani, Kedah.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised Form 5 students in the year 2025 at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sungai Pasir Kechil, Sungai Petani, Kedah (SMKSPK). This school was selected due to its notably high truancy rate, recorded at over 60 percent according to the *Aplikasi Pangkalan Data Murid (APDM, 2025)*. The selection of this population was therefore appropriate, as it provided a relevant context in which to examine the factors influencing truancy.

Sample of the Study

According to Mohd Najib (1999), the determination of sample size is crucial as it affects the reliability and generalizability of research findings. In this study, a cluster random sampling technique was employed, focusing specifically on Form 5 students at SMKSPK. This approach was chosen to ensure that the sample would represent the wider student population while minimizing selection bias. From a total of 184 Form 5 students, 100 were randomly selected, a number considered sufficient to provide meaningful insights while remaining manageable for data collection and analysis.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which served as the primary research instrument. Questionnaires are widely used in survey-based research because they enable systematic collection of data from a relatively large number of respondents within a limited timeframe. Furthermore, standardized questions facilitate the measurement of attitudes and perceptions while enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. The use of this instrument was therefore considered suitable for addressing the objectives of the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Are parents the cause of truancy?

Table 3 shows the mean scores for parental factors. The overall mean score for parental factors is at a moderate level, with a mean of 3.58. The lowest mean score was 2.65, indicating that respondents felt their parents did not show much concern towards them. The highest mean score was 4.25 for the item stating that parents allowed them to go out with friends.

Table 3: Mean Score for Parental Factors

Variable	Sub-variable	Score	Overall Mean Score
Parents	Parents allow me to go out with friends	4.25	Mean = 3.58
	Parents are always busy with work	3.80	
	Parents spend little time with children	4.02	
	Parents provide phones and allow internet/gaming at home	3.20	
	Parents show little concern about me	2.65	

Are subject teachers' attitudes the cause of truancy?

Table 4 shows the mean scores for teacher-related factors. The overall mean score is at a high level, with a mean of 3.73. The lowest mean score was 3.20, indicating that respondents felt subject teachers did not provide motivation or praise. The highest mean score was 4.45 for the item stating that teachers did not use teaching aids aligned with 21st Century Learning (PAK-21).

Table 4: Mean Score for Teacher-Related Factors

Variable	Sub-variable	Score	Overall Mean Score
Teachers	Subject teachers do not provide motivation and praise	3.20	Mean = 3.73
	Teachers do not use topical modules in lessons	3.76	
	Teachers ask students to copy notes from textbooks	3.89	
	Teachers show favoritism among students	3.36	
	Teachers do not use teaching aids aligned with PAK-21	4.45	
	Teachers assign excessive homework	4.23	
	Teachers poorly manage the class during teaching and learning (PdPc)	3.25	

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that most respondents come from rural areas, where they lack the freedom to go into nearby towns. Among parental factors, the most influential variable encouraging truancy was the permission given by parents to go out with friends. This view is supported by Norazah et al. (2018) and Azizi Yahaya et al. (2021). Regarding teacher-related factors, the highest mean score (4.45) was for the variable where teachers did not use teaching aids in line with 21st Century Learning (PAK-21). This shows that subject teachers are a significant factor contributing to student truancy, as they often fail to create engaging and enjoyable classroom activities.

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