

## **Approaches To Solve the Problem of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia**

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**Abstract:** *This study examines approaches to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. The study investigated school-based interventions, role of teachers and role of parent teachers' association in solving truancy. Descriptive survey research design was used where self-administered questionnaires were given to 100 teachers and 100 parents in five selected secondary schools within Kuala Terengganu district. The schools include: Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kompleks Gong Badak, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Ibrahim Fikri, Sekolah Menengah Agama Khairiah, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Mengabang Telipot, and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bukit Besar. The data obtained was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. Descriptive statistics was used to determine the mean, frequency, percentages and standard deviation of the respondents. The findings of the study indicated that school-based interventions have a positive impact in solving truancy. Role of teachers was also found to have a significant impact in solving truancy. However, based on the result, role of parent teachers' association was significant in solving the problem of students' truants' behaviour. Finally, recommendations were given to school administrators, teachers and parents.*

**Keywords:** *Truancy, interventions, secondary school students, approaches, solving*

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### **I. Introduction**

Truancy is a problem affecting student's success in school that can have a long-term effect on the students. Students who absent themselves from school are at risk of dropping out of school early, resulting in the long-term effect of becoming unemployed, falling into the poverty trap, and engaging in various act of misbehavior. Students' truancy from school is a common problem encountered by the school teachers and other professionals who work in the field of education. Studies reveal many reasons why some students engaged themselves in a different kind of absence from schools. In a number of cases, truancy can be drawn to absenting from school due to poor achievement, family conditions or behavioural reasons. In some instances, students just resist the requirement to attend school. For this reason, this area is one in which the need for collaboration between school and teachers is of paramount importance. While many schools provide adequate alternative programmes or truancy interventions, there will be instances where, despite the efforts of schools and teachers, the students stay away. It is clear that any unauthorised absence is of concern because of the valuable educational time that is missed due to the non-attendance of some students.

School attendance laws were first passed by Massachusetts in United States of America in the year 1852 as a way to curb child labour [1]. By 1900, thirty-two states had compulsory school attendance laws, and by 1918 every state had some form of school attendance law. The laws were said to be ineffective, simply because they were largely enforced and relied on the school policy of "push out", on learner rather than tackling the underlying issues of truancy and developing approaches to keep students in school. School districts around the United States are tackling the truancy problem by working jointly with courts, law enforcement, and social service agencies and parents for them to identify students at the first signs of unexcused absence and ensuring that all individuals are taking part in the prevention, planning, and implementation of truancy plan [1]. The truants are commonly missing school for such a period that it is hard if not impossible for them to meet up. "This results to further their disengagement from school, from the teachers and lastly can cause serious anti-social behaviour like juvenile delinquency." The traditional method of disciplining student delinquents is to exclude them. The "push out" process sends a message to truants that they are not wanted, ultimately forcing a student's situation from bad to worse. It was reported that "referring a student home for not attending school provided little or no intervention to the prevailing root cause of the absences, and is counter-productive to the educational process." The "push-out" method was continued in the 1980s. As the state and federal drug enforcement policies increased, favouring the zero tolerance policies adopted to punish all acts of anti-social behaviour severely, no matter how little the offense. The importance of school attendance to educational success

has been neglected in most education prevention and reform initiatives. The school discipline, school safety, and zero tolerance concerns have combined to produce procedures which are counter-productive by forcing the problems out of the schools [1].

In United States various sections (36, 39 and 40) of the 1994 Education Act of USA contains such provisions. Under section 36, it is the responsibility of parents of any student of compulsory school-age to ensure that the child receives full-time education suitable to the age, aptitude and ability [2]. According to provisions of section 39, student aged between 5 and 16, who failed to attend school and does not have the genuine reason for being absent from school, is called a truant. Under this section, there are three acceptable reasons for absence from the school. These include sickness or other unavoidable reasons relating to the student, religion function at home and the distance to the school from the student's residence and further no suitable arrangement for transport have been made available. Under section 40 of the act, action may be taken against such students, who failed to attend school regularly, and they may also be taken to juvenile court [2]. However, the Act stated that only the schools and not the parents may authorise the absence of a student from school. The penalty for truancy in United States ranges from \$250 to as much as \$500. In some cities or towns, teenagers found roaming on the streets during school working periods are sometimes even handcuffed. However, many states appoint local truancy officers. These are responsible for arresting habitually truant students and bring them to their parents or the school they are supposed to attend. However, such truancy regulations are enforced by school officials in the context of parental obligation. In addition, the new automated calling systems i.e. Connect Ed was introduced to allow automated notification to the parent when their child is not marked present in a computer in the school.

The Department of Education reported that the availability of free and compulsory education for its children, usually through the provision of state-funded schooling, is considered a hallmark for the development of a society [3]. In the UK, a system of such instruction has been in existence since the end of the nineteenth century. However, every child in Britain aged between 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16 being required to receive 'efficient, full-time education suitable to his age. Thus, it involves ability and aptitude to any special educational needs he or she may have. Free and compulsory education is as an essential entitlement under international standards "The United Nations' Universal Declaration for Human Rights and Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights" [3]. However, since different perceptions can be and are held for the various purposes of education and their relative importance, so too there is a range of views about the meaning and significance of absence from school. For example, the 'mainstream' view propounded by the 'Department of Education' (now the Department for Education and Employment) highlighted that: "Truancy is too much in our schools. Hence is undermining our educational organisation. This means that some schools have turn-off a blind eye, and some parents are not fulfilling their responsibility of encouraging attendance by meeting their legal obligation to see that their child attends school. Worse of all, it can lead to much unhappiness among students themselves, as well as to create greater problems for the community".

In Australia, schools keep a close understanding with local police to combat students' truant behaviour. The nearby police stations monitor areas around the school and looks for truanting students. In most cases, the truants are returned to schools. The Australian government can also take action against parents of such students by withdrawing child support payment to them if the child is caught absencing schools multiple times. Some schools have started operating a new system; whereby if a student is not marked as 'present', school computers will automatically SMS the parent (s) of the child and notify absence [2].

Truancy among students in Malaysia is the number one discipline problem that accounted for about 32% of all discipline problems [4]. School systems that have experienced some degree of success in decreasing their rates of truancy seem to have several common factors. Firstly, their attendance policies are firm and compulsory, and in some cases are backed by public support. Parents and students are held responsible for absences, with a sanction when they do not comply. Secondly, early interventions that include counselling to try to prevent continued patterns of truancy have been successful in some schools as well as providing positive reinforcement to school personnel to reward students who improve their attendance. And thirdly, schools that methodically monitor and track their students' patterns of truancy and which follow-up with parental contacts and legal sanctions reports some reductions in truancy rates [5].

A study of the literature review reveals that most of the researchers explore truancy as an issue related to individuals and communities. The menace of truancy includes more than just a study on individuals and communities aspects of students' truant behavior. It involves the schools, teachers and parent teachers associations. This is evident in the study by [6] who analyzed three years period of school practices and their subsequent attendance rates at 12 secondary schools, mostly in California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. The study centered on two main goals which include; increasing attendance rate for all students and reducing the percentage of chronically truant learners (more than 20 absences). The study which relied on descriptive information and cooperative school principals found that the best predictors of students' attendance

included: firstly rewarding students for improved attendance had an effect on both increasing the overall school attendance and decreasing the level of chronic truancy. Conversely, another study on truancy was conducted at 59 high schools in the Minneapolis region to find out variables that are related to school attendance rates [7]. Results of the study found that school attendance increased when there is an excessive attendance policy in which learners loses marks after to a particular number of class absences. The effect of truancy intervention was evident in a study conducted at Swanley Schools where attendance patterns of eight of the twelve learners increased significantly due to regular supports [8]. It is obvious that students benefit from meetings where they listen to others with similar problems and experiences. Yet, a study at Memphis Title, I high schools found 80 percent or more of the free and reduced-price of lunch on students' attendance [9]. The study asked ten questions about what principals believed were the most effective strategies for reducing truancy. The results of the study indicated that number one on principals' list, with 72 per cent, was the provision of additional professional development to teachers. However, school climate, attachment to teachers, and feelings of physical safety, has been shown greatly to affect a student's desire to attend school [10].

## **II. Objective Of The Study**

The objective of this study is intended:

1. To identify the School-based interventions in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu.
2. To find out the role of teachers in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu.
3. To identify the role of parent teachers' association in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu.

## **III. Research Questions**

The researcher formulates the following research questions to guide this study:

1. What are the School-based interventions in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu?
2. What are the roles of teachers in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu?
3. What are the roles of parent teachers' association in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu?

## **IV. Statement Of The Problem**

Truancy among students is a major concern across secondary schools. The aim of every school is to create a conducive environment that would make effective teaching and learning possible. This makes the goal of preparing students to obtain the required skills, knowledge, morals and talent for their growth and the development of the society as a whole. Truancy is a primary contributor to poor academic performance of learners. This is also likely to effects adversely on the management and administration of the school heads and teachers; as they would have to deal with such challenges as truancy instead of dealing with the day-to-day issues relating to the teaching and learning process. The spread of truancy problem is quite alarming among secondary school students in Malaysia [11]. It has given rise to various moral and social issues among students and cannot be taken lightly. It is reported that in Malaysia, truancy nearly tops the list of acts of misbehaviour among students. However, this problem of truancy is regardless of gender, race and religion. Based on the records of Ministry of Education, Malaysia, a total of 24,840 students in 2006 and 21,060 in 2007, were found to have committed truancy. And of the eight types of discipline problems enumerated by M.O.E, truancy was then ranked second highest after lack of politeness [11].

However, despite the fact that present research contributes significantly to the overall understanding of the approaches in solving the problem of truancy. Most of the researches referred in the literature review failed to explore truancy as a school and an issue related to parent teachers' association. A comprehensive analysis of truancy intervention approaches includes more than just research only on community and an individual matters of truant behaviour and its intervention strategies. What we can learn about the truancy interventions, therefore, comes not just from communities and individual students. But, it is also communicated by the methods of responses adopted by schools administrators, teachers and parents in overcoming the problem of truancy.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that truancy exist among secondary schools in Malaysia, yet, there was no study conducted on the menace of truancy in Kuala Terengganu. Hence, the need for research on truancy in the region is of paramount importance. Therefore the current study was served to bridge this gap. It is believed that some students willingly attend school, while others do not, often as a result of certain factors or effects in their lives. These students require interventions that would help them promote regular attendance. Consequently, in order to reduce students' truant behaviour, the research examines the school-based interventions, role of

teachers and role of parent teachers' association in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.

## V. Research Methodology

### 1.1 Respondents

The target respondents of this study were teachers and parents of secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu. They include 100 teachers and 100 parents of secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.

### 1.2 Sample and sampling technique

The sample size of the study consists of 200 respondents which involve 100 parents and 100 teachers. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to select five schools out of 32 secondary schools in Kuala Terengganu district for data collection. The schools were: Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kompleks Gong Badak, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Ibrahim Fikri, Sekolah Menengah Agama Khairiah, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Mengabang Telipot, and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bukit Besar. In all schools, a total of 100 teachers and 100 parents were randomly selected to participate in the study using simple random sampling. In each of the schools, 20 teachers and 20 parents of the students were asked to fill the closed-ended questionnaires.

### 1.3 Research Instruments

The instrument used for data collection is the two separate questionnaires coded; School-based Intervention Truancy Survey Questionnaire (SITSQ) and Parent Teachers' Association Truancy Survey Questionnaire (PTATSQ). The instruments were developed by the researcher based on established facts in the literature study. The questionnaire on school contained three sections. Section A focused on demographic information of teachers that include: school name, location of the school, gender, marital status, academic qualification, position and years of experience. Section B consists of 17 items on school-based interventions. And, section C of the questionnaires contained seven items on the role of the teacher in solving the problem of truancy. However, a questionnaire on PTA consists of two parts. Section A solicited the demographic information of parents such as gender, age, marital status and occupations, and Section B contained 14 items on role of parent teachers' association to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students. It was developed by the researcher based on established facts in the literature.

### 1.4 Data Analysis

To facilitate scoring and analysis of data, the various categories of questions in the questionnaires were coded according to the different scoring keys. These include Strongly Disagree-5, Disagree-4, Neither Agree/nor Disagree-3, Agree-2, Strongly Agree-1. All the responses ticked on the questionnaires were recorded on a broadsheet before they were inputted into the computer for data analysis using the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. The SPSS was chosen because of its efficacy as an analytical tool for the analysis of complex data.

## VI. Results And Discussions

**1.1 Table 1: Demographic Information of Teachers**

	Age			Gender		Marital Status	
	31-35	36-40	41 and above	Male	Female	Married	Single
Frequency	9	27	64	29	71	96	4
Percentage	9.0	27.0	64.0	29.0	71.0	96.0	4.0

Qualification	Position			Years in Service					
	Bachelor	Masters	Teacher	Senior Master/Head Mistress	Vice Principal	1-10	11-20	21-30	31 and above
63	28	9	93	6	1	14	51	20	5
63.0	28.0	9.0	93.0	6.0	1.0	14.0	51.0	20.0	5.0

Table 1 above indicates the demographic information of teachers. It shows the distribution of teachers based on their age which ranges from 31-35 years 9 (9%), 36-40 years 27 (27%), and 41 and above years 64 (64%). The distribution of the respondents by gender reveals 29 (29%) males and 71 (71%) are females. By marital status 96 (96%) are married, and 4 (4%) are single. The distribution of the respondents by academic qualification indicates 63 (63%) diploma or its equivalent, 28 (28%) bachelor degrees. Also, 9 (9%) of the respondents possesses master's degree. However, 93 (93%) of the respondents are classroom teachers, 6 (6.0) senior masters/head mistress, and 1 (1%) vice principal. Based on the years of service; the figure indicates 1-10

years as 14 (14%), 11-20 years are 51 (51%), 21-30 years 20 (20%). The respondents from 31 and above are 5 (5.0%). However, the information in Table 1 above shows that the respondents were fairly represented.

**1.2 Table 2: Demographic Information of Parents**

	Age			Gender		Marital Status		Occupation		
	30-40	41-50	51 and Above	Male	Female	Married	Single	Civil Servant	Business	Others
Frequency	20	32	48	37	63	100	0	58	26	16
Percentage	20.0	32.0	48.0	37.0	63.0	100.0	0.0	58.0	26.0	16.0

Table 2 above indicates demographic information of parents. The respondents by age distribution between 30-40 years were 20 (20%), 41-50 years 32 (32%), and 51 years and above were 48 (48%). Based on gender distribution, there were 37 (37%) males and 63 (63%) females. However, 100 (100%) of the respondents are married. Also, based on the occupation, 58 (58%) were civil servants, 26 (26%) engaged in commercial business activities, and 16 (16%) belongs to other categories of occupations.

**Research Question 1:** What are the school-based interventions in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu?

**Table 1: School-Based Interventions to solve the problem of truancy**

S/N	ITEM	N	MEAN	DISAGREE	NA/ND	AGREE
1	There are some policies regarding students' attendance in my school.	100	4.29	1(0.9%)	9(7.9%)	90(79.0%)
2	Schools should have a clear strategies and procedures for addressing high rates of students' truant behaviour.	100	4.56	0(0.0%)	4(3.5%)	96(84.2%)
3	I believe in the effectiveness of preventive strategies towards addressing truancy in my school.	100	4.10	3(2.6%)	13(11.4%)	84(73.6%)
4	The rewarding good behaviour of students reduces truancy.	100	4.16	5(4.4%)	11(9.6%)	84(73.7%)
5	Use of rewards to improve attendance rather than punishing students will help reduce truancy.	100	4.05	6(5.3%)	18(15.8%)	76(66.7%)
6	The schools should develop a system of sending short messages (SMS) to the mobile phone with parents or guardians regarding the attendance of a child, this will help improve punctuality.	100	3.95	6(5.3%)	18(15.8%)	76(66.7%)
7	The system should also be made with multi-lingual versions to enable sending messages in many languages.	100	3.72	11(9.7%)	24(21.1%)	65(57.0%)
8	The use of electronic registration to monitor lesson-by-lesson attendance of students reduces truancy.	100	3.84	11(9.6%)	15(13.2%)	74(65.0%)
9	A school environment that is conducive to all student's learning and safety reduces students' truant behaviour.	100	4.27	5(4.4%)	7(6.1%)	88(77.2%)
10	Truancy can be reduced if the schools have activities that attract students to come to school.	100	3.88	9(7.9%)	18(15.8%)	73(64.1%)
11	Establishing mentoring and tutoring after-school programme help reduce students' truant behaviour.	100	3.60	18(15.8%)	22(19.3%)	60(52.6%)
12	Enforcement of the attendance policy by holding parents responsible helps reduce truancy.	100	4.21	3(2.7%)	11(9.6%)	86(75.4%)
13	When a student is absent, the school should immediately inform the parent or guardians.	100	4.26	4(3.5%)	11(9.6%)	85(74.6%)
14	The school should establish a mutual relationship with local businesses where students meet when away from the school.	100	4.34	2(1.8%)	7(6.1%)	91(79.9%)
15	The school should provide professional development to teachers whereby they can make proper use of instructional practices.	100	4.16	1(0.9%)	12(10.5%)	87(76.3%)
16	Truancy if not properly addressed would affect the overall success of our school.	100	4.50	3(2.7%)	3(2.6%)	94(82.4%)
17	Regular attendance will promote student achievement levels in school.	100	4.54	0(0.0%)	6(5.3%)	94(82.4%)

The result of the descriptive statistics on school-based interventions as presented in Table 3 above indicated positive responses by the respondents about school-based interventions. The majority of the respondents have agreed that (items 1 to 17) plays a vital role in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students. However, from the analysis in Table 3 above, we can further summarise it by taking the overall mean score of the school-based interventions to draw the conclusion with regards to all responses. This is depicted in Table 4 below:

**Table 2: Summary of School-Based Interventions**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Overall Percentage
School-based interventions	100	4.14	0.82	82.8%

The Table 4 above indicates the summary of responses regarding school-based interventions in solving the problem of truancy. A total of 100 respondents filled the questionnaires on school-based interventions. The table indicated that the distribution of the respondents by mean score was 4.14, and the standard deviation is 0.82. However, the overall percentage of the responses is 82.8%, which show a positive reaction of the participants about school-based intervention in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students.

**Research Question 2:** What are the roles of teachers in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu?

**Table 3: Role of Teachers**

S/N	ITEMS	N	MEAN	DISAGREE	NA/ND	AGREE
1	I believe fairness and firmness in dealing with students help reduce truancy.	100	4.47	1(1.0%)	5(5.0%)	94(94.0%)
2	Teachers should demonstrate a spirit of mutual respect for and confidence in their students to encourage punctuality.	100	4.55	1(1.0%)	2(2.0%)	97(97.0%)
3	I believe truancy could be reduced if teachers teach their subjects well, with enthusiasm, and in a variety of interesting ways.	100	4.11	8(8.0%)	10(10.0%)	82(82.0%)
4	Assisting academically weak students reduces truancy.	100	4.08	6(6.0%)	11(11.0%)	83(83.0%)
5	Teachers should have their penalties for dealing with truancy in the class.	100	3.92	10(10.0%)	14(14.0%)	76(76.0%)
6	As a teacher, I think allowing students to participate fully in the classroom activities would help reduce students' truant behaviour in the class.	100	4.14	2(2.0%)	8(8.0%)	90(90.0%)
7	If a programme were implemented to reduce truancy, I would willingly participate even it meant more work for me during school hours.	100	4.03	4(4.0%)	17(17.0%)	79(79.0%)

Table 5 above indicates descriptive statistics on the role of teachers to solve the problem of truancy. The overall results showed that the majority of the respondents have agreed that all items in the questionnaires (1 to 7) are an effective approach to solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students. Furthermore, from the analysis of Table 5 above, we can summarise it by taking the mean score and standard deviation of the role of teachers. This is shown in the table below:

**Table 4: Summary of Role of Teachers**

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Overall Percentage
Role of teachers	100	4.1857	.56179	83.8%

Table 6 above indicates that a total of 100 respondents filled questionnaires on the role of teachers to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students. The analysis reveals that the mean score of respondents was 4.19, and the standard deviation was 0.56, the overall percentage is 83.8%. Therefore, based on the results in Table 6 above, the role of teachers has a positive impact on solving the problem of truancy.

**Research Question 3:** What are the roles of Parent Teachers' Association in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu?

**Table 5: Role of Parent Teachers' Association**

S/N	ITEM	N	MEAN	AGREE	NA/ND	DISAGREE
1	The procedures that the school uses in addressing truancy should be clearly stated.	100	4.54	92(92.0%)	6(6.0%)	8(8.0%)
2	I believed that each school should have a clear anti-truancy policy.	100	4.56	92(92.0%)	6(6.0%)	2(2.0%)
3	Teachers should deal effectively with the incidence of students' truant behaviour.	100	4.47	93(93.0%)	4(4.0%)	3(3.0%)
4	The schools should ensure that each child is physically safe when on the school site.	100	4.59	92(92.0%)	5(5.0%)	8(8.0%)
5	As a parent/guardian, I understand the attendance procedures used and knew what to do when my child is going to be absent from school.	100	4.44	91(91.0%)	7(7.0%)	2(2.0%)
6	I believed that the school should call parent/guardian on the first day of child's absence.	100	4.41	89(89.0%)	7(7.0%)	2(2.0%)
7	The school should inform the parent/guardians about child attendance and punctuality to school or lessons.	100	4.42	87(87.0%)	11(11.0%)	2(2.0%)
8	I believed that schools should reward student's good attendance and punctuality.	100	4.41	87(87.0%)	13(13.0%)	0(0.0%)
9	I know who I could talk to if I had a problem with my child's learning and progress or behaviour and safety.	100	4.28	85(85.0%)	12(12.0%)	3(3.0%)
10	I always attend a meeting with the Parents' Teachers Association.	100	4.00	77(77.0%)	18(18.0%)	5(5.0%)
11	I feel that my voice as a parent/guardian is listened to and valued by the school.	100	4.24	82(82.0%)	18(18.0%)	0(0.0%)
12	Making unscheduled visits by parents/guardians to the school where their children attend help improve attendance.	100	4.20	86(86.0%)	12(12.0%)	2(2.0%)
13	Parents/guardians should check their children notebooks on a regular basis to ensure regular attendance.	100	4.42	89(89.0%)	10(10.0%)	1(1.0%)
14	As a parent/guardian, if I realised any area of weaknesses in my child regarding his attendance at school, I will find out an immediate way to overcome the problem.	100	4.39	91(91.0%)	4(4.0%)	5(5.0%)

Table 7 above indicates descriptive statistics on roles of Parent Teachers' Association to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students. The overall results showed that the majority of the respondents have agreed that all items (1 to 14) in the questionnaire are effective ways to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students. However, the summary of the mean and standard deviation of Table 7 above will be depicted in the table below:

**Table 6: Summary of Role of P.T.A**

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Overall Percentage
Role of P.T.A	100	4.386	.596	87.6%

Table 8 above shows the summary of responses about the role of Parent Teachers' Association to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students. The analysis reveals that 100 respondents filled the questionnaires, and the mean score of the distribution is 4.38, the standard deviation is 0.596, and the overall percentage is 87.6%. Therefore, the result indicates a positive impact of the roles of parent teachers' association to solve the problem of truancy among secondary school students.

**Research Question 1: School-based interventions**

The result of the study showed that the item "there are some policies regarding students' attendance in my school" indicated that 79.0% of the respondents have agreed with the item. There are 7.9% of respondents who neither agree/nor disagree, and 0.9% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. The mean distribution of the respondents was 4.29. This finding is supported by the research finding which found that school attendance increased when there is an excessive attendance policy [7]. However, the item "schools should have a clear strategies and procedures for addressing high rates of students' truant behaviour" has the highest percentage 84.0% of response. Conversely, the item "rewarding good behaviour of students reduces truancy" has 73.7% of the respondents agreed with the item. Responses on Neither Agree/nor Disagree was 9.6%, and there were 4.4% respondents have disagreed with the item. The mean score was 4.16. This result is consistent with the result of the study that rewarding students for improved attendance had an effect on both increasing the overall school attendance and decreasing the level of truancy [6].

Also, the item "use of rewards to improve attendance rather than punishing students helps reduce truancy" indicated that 66.7% of the respondents agreed with the item. There was 15.8% of the respondents who neither Agree/nor disagree with the item. And 5.3% of respondents have disagreed with this item. The mean

distribution was 4.05. This finding is supported by the study which found that provision of incentives for regular attendance was more efficient than using punishment and sanctions on truants [8].

Moreover, the item "school environment that is conducive to all students' learning and safety reduces students' truant behaviour" showed that 77.2% of respondents agreed with this item. There were 6.1% of the respondents that neither agree/nor disagree with the item. The respondents who disagreed with the item were 4.4%, and the mean distribution was 4.27. This result is in line with the research finding which revealed that the strategy adopted by principals and assistant principals was considered most effective is to provide school environment that is conducive to all students' educational need [9]. The response on item, "the school should provide professional development to teachers whereby they can make proper use of instructional practices" revealed that 76.3% of the respondents agreed with the statement. There were 10.5% of respondents who neither agreed/nor disagreed with this statement. The respondents who disagreed with the item were 0.9%, and the mean distribution was 4.16.

### **Research Question 2: Role of teachers**

The item "I believe fairness and firmness in dealing with students help reduce truancy" indicated that 94.0% of the respondents agreed with the statement. There were 5.0% of respondents who neither agreed/nor disagreed with this item. The respondents who disagreed with the instrument were 1.0%, and the mean score was 4.47. This finding is in line with the result of the study which reported that attachment to teachers and feeling of physical safety has been greatly shown to affect a students' desire to attend school [10].

### **Research Question 3: Role of Parent Teachers' Association (P.T.A)**

The response on item "the procedure that schools uses in addressing truancy should be clearly stated" indicated that 92.0% of the respondents agreed with the statement, while 6.0% neither agreed/nor disagree with this item. The response on item "making unscheduled visits by parents/guardians to the schools where their children attend help improves attendance" indicated that 86.0% of the respondents agreed with this statement, while 12.0% neither agree/nor disagreed with this item. There were 2.0% respondents who disagreed with the statement, and the mean score was 4.20.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The result of the study concluded that school-based interventions, role of teachers and role of parent teachers' association have a positive impact in solving the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. Thus, the research suggests that schools should adopt clear procedures and strategies for addressing students' truants' behaviour. The study also recommends that teachers should teach their subject well in a professional way with enthusiasm and in a variety of interesting manner. And lastly, the study recommends that parents should be visiting their children in schools from time-to-time to ensure punctuality.

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