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## Research Article

### Factors Affecting the Absenteeism among Senior High School Learners

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## ABSTRACT

Student absenteeism was a persistent issue in education, affecting academic performance and future opportunities. This study explored the factors that influenced absenteeism among senior high school learners in one of the Public Secondary High Schools in Cluster 1 Division of Pampanga, Philippines. Using a sequential-explanatory research design, the study first collected quantitative data through surveys and then conducted qualitative interviews with selected respondents. Findings revealed that absenteeism was influenced by financial constraints, health issues, family problems, lack of sleep, overloaded academic activities, and unfavorable school environments. The study highlighted that student facing financial difficulties often missed school due to lack of transportation funds and daily allowances. Similarly, frequent illness and family-related responsibilities contributed to absences. Additionally, academic pressures, strict teachers, and peer conflicts negatively impacted students' motivation to attend school. The study emphasized the need for targeted interventions, such as financial aid programs, mental health support, and policy adjustments in school administration, to minimize absenteeism. Addressing these concerns could enhance student engagement, academic performance, and overall well-being.

**Keywords:** *Absenteeism, Senior High School Learners*

## Introduction

A major concern in the country's academia is absenteeism. Students' ability to learn is negatively impacted by the presence of a large number of absences; the more absences they acquire, the fewer lessons they can attend. Attendance in school is one of the most basic requisites that affect students' performance in school. In other words, the lack of this basic need may be truancy or, in ordinary language,

absenteeism. Additionally, there would be fewer and disconnected concepts of learning as a consequence. Students who are regularly absent from school are more likely to drop out and not finish school, which may lead to unemployment, low average incomes, and poverty.

## Education

Education is the act of preparing a person or a group of persons to read, write, and

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perform certain activities in life and to be able to align with the cultural expectations of any society (Aliero, 2020; Odeniyi & Adeyanju, 2020). Today, education is a relevant factor needed for the development of people, communities, individuals, and societies. It is noteworthy to stress that education plays an important role in empowering, liberating, and directing individuals throughout the cycle of life (Abubakar & Kwashabawa, 2021; Sarkingobir et al., 2023). Education offers learners and students a bright future as it provides them with the required skills and employability or credits to pursue further education (Aliero, 2020).

### **Reasons for Absenteeism**

Many factors contribute to absenteeism, either individually or synergistically. It has been shown that a poor school environment affects students' interest in attending school, along with violence, poverty, and poor teaching methods (Musa & Mbeya, 2022). Various published works from different parts of the world indicate that student absenteeism is influenced by socioeconomic status, illness of students or their parents, distance from school, household chores, hunger, harassment, harsh punishment at school, poor parental supervision, financial challenges, and negative peer influence (Bamgboye et al., 2017; Ada et al., 2019; Musa & Mbeya, 2022). Consequently, absenteeism poses a great threat to society as it leads to social issues, including prostitution, substance abuse, early marriage, increased juvenile delinquency, suicide, violence, theft, and school dropouts (Musa & Mbeya, 2022).

Because students stay at home frequently due to absenteeism and related issues, they develop a habitual disinterest in learning. Many students perform poorly in academics, and the loss of qualified personnel in the workforce can be attributed to absenteeism. Many specialized institutions of learning also suffer due to high absenteeism rates (Oghuvbu, 2008; Ibrahim et al., 2021; Hiliya et al., 2022).

### **Absenteeism**

Absenteeism is defined as a pattern whereby a student frequently misses school (Musa & Mbeya, 2022). This results in students developing a lack of interest in education,

leading to poor academic performance. Additionally, absenteeism negatively impacts workforce readiness, as many potential employees fail to acquire the necessary qualifications (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Hiliya et al., 2022).

Research has established that children who frequently miss lessons in kindergarten are likely to develop low working memory and cognitive flexibility in early childhood (Ansari & Gottfried, 2021; Gottfried & Ansari, 2021). Students who are often absent from school may also experience lower engagement in classroom activities, making it difficult to interact with peers and teachers, which hinders their learning process (Korpershoek et al., 2020).

Although school absence is linked to lower academic performance, it is essential to understand the underlying causes. Identifying specific reasons for absenteeism may help in addressing these challenges more effectively. Intentional truancy is particularly detrimental to academic performance, as what students engage in outside of school significantly impacts their learning (Klein, 2022). Studies have indicated that unexcused absenteeism correlates most strongly with poor academic performance (Klein, 2022). Furthermore, unauthorized absences are one of the primary indicators of early school dropout. A lack of motivation may also make it difficult for disengaged students to catch up on missed lessons and coursework.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

The researchers aimed to determine the factors affecting the absenteeism of senior high school learners in one of the Public Secondary High Schools in Cluster 1, Division of Pampanga, Philippines, during the academic year 2024-2025.

Specifically, this seeks to answer the following questions;

- 1 How may the factors affecting the absenteeism of the respondents be describe in terms of;
  - 1.1 personal;
  - 1.2 natural and social;
  - 1.3 subject related;
  - 1.4 teacher-related; and
  - 1.5 administration related?

2. Based on the quantitative findings, what are the reasons behind the absenteeism of senior high school learners

### **Significance of the Study**

This study will be greatly important for the following:

**Students:** The research allowed students to better understand how their attendance habits affected their academic progress and personal growth. It encouraged them to evaluate their attendance patterns and take steps to improve, ultimately enhancing their learning and prospects.

**Parents:** Parents gained valuable insights into how their engagement with their child's education influenced attendance and academic success. This study fostered stronger partnerships between schools and families, highlighting the critical role that parental support played in reducing absenteeism. Parent education programs emerged, providing parents with strategies to support their children's school participation more effectively.

**Teachers:** The findings equipped teachers with a clearer understanding of the factors that led to absenteeism, enabling them to adjust their teaching methods accordingly. By creating a more inclusive and responsive classroom environment, teachers were able to help address the barriers that caused students to miss school, leading to improved attendance and student engagement.

**Future Researcher:** This study provided a valuable foundation for future researchers examining factors that influenced absenteeism among senior high school students. Identifying key patterns supported the development of new interventions and policies to reduce absenteeism, ultimately contributing to improved educational practices and policies.

### **Scope and Delimitation:**

This study aimed to determine the factors affecting the absenteeism of senior high school students in one of the clusters in a public secondary school in the division of Pampanga, Philippines. The respondents were senior high school students from the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL), Humanities and Social

Sciences (HUMSS), and Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strands.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

The researchers utilized a sequential-explanatory design to investigate the factors that contributed to absenteeism among senior high school students. According to Biber and Johnson (2021), this design entailed initially collecting and analyzing quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Examining absenteeism in senior high school students was vital, as it affected their academic outcomes. This study aimed to uncover its causes to help create strategies that would boost attendance and promote a supportive school atmosphere. This approach aimed to enrich the quantitative findings with further context or explanations. By integrating both numerical and descriptive data collection methods within a single study, this design leveraged the strengths of each method to provide a deeper understanding of the research issue (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative data yielded measurable outcomes, while qualitative data revealed richer insights into the experiences and perceptions of participants. The combination of these two types of data facilitated a more comprehensive exploration of the factors affecting absenteeism.

### **Respondents/Participants**

This study's respondents were senior high school students from the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strands in one of the public secondary high schools during the 2024-2025 academic year. The study used a quantitative research design to collect and analyze data.

Additionally, the researchers will employ purposive sampling to select participants for this study. Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental sampling, is a non-probability sampling approach where individuals are chosen based on specific traits or criteria that are pertinent to the research goals (Teddlie & Yu, 2021). In this study, participants will be

selected based on their absenteeism rates, as they are the most relevant individuals who can provide valuable insights into the factors influencing absenteeism among senior high school learners. By focusing on students with varying levels of absenteeism, the researchers can gather diverse perspectives, identifying common patterns, underlying causes, and possible interventions. This approach ensures that the data collected is meaningful and directly aligned with the study's objectives, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

The researchers shifted focus to interviewing outliers—those students who exhibited the highest score in the questionnaire levels of absenteeism based on the data collected in Phase 1. This phase aimed to explore the deeper, qualitative factors that might have contributed to the high absenteeism rates among these specific students.

The researchers will employ homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling is a type of purposive sampling that focuses on a specific subgroup of the population with shared characteristics, ensuring that all participants are similar in terms of a particular criterion of interest (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This method is chosen to ensure that the study can gain detailed insights from participants who are most representative of the specific phenomenon being studied—in this case, students with high absenteeism rates. Homogeneous sampling is particularly appropriate for qualitative interviews as it allows researchers to explore the lived experiences, motivations, and challenges of a specific group in depth. By selecting participants who share a common characteristic—high absenteeism—the researchers can facilitate more focused discussions, identify recurring themes, and develop a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to absenteeism. This approach enhances the richness and relevance of the data, making it well-suited for qualitative research, where depth and detail are prioritized over generalizability.

### **Instrument**

The researchers used an adopted questionnaire to gather data on factors influencing

absenteeism among senior high school students. The questionnaire, adopted from Edwin Conel (2021). The self-report survey questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile of the students and their reasons for not attending the whole day classes. The instrument was adapted and developed by the researcher, was measured and considered as variable in this study. The survey was trimmed down from 50 to 38 items. Table 1 shows the reliability of the survey questionnaire.

### **Reliability Analysis of Survey Questionnaire**

| <i>Reasons/Factors</i> | <i>Cronbach alpha coefficient</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Personal               | 0.61                              |
| Natural and Social     | 0.73                              |
| Subject-related        | 0.67                              |
| Teacher-related        | 0.80                              |
| Administration-related | 0.77                              |

The overall reliability of the questionnaire was above 0.6. This indicated that the instrument is consistent and acceptable. The form of assessment used is Likert scale with three-point scale with: strongly agree (SA), neither agree nor disagree (NAD), and totally disagree (TD). After the survey, factors affecting absenteeism were identified of which are prevalent to the surveyed school. The corresponding reasons indicated in the survey were as follow: personal reason, social and natural reason, subject-related reason, teacher-related reason, and school administration reason. The number of students who answered strongly agree were counted to determine which of the factors had the highest influence on the students' absenteeism and the number of students who answered totally disagree were tallied to determine the factors that had the less influence on the students' absenteeism.

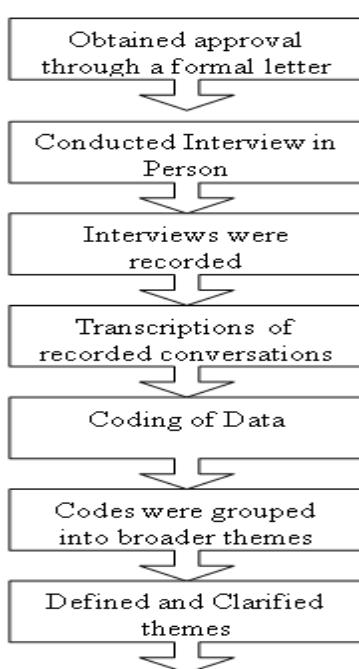
### **Data Collection**

To collect data, the researchers followed a structured process. First, a formal request letter was sent to the school principal, seeking permission to conduct the study within the

school. Once approval was granted, the researchers distributed the adopted questionnaires to the respondents through Google Forms to facilitate easy and efficient data collection. The primary data collected came directly from the students, ensuring that responses accurately reflected the factors influencing absenteeism. After the responses were gathered, the researchers compiled and analyzed the data to address the study's objectives.

In this phase, the researchers first obtained approval through a formal letter request to conduct interviews. Homogeneous sampling was used to ensure that all participants had similar academic backgrounds. Afterward, the researchers conducted interviews in person depending on the participants' preferences and availability. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded to ensure accurate data collection. The recorded conversations

were then transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were anonymized to protect the participants' identities throughout the research process. Once the data was collected, the researchers carefully reviewed the transcripts multiple times to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' time management strategies. Following this, the data was systematically coded. The relevant codes were grouped into broader themes, and the researchers reviewed these themes to ensure they accurately represented the data. The next step was to define and clarify these themes. Finally, the researchers used direct quotes from the participants to illustrate the identified themes in a clear and organized manner. Additionally, out of a total population of 333 Senior High School learners, approximately 20.12% or 67 students were selected as the sample size.

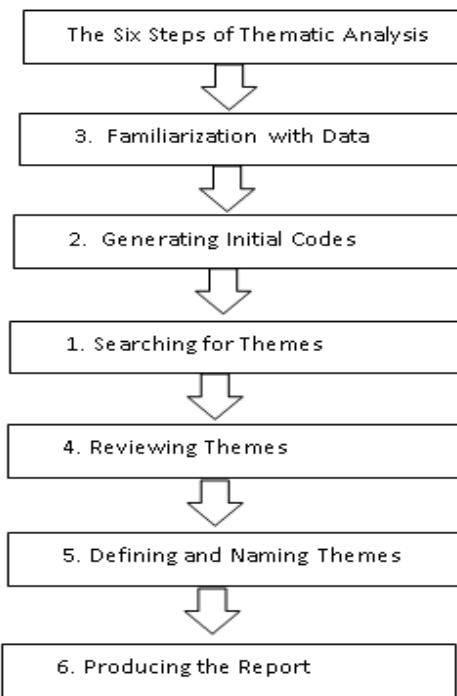


### Statistical Treatment /Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using standard deviation to compare absenteeism rates across different strands—Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM)—and the findings were presented in tables and graphs for better clarity.

The researchers adopted the model of

Braun & Clarke, the process of thematic analysis (TA). According to Braun & Clarke (2017), the method involved identifying, examining, and interpreting patterns or themes within the qualitative data. Thematic analysis was ideal for this study as it allowed the researchers to explore key themes in students' experiences and perceptions of absenteeism, without being limited by any specific theoretical framework.



The six steps of thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involved the following process: First, the researchers familiarized themselves with the data by reading and re-reading the content to gain a deep understanding. Second, initial codes were generated by identifying significant features of the data that were relevant to the research question. Third, the researchers searched for themes by grouping the codes into broader patterns that captured key aspects of the data. Fourth, the themes were reviewed to ensure they accurately reflected the data and made sense in the context of the study. Fifth, the themes were defined and named by clearly articulating their meaning and ensuring they were distinct from one another. Finally, the

report was produced by weaving together the themes and providing a coherent narrative that answered the research question, supported by relevant data excerpts.

#### **Ethical Consideration**

This study followed ethical guidelines to safeguard the rights and well-being of participants. Informed consent was secured from the students. To maintain confidentiality, responses were anonymized, and data was stored securely, with access limited to research purposes only. The researchers also took measures to ensure that the study did not cause any harm or distress, fostering a supportive environment for discussing absenteeism.

## **Result and Discussion**

*Table 1. Descriptive Rating of Respondents' Absenteeism*

| Indicators   | Mean | Verbal Description |
|--|------|--------------------|
| <b>Personal</b>                                    |      |                    |
| 1. I had no allowance.                             | 2.32 | Strongly Agree     |
| 2. I was sick.                                     | 2.28 | Strongly Agree     |
| 3. I was out-of-town.                              | 1.94 | Disagree           |
| 4. I have a job-related conflict.                  | 2    | Disagree           |
| 5. I attend an important occasion (e.g wedding).   | 2.17 | Disagree           |
| 6. I overslept because I had fun the night before. | 2    | Disagree           |
| 7. I wanted to take a break.                       | 1.98 | Disagree           |

| Indicators  | Mean         | Verbal Description |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| 8. The school is far from our house.  | 2            | Disagree           |
| 9. I have not done my assignment/projects to one/several subjects.  | 2.19         | Disagree           |
| 10. I dislike the subject matter.   | 1.80         | Totally Disagree   |
| 11. I don't like one of my teachers.  | 1.79         | Totally Disagree   |
| 12. I was needed in the house for household chores or subjects.   | 2.20         | Disagree           |
| 13. I have never missed class.  | 1.71         | Totally Disagree   |
| <b>Natural And Social;</b>  | <b>Mean</b>  |                    |
| 1. The weather was bad  | 2.38         | Strongly Agree     |
| 2. A needed ride or vehicle wasn't available  | 2.17         | Disagree           |
| 3. I had a campus-related appointment (to participate in an athletic event or contest).                                   | 1.98         | Disagree           |
| 4. It was a religious holiday.  | 2.13         | Disagree           |
| 5. I had to take care of someone else (e.g. sick people/family members).  | 2.10         | Disagree           |
| 6. I dislike my classmates.   | 1.86         | Totally Disagree   |
| 7. I dislike the school.  | 1.76         | Totally Disagree   |
| <b>Subject Related;</b>   | <b>Mean</b>  |                    |
| 1. The topic is/are boring.   | 1.98         | Disagree           |
| 2. The topics are confusing /hard to deal with.   | 2.19         | Disagree           |
| 3. The subject/s is/are easy, and I don't need to attend the class to know it.  | 1.77         | Totally Disagree   |
| 4. The subject content is available from another source like books, internet tutorials, classmates' notes, etc.           | 1.89         | Totally Disagree   |
| <b>Teacher Related;</b>   | <b>Mean</b>  |                    |
| 1. The teachers are boring  | 1.85         | Totally Disagree   |
| 2. The teachers are confused or jump quickly to another topic, so I don't learn much when I attend the class              | 1.98         | Disagree           |
| 3. The teachers' writings are not clear   | 1.77         | Totally Disagree   |
| 4. The teachers' speech is not clear, audible, and discriminating.  | 1.74         | Totally Disagree   |
| 5. The teacher/s doesn't/don't notice when I attend the class.  | 1.89         | Totally Disagree   |
| 6. The teacher/s doesn't/don't like me.   | 1.76         | Totally Disagree   |
| 7. The teacher is/are biased to some students (e.g. favoritism).  | 1.89         | Totally Disagree   |
| 8. The teacher/s is/are not delivering the lessons effectively.   | 1.82         | Totally Disagree   |
| <b>Administration Related;</b>  | <b>Mean</b>  |                    |
| 1. The administration has discrimination among students.  | 2.02         | Disagree           |
| 2. The administration closes the school gate, and will not be able to enter the school, so I will just go somewhere else. | 1.83         | Totally Disagree   |
| 3. The administration is not strict, so I can go out to the school easily and go anywhere                                 | 1.92         | Disagree           |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>   | <b>69.06</b> |                    |

### Personal

Table 1 revealed that the two highest mean scores were associated with financial constraints and health issues. The statement 'I had

no allowance' received a mean score of 2.32, suggesting that students perceived financial limitations as a significant barrier to school attendance. This aligned with Conel's (2022)

study, where 48.75% of respondents agreed that financial problems contributed to their absenteeism. A second high mean score of 2.28 was associated with 'I was sick,' indicating that health concerns also significantly impacted attendance. This finding was consistent with Conel's report of 47.50% identifying illness as a reason for absence. In contrast, the lowest mean scores were linked to 'I have never missed class' (1.71) and 'I don't like one of my teachers' (1.79). These findings suggested that infrequent absences and negative teacher-student relationships were perceived as less significant factors influencing absenteeism. Conel's study reported that 60.00% agreed with the statement 'I have never missed class,' indicating a strong sense of consistent attendance among their participants. Furthermore, only 26.25% in Conel's study agreed with disliking a teacher, a lower percentage than the mean score observed in this study. This suggested that while classroom dynamics and teacher relationships were relevant, they played a minor role in absenteeism compared to financial and health-related factors.

### ***Natural and Social***

Table 2 showed that the two highest mean scores were linked to environmental and transportation issues. The statement 'The weather was bad' received a mean score of 2.38, indicating that students strongly perceived adverse weather conditions as significantly impacting their attendance. This finding was consistent with Conel's (2022) study, which found that 52.50% of respondents acknowledged bad weather as a contributing factor to absenteeism. The second-highest mean score of 2.17 corresponded to the statement 'A needed ride or vehicle wasn't available,' suggesting that transportation issues were also regarded as a notable barrier to attendance. In contrast, Conel's study reported that only 26.25% identified transportation availability as a reason for their absences, indicating a potentially heightened awareness of this issue among the surveyed students. Conversely, the two lowest mean scores pertained to negative feelings towards the school environment and peer relationships. The statement 'I dislike the school' received a mean score of 1.76, suggesting that

dissatisfaction with the school was not a primary driver of absenteeism. This contrasted with Conel's findings, which showed that 21.25% of respondents cited disliking the school as a factor in their absences. Similarly, the statement 'I dislike my classmates' had a mean score of 1.86, indicating that negative relationships with peers played a minor role in absenteeism, supported by Conel's report of 25.00% acknowledging this factor. Overall, these results highlighted that while adverse weather and transportation issues significantly affected absenteeism, negative attitudes towards the school and classmates were perceived as less influential factors among students.

### ***Subject Related***

Table 3 confirmed that the two highest mean scores were associated with challenges in understanding the subject matter. The statement 'The topics are confusing/hard to deal with' received a mean score of 2.19, indicating that students perceived the content as difficult. This aligned with Cone's (2022) finding that 33.75% of respondents shared this sentiment. Additionally, the statement 'The topic(s) is/are boring' garnered a mean score of 1.98, suggesting that a lack of engagement with the material also impacted student involvement. This finding was lower than Conel's report, which stated that 43.75% of students agreed that boredom influenced their learning experience. Conversely, the two lowest mean scores pertained to the perceived ease of the subject matter and the availability of alternative resources. The statement 'The subject(s) is/are easy, and I don't need to attend the class to know it' received a mean score of 1.77, suggesting that students did not generally view the content as easily comprehensible enough to forgo attendance. This was in stark contrast to Conel's study, which reported that 43.75% of participants agreed with this statement. Similarly, the statement 'The subject content is available from another source like books, internet tutorials, classmates' notes, etc.' received a mean score of 1.89, indicating that students did not heavily rely on alternative resources, which was lower than Conel's finding of 53.75% agreeing with this perspective. Overall, these

results highlighted that while students perceived subject difficulty and lack of engagement as significant factors affecting their attendance, they did not consider the ease of the subject matter or the availability of alternative resources as primary influences on their absenteeism.

### **Teacher Related**

Table 4 indicated that the statement 'The teachers' speech is not clear, audible, and discriminating' received a mean score of 1.74, suggesting that students did not generally perceive issues with the clarity and audibility of their teachers' speech as significant barriers to their learning. This finding was higher than Conel's (2022) study, which reported that 18.75% of respondents agreed with this sentiment.

Similarly, the statement 'The teacher(s) does not/don't like me' garnered a mean score of 1.76, indicating that students did not feel that personal feelings from teachers significantly affected their attendance. This result was also higher than Conel's finding, which was that 13.75% agreed with this perspective.

The relatively low mean scores for these statements suggested that students were less concerned about communication clarity and teacher favoritism compared to other factors influencing their attendance. Moreover, the higher percentages in Conel's study indicated that these issues might have been less pronounced in the current student population. Overall, these findings highlighted that while communication and interpersonal dynamics were relevant, they were not viewed as primary drivers of absenteeism among students."

### **Administration Related**

Table 5 conveyed that the highest mean score of 2.02 was associated with the statement, 'The administration has discrimination among students,' indicating that students felt this issue significantly impacted their school experience. This finding contrasted sharply with Conel's (2022) study, which reported that only 23.75% of respondents agreed with this sentiment.

The second-highest mean score of 1.92 corresponded to the statement, 'The administration is not strict, so I can go out of the school

easily and go anywhere.' This suggested that students perceived a lack of strictness in administrative policies as a factor influencing their behavior and potentially their attendance, which was also higher than Conel's finding of 21.25% agreeing with this perspective.

In contrast, the lowest mean score of 1.83 was linked to the statement, 'The administration closes the school gate, and I will not be able to enter the school, so I will just go somewhere else.' This indicated that students did not view the closing of school gates as a significant factor affecting their attendance. In comparison, Conel's study found that 25.00% of respondents expressed concern regarding this issue.

Overall, these findings highlighted that while students expressed substantial concerns about administrative practices, particularly in terms of perceived discrimination and leniency, they felt less impacted by school access policies. This suggested that addressing issues related to discrimination and administrative strictness might have been crucial for improving student experiences and attendance.

### **Sequential Explanatory Data**

This chapter presented the findings and discussion in alignment with the research problems outlined in Chapter 1. The topics were addressed in the following order: Work as a Barrier to Education, Financial Constraints Affecting Education, Illness Affecting Attendance, Sleep's Role in Education, Impacts of Family Problems, Mental Struggles from Overthinking, Pressure of Overloaded Activities, Persistence Despite Absences, Struggles with Catching Up, Breaking the Habit of Cutting Classes, Managing Classmate Conflicts, Impact of Academic Failure, Challenges with Strict Teachers, and Suggesting Schedule Adjustments. The findings were derived from insights shared by the participants.

### **Work as a Barrier to Education**

The responses from Senior High School learners indicate that part-time work is a major reason for absenteeism, as students struggle to balance academic responsibilities with employment. Survey results reveal that **35% of students** miss school due to work obligations,

aligning with interview responses that highlight the necessity of earning income to support personal or family needs.

*(Some people work, while others just don't want to attend)* "Kayi deng aliwa mag obra, reng aliwa naman ela talaga bisang lungub" -A1

*(One thing I dislike and the reason I don't attend school is that I lack sleep. We sell balut, so I often lack sleep)* "One. Ing eku buri kasi anya eku makapag lub pane kung puyat, mag tinda kami kasing balut" -A6

Research supports this, showing that part-time employment negatively impacts academic performance. Singh, Chang, and Dika (2007) found that increased work hours correlate with lower self-reported grades among high school students, even after considering background factors. Similarly, a 2024 study from the International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews found that university students in part-time jobs struggle with time management, leading to decreased academic performance.

### ***Financial Constraints affects Education***

Survey results show that **42% of students** cited financial difficulties as their primary reason for absenteeism. Interview responses further illustrate these struggles, with students frequently mentioning a lack of transportation funds and daily allowances.

*(Sometimes I don't have enough money for school)* "Minsan kasi kayi alaku masyadung bakal" -A2

*(Maybe they have an illness or a problem with their allowance, which is why they don't attend school)* "Baka pu kayi or ita pung atin la pung sakit or atin la pung problema king allowance nya elapu lulub king eskwela." -A3

*(Fever. No money for recess)* "Malagnat. Ala lang bakal." -A7

*(Our family is doing fine, but sometimes we face problems. My mother has a lot of debt. I admit that she has many debts and has to pay a lot, so sometimes I can't*

*even go to school, and I try to help.)* "Number two. Ayus neman ing kekaming pamilya minsan mikayi mu pag problema makanyan. Mama ku dakal ya utang, Aminan ku dakal ya utang mama ku plus madakal ya babayaran kayi minsan eku man maka lub sopan kula" -A6

This aligns with research by Kearney (2008), which found that students from low-income families are more likely to miss school due to financial difficulties. Studies also show that economic hardships force students to prioritize work over education, leading to increased absentee rates (Hocking, 2008). In Uganda and other regions, financial instability causes students to drop out due to unregulated school fees (Associated Press, 2024).

### ***Illness Affecting Attendance***

Survey findings indicate that **39% of students** reported missing school due to illness. Interviews confirm this trend, with students citing health issues as a primary reason for absenteeism.

*(Maybe they have an illness or a problem with their allowance, which is why they don't attend school)* "Baka pu kayi or ita pung atin la pung sakit or atin la pung problema king allowance nya elapu lulub king eskwela." -A3

*(Fever. No money for recess)* "Malagnat. Ala lang bakal." -A7

Research from the CDC (2022) states that approximately 5.8% of students aged 5–17 regularly miss school due to illness, injury, or disability. Chronic illnesses like asthma contribute significantly to absentee rates, leading to lower academic performance and disengagement in class.

### ***Sleep's Role in Education***

Survey responses show that **28% of students** cited lack of sleep as a contributing factor to absenteeism. Many students report difficulty concentrating in class due to exhaustion from responsibilities at home or late-night commitments.

*(I would say that to reduce student absences in class, waking up early is important. If you have something to do, you should go to school right away, and the tasks you need to do should be completed)*

"Masasabi ko po dito para po mabawasan ang pagliban ng mga estudyante sa klase ay dapat po magising ng maaga at kung may mga dapat pong gawin ay dapat agad pumasok at yung mga kailamgan po na gawin na activities ay kailangan po nating gawin. "-A4

*(One thing I dislike and the reason I don't attend school is that I lack sleep. We sell balut, so I often lack sleep) "One. Ing eku buri kasi anya eku makapag lub pane kung puyat, mag tinda kami kasing batlut"-A6*

*(At first, it's because of lack of sleep)" Keng mumuna kayi, mapupuyat."-A8*

The CDC (2022) found that 73% of high school students do not get the recommended 8–10 hours of sleep per night, which negatively affects concentration and retention. Beebe et al. (2017) noted that students who sleep less than six hours per night are twice as likely to be absent compared to those who get adequate rest.

### **Impacts of Family Problems**

The feedback gathered from Senior High School learners showed that family problems significantly contributed to absenteeism. Many students experienced difficulties at home, such as family conflicts, financial struggles, or caregiving responsibilities, which impacted their ability to attend school regularly. These family-related challenges often distracted students, leaving them emotionally and mentally unprepared for school.

Research showed that family problems could negatively affect student attendance and academic performance. According to a study published in *Children and Youth Services Review*, family stress, such as parental separation or financial hardship, was linked to increased absenteeism among adolescents. Family issues could lead to emotional distress, which made it difficult for students to focus on their studies or attend school regularly. Further studies indicated that children from lower-income families

were more likely to experience chronic absenteeism. Financial instability could affect their ability to afford transportation, school supplies, or even basic necessities, causing them to miss school. A report from the *National Center for Education Statistics* revealed that students from low-income households were more likely to miss school, contributing to lower graduation rates and academic challenges (NCES, 2021). In addition, caregiving responsibilities, such as taking care of siblings or parents, could interfere with a student's ability to focus on school. According to a report by the *American Psychological Association*, students who were primary caregivers at home often experienced higher levels of stress, which could lead to increased absenteeism and academic struggles.

*(Family problems sometimes cause me to be late. I also arrive late when I have to take my sibling to school, which makes me late for my first subject) "Ano... number one, ano.. sa family problem tapos minsan na l-late kasi nga ano hahatid, pag hahatid yung kapatid ko na l-late ako sa first subject sa teacher ko "-A5*

*(When you have problems with your family, it feels like you lose interest in your studies)" Kayi pag atin kang problema keng pamilya mu, balamu milalako ka gana keng pamag-alaral mu"-A1*

*(Sometimes there are problems in our family, so I can't study)" Minsan problema din sa family namin kaya medyo hindi ako nakakapasok"-A2*

*(Family problems, lack of understanding)" Problema keng pamilya, e pagka intimdahan."-A8*

### **Mental Struggles from Overthinking**

The feedback from Senior High School learners revealed that mental struggles, particularly caused by overthinking, contributed to absenteeism. Many students experienced stress and anxiety due to excessive worry about schoolwork, exams, or personal issues. These mental challenges often prevented them from attending school regularly, as they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope with their thoughts.

Research suggested that overthinking could have a significant impact on students' mental

health and academic performance. According to a study published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, excessive rumination and anxiety could lead to difficulties in concentrating, poor decision-making, and decreased motivation, which could ultimately affect a student's ability to attend school regularly (Kuehner, 2017). Furthermore, overthinking often resulted in emotional exhaustion. A report from the American Psychological Association explained that students who constantly worried about their academic performance or personal problems might have suffered from burnout, leading to increased absenteeism.

*(This affects mental health because there are different things on your mind)*  
"Nakaka-apekto po yung mental health dahil iba iba po yung nasa isip." -A4

*(It affects my mind, especially when I don't know what the teacher will ask me, and I have no answer. I don't know what to do, and I feel disconnected from my classmates. Every time I go to class, I always think about it. Not being able to answer affects me the most. Sometimes, it even made me feel embarrassed to attend school)"* Ano, number two naapektuhan yung kaisipan ko sa ano yung minsan yung pag.. diba.. sa ano pag dimo alam yung aa-nohin ng teacher mo sayo tapos wala ka masasagot tapos di mo alam anong gagawin mo lalo na yung mga kaklase mo di mo sila... di mo kaano yung ano nila.. yung kada papasok ka ano...iniisip mo lagi, lalo na kapag ano basta yung wala ka masasagot yung pinaka naapektuhan sa ano ko. Minsan den yun din dahilan kung bakit ano, nahihiya ako pumasok non." -A5

### **Pressure of Overload activities**

The responses from Senior High School learners showed that the pressure of overloaded activities significantly contributed to absenteeism. Many students felt overwhelmed by the numerous tasks, assignments, and extracurricular commitments they had to juggle, leading to stress and mental exhaustion. As the academic demands increased, students often found it challenging to keep up with their

schoolwork, which affected their motivation to attend classes.

Research supported the idea that high academic workloads and extracurricular pressures could negatively impact students' attendance and well-being. A study published in *Educational Psychology International* found that students who experienced high levels of stress due to school-related activities were more likely to engage in absenteeism as a way to cope with the pressure (Steinberg, 2019). The continuous demands of assignments, projects, and other responsibilities made students feel mentally drained, leading to a decrease in attendance and participation in school activities. Additionally, research from the American College Health Association indicated that students with higher levels of academic stress were more likely to experience burnout and absenteeism. This stress often came from an overload of academic and extracurricular obligations that left students with little time for rest or personal recovery, contributing to feelings of being overwhelmed.

*(Yes, especially when working on research, like coming up with a title. Sometimes, multiple tasks pile up, and I don't know which one to prioritize. Since we are in agriculture, going outside in the heat also adds to the difficulty)* "ano.. oo dun sa ano nga lalo na kapag sa research, title ganon tapos minsan sabay sabay pa tas di mo alam kung ano uunahin mo don tapos sa..lalo na agriculture kame, kapag pu-punta sa likod diba ang inet... yon." -A5

*(The number of activities in school affects me because you have different things on your mind and different things to do)*  
"Nakaka-apekto po ang dami ng Gawain sa paaralan kaya iba iba po yung mga nasa isip at iba iba po yung mga naga-gawa." A4

*(You feel emotionally hurt and exhausted, yet you're still given tasks to do.)* "kayi... makasakit la lub, mapagal naka-utus daka pa." -A7

### **Persistence Despite Absences**

The responses provided were based on the opinions of senior high school students from the TVL, ABM, and HUMSS strands, aiming to

understand the reasons behind their frequent absences. To help prevent further absenteeism, the researchers proposed several strategies to encourage regular attendance and support the students in overcoming the challenges that led to their absences. The Learning Policy Institute's report on community schools suggested ways to reduce chronic absenteeism. It focused on improving family involvement, helping students feel more connected, tracking attendance regularly, and using support systems to create a positive environment that reduced absenteeism (Learning Policy Institute, 2024).

(Still attend, of course. Maybe. Because there are activities and performance tasks, and sometimes you don't even know what to do.) *Lungub parin sysempre. Oo, maybe. Kase may mga activities tsaka may mga performance task, yung iba di mo na alam diba?* – A7

(Don't let yourself be absent. Most of their friends, avoid making friends with them.) *Huwag hayaang mag-absent. Karamihan sa kanilang mga kaibigan, iwasang makipagkaibigan* – A2

(Maybe, for example, for those who are absent, they should reduce or avoid giving reasons for their absence, and instead, focus on not making excuses so that they can catch up on the lessons or presentations they need to do.) *Siguro halimbawa sa mga absent, dapat bawasan nila yung reason or iwasan yung reason kung bakit sila absent tapos yung hindi nila ginagawang dahilan kung bakit sila absent para mahabol pa nila ang mga aralin o pagtatanghal na kailangan nilang gawin.* – A3

(I would say that to reduce student absences in class, waking up early is important. If you have something to do, you should go to school right away, and the tasks you need to do should be completed.) *Masasabi ko dito para mabawasan ang pagliban ng mga mag-aaral sa klase ay ang paggising ng maaga at kung may gagawin ay agad na pumasok at ang mga kailangang gawain na dapat gawin ay kailangan nating gawin.* – A4

### **Struggles of Catching Up**

Missing school often could make things really tough for students. When they were absent, they missed out on important lessons, making it harder to catch up with the rest of the class. This could have left them feeling stressed, lost, and disconnected from their peers. It was easy to feel overwhelmed by all the work piling up.

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2020) Frequent absenteeism created major obstacles for students, resulting in academic difficulties and a higher likelihood of dropping out. Studies showed that students who were absent for 10% or more of the school year tended to have lower academic performance and were more likely to disengage from school. Moreover, here are some answers from the senior high school learners about their struggles with catching up.

Catching up after extended absences from school could have been a major challenge for students, affecting both their academic progress and personal well-being. Studies showed that students who missed a significant amount of school often found it difficult to stay on track with their classmates, resulting in poor academic performance and a higher likelihood of dropping out. According to Balfanz (2024), the rise in chronic absenteeism, especially after the pandemic, had made it even harder for students to recover from lost learning and reintegrate into school life.

(When you have problems with your family, it feels like you lose interest in your studies.) *Kayı pag atin kang problema keng pamilya mu, balamu milalako ka gana keng pamag-aral mu* – A1

(I feel pressured by the people here, by what they teach. Because with some of the teachers, I have a hard time understanding them, because sometimes you only understand at first, but as time goes on, they drift away from the topic.) *Balamu mappressure kumu kareng kayi da keni, kareng tuturu da makanta. Kasi kareng alwang tuturu magkasakit kung intindya la kasi minsan itang mumuna aytindyan me tas patalwi nang patalwi balamu lalawut ne keng topic ing sasabyan da.* – A3

(It affects my mind, especially when I don't know what the teacher will ask me, and I have no answer. I don't know what to do, and I feel disconnected from my classmates. Every time I go to class, I always think about it. Not being able to answer affects me the most. Sometimes, it even made me feel embarrassed to attend school.) *Ano, number two naapektuhan yung kaisipan ko sa ano yung minsan yung pag.. diba.. sa ano pag dimo alam yung aano hin ng teacher mo sayo tapos wala ka masasagot tapos di mo alam anong gagawin mo lalo na yung mga kaklase mo di mo sila... di mo kaano yung ano nila.. yung kada papasok ka ano... iniisip mo lagi, lalo na kapag ano basta yung wala ka masasagot yung pinaka naapektuhan sa ano ko. Minsan den yun din dahilan kung bakit ano, nahihiya ako pumasok non.* – A5

(You feel emotionally hurt and exhausted, yet you're still given tasks to do.) *kayi... makasakit la lub, mapagal naka utus daka pa.* – A7

(Sometimes, your relationship with classmates is affected because you get bullied, and sometimes the teacher pressures you. For example, if I become the target, my classmates bully me. I don't fight back. Because of that, I sometimes feel body pain or headaches. Sometimes, I just endure it, but in the end, I get weak and fail my subjects.) *Minsan, wa maka apektu ya ing relasyun mu king kaklasi kasi pane dakang bubully, kayi minsan ing teacher maka pressure ka. Kunwari mo yaku pag tripan daku ren, kaklasi ku ngeni bubully daku. Enakumu mag kayi. Kayi minsan masakit ku atyan minsan, minsan masakit ku buntuk. Anyang kayi amu..masakit ka tud, mangaplas ku dungus. Mababagsak ku.* – A6

### ***Breaking the Habit of Cutting classes***

Breaking the habit of skipping classes could be tough, especially for students who were often absent. While it might have seemed like an escape, it only made catching up harder. With the right support, students could have developed better habits and stayed motivated.

(Learning Policy Institute, 2024) Tackling the habit of skipping classes was key to boosting student engagement and success. Studies showed that when students had strong connections with their teachers, absenteeism decreased, as students were more likely to attend when they felt supported. Here are the responses of some interviewees of senior high school learners about breaking the habit of cutting classes.

**Cultivating Strong Relationships Between Students and Teachers:** Building personal connections could have made students feel included and valued, reducing the likelihood of skipping classes.

(If you don't attend, you'll have a lot to do, a lot will be lacking, and you'll fail.) *Kayi, patse eka lulub nakang karakal gagawan tsaka nakang karakal kulang tsaka mibabagsak ka* – A1

(You need to be persistent in studying so you attend every day.) *Kayi mag tyaga kang mag aral para aldoldo lungub ka* – A1

(Don't let yourself be absent. Most of their friends, avoid making friends with them.) *Wag nalang silang umabsent. Karamihan kasi sa mga barkada nila, iwasan ang pagbarkada* – A2

(Maybe, for example, for those who are absent, they should reduce or avoid giving reasons for their absence, and instead, focus on not making excuses so that they can catch up on the lessons or presentations they need to do.) *Kayi baka siguru.. example pu kareng pala absent pu kayi pu siguru pu bawasan danamu pu itang kayi itang reason kung bakit la pu mapapa-absent or iwasan danamu pu itang pamagkayi itang pamag-absent tapus itang edanapu gagawan dahilan kung bat la mag absent ampo pu para pu atagal do pu retang lesson or performance na kailangan dang kayan.* – A3

(For number five, classmates who cut classes should be told to stop. I will study well. Even if I don't get with honors, as long as I pass.) *Keni naman number five kayi... dapat sabyan mu kapag mag cut-*

*ting la reng kaklasi mu. Magaral kung māsalese, kahit eku mag with honors basta't mipasar ku. – A6*

### **Managing Classmate conflicts**

Managing conflicts among classmates, especially with students who were frequently absent, could be tough but essential. Absenteeism could lead to misunderstandings and strained relationships, making it crucial to foster understanding and communication. Helping these students reconnect with their peers could reduce conflicts and improve their school experience (Cohen, R., 1999). An effective strategy was the introduction of peer mediation programs, where students were trained to help their peers resolve conflicts. This approach not only enabled students to manage disputes on their own but also fostered empathy and better understanding among classmates. Here are some responses from interviewees about how they managed conflicts with their classmates.

*(I don't like my classmates sometimes, but I have a good relationship with my teachers. They are really my classmates. Sometimes they bully or tease me, things like that.) Eku noman kasi ka vibes minsan deng kaklase ku, pero ring guru okay naman ing relasyun ku karela, ren mu talagang reng kaklase ku. Minsan māmully la manusit la makanta. – A2*

*(Sometimes, your relationship with classmates is affected because you get bullied, and sometimes the teacher pressures you. For example, if I become the target, my classmates bully me. I don't fight back. Because of that, I sometimes feel body pain or headaches. Sometimes, I just endure it, but in the end, I get weak and fail my subjects.) Minsan, wa maka apektu ya ing relasyun mu king kaklasi kasi pane dakang bubully, kayi minsan ing teacher maka pressure ka. Kunwari mo yaku pag tripan daku ren, kaklasi ku ngeni bubully daku. Enakumu mag kayi. Kayi minsan masakit ku atyan minsan, minsan masakit ku buntuk. Anyang kayi amu... masakit ka tud, mangaplas ku dungus. Mababagsak ku. – A6*

### **Impact of Academic failure**

For students who missed school often, academic failure could be tough, leaving gaps in learning and hurting their confidence. It could have made school feel discouraging, and sometimes, it felt like a cycle that was hard to break. However, with support and understanding, these students could have gotten back on track and found success again.

Najimi's (2013) study pointed out that academic failure not only squandered educational resources but also caused mental, psychological, social, and familial issues for university students. The research stressed that academic failure was a significant social issue that impacted both individuals and society as a whole. Here are the responses of some of the interviewees about the impact of academic failure. Academic failure is strongly linked to mental health issues like stress, anxiety, and depression. Students who repeatedly struggle in their studies often see a drop in self-esteem, which leads to more emotional strain. A study by Liu and Spector (2021) found that academic failure significantly contributes to mental health difficulties in high school students, making it more challenging for them to manage daily life.

*(Absence from class affects me because of the many things I'm thinking about... it affects my performance in class) nakaka-apekto po ang pagliban sa klase sa dami po ng iniisip... nakaka-apekto po ang pagliban ko sa klase sa performance ko po. – A4*

*(Some people work, while others just don't want to attend.) Kayi deng aliwa mag obra, reng aliwa naman ela talaga bisang lungub. – A1*

*(When you have problems with your family, it feels like you lose interest in your studies.) Kayi pag atin kang problema keng pamilya mu, balamu milalako ka gana keng pamag-arat mu. – A1*

*(Sometimes, there are strict teachers and surprise quizzes. If I was absent before and there's a sudden quiz, I can't answer anything. When activities are assigned, I get overwhelmed, especially when things come unexpectedly, like quizzes.) Yun din ulet. Yung...kapag ano minsan may mga strict na teacher tapos*

*minsan may biglaang quiz tas pag minsan nga diba pala absent ako tapos biglaang quiz tas wala ka nasasagot tapos pag ano pag papagawa ng mga kailangan sa activity ganon tapos yung... ano kase? basta yon nabibigla sa mga ano, ano ba mga naka-kabigla? yung mga kapag sasagot sa mga quiz ganon. – A5*

(Family problems, lack of understanding) *Problema king pamilya, e pagka intimdahan. – A8*

(Yes, I am behind on lessons and in the discussions of their lectures. That's why I can't answer other assignments.) *Kayi uhm, malalate ku pu kareng lessons ampo kareng kayi discussion nya pu minsan mabablangku kupu potang ating test eko pu balu nanung sagut ku makanta. – A3*

### ***Challenges with Strict teachers***

For students who missed school a lot, dealing with strict teachers could be really tough. When they finally came back, they might have felt nervous or overwhelmed, especially if they were worried about falling behind or if their teacher had a reputation for being tough. Strict teachers usually had high expectations, and that could have felt intimidating if they were already struggling with getting back into the routine. It might have made students hesitant to ask for help or admit they were lost, which only added to the stress of school. However, a strict teacher's structure and consistency could have helped students in the long run. If there had been a chance for more open communication and understanding, students might have felt more supported and less anxious about getting back on track. Moreover, here are the responses of some of the interviewees about how they dealt with a strict teacher.

Paulmann and Weinstein (2023) found that strict teachers posed particular challenges for students, especially those who missed school often. Studies showed that students tended to view strict teachers as less approachable, which could have made it harder to communicate openly and may have increased feelings of loneliness. According to a study by Paulmann and Weinstein (2023), students were less likely to share personal problems, like bullying, when

faced with a harsh or controlling teaching style. This lack of communication could have made it even harder for students who already struggled with absenteeism.

Although strict teachers strived to uphold discipline and high expectations, their methods may have inadvertently created obstacles for students who were often absent, which could have affected their academic involvement and emotional

(The number of strict teachers should be reduced, and some of them even embarrass students.) *Ano yung bawasan ang mga...yung mga stirct na teacher tapos yung iba namamahiya tapos... yun. – A5*

### ***Suggesting Schedule Adjustments***

For students who often missed school, suggesting schedule adjustments could have made a big difference. Life could sometimes get in the way, whether it was personal struggles, family issues, or just feeling overwhelmed, and sticking to a strict schedule could feel impossible. Offering more flexible scheduling options might have given these students a better chance to catch up and re-engage with their studies without feeling like they were always behind. It could also have reduced the pressure they felt about coming back to class, making school feel more supportive and less stressful. Here are the responses of some of the interviewees about suggesting schedule adjustments:

Kroll's (2019) study explored the impact of flexible modular scheduling on students' academic success and behavior. The findings showed that this type of scheduling had a positive effect on both academic performance and student conduct, indicating that offering more flexible schedules could have improved educational results.

Introducing flexible scheduling in schools could have greatly helped students who often missed classes. By incorporating flex periods into the school day, students would have had the opportunity to get extra support, participate in enrichment activities, or take care of personal matters without the stress of a fixed schedule. This method was shown to boost student involvement and decrease absenteeism (Kroll, R., 2019).

(It depends on them, right? They should adjust the schedule, maybe move it to 8:00 AM) *Atchu naman pu karelay ta diba? Dapat i adjust de ing oras, okaya alas otchu makanyan.* – A7

## Conclusion

The study identified key factors contributing to absenteeism among senior high school students, including financial constraints, health issues, family problems, lack of sleep, overloaded academic activities, and unfavorable school environments. While financial difficulties emerged as a primary cause, the study also highlighted the negative impact of mental health struggles and academic pressures on student attendance. The findings emphasize that absenteeism is a multi-faceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach involving students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions can enhance student engagement, improve academic performance, and foster a more supportive learning environment.

## Recommendation

1. Schools should establish financial assistance programs, such as transportation subsidies or meal allowances, to support students facing economic difficulties. Partnerships with local government units and private organizations can help fund these initiatives to ensure sustainable financial support.
2. Schools should integrate mental health programs, including counseling services, stress management workshops, and peer support groups, to assist students struggling with personal and academic pressures. Teachers should receive training on recognizing early signs of mental distress to provide timely intervention and referral to guidance counselors.
3. Schools should adopt flexible attendance policies that consider valid reasons for absences, such as health issues or financial struggles, to avoid penalizing students unfairly. Alternative learning strategies, such as recorded lectures and online modules,

can be introduced to help students keep up with lessons despite absences.

4. A longitudinal study on absenteeism trends could provide deeper insights into long-term patterns and the effectiveness of intervention programs. Further research on the role of teacher-student relationships and classroom engagement in reducing absenteeism would be beneficial.

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