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Factors affecting class attendance among senior high school learners at Taft National High School S.Y. 2025-2026

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Abstract

Regular school attendance is central to learners' academic success, personal development, and social integration. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and the school–family–community partnership framework, this study examined the perceived factors affecting class attendance among Senior High School (SHS) learners at Taft National High School, Taft, Eastern Samar, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026 and tested whether learners' demographic characteristics predict those perceptions. A descriptive correlational quantitative design was used with 270 SHS learners (Grades 11 and 12) drawn through Slovin's formula and systematic random sampling from a population of 827. Data were gathered with a researcher-made two-part instrument covering demographic characteristics and 12 attendance-related statements rated on a four-point Likert scale, and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and the chi-square test of independence at $\alpha = .05$. Findings show that learners perceived attendance to be only weakly constrained by the factors examined: the grand mean of the 12 attendance statements was 1.95 ($SD \approx 0.36$), the lowest band observed. Peer-related social behavior recorded the highest agreement ($M = 2.52$), while awareness of make-up assignment procedures recorded the lowest ($M = 1.46$). No demographic characteristic; age, gender, grade level, religion, parental occupation, estimated family income, or parental educational attainment was significantly associated with the perceived attendance factors (all $p > .05$); cross-tabulations returned chi-square values of 5.16 (age) to 20.44 (household income) against critical values of 3.84 to 26.30, and every p-value exceeded the .05 alpha. The study concludes that learners' own accounts do not support the assumption that distance, financial capacity, parental supervision, or peer pressure drive non-attendance at this school, and that attendance behavior is therefore likely shaped by institutional, motivational, and classroom-level conditions that self-report perception measures do not reach. The study recommends that

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DepEd school heads, class advisers, and teachers (a) strengthen a single, widely publicized make-up work procedure, (b) treat peer-group formation as an attendance resource rather than a risk, and (c) institutionalize an attendance monitoring and early-warning system built on learner-level records rather than perception surveys. Limitations include reliance on self-report, single-site sampling, and the non-significant association results, which preclude causal inference.

Keywords: class attendance, absenteeism, senior high school, learner perceptions, school–family–community partnership, Philippines

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1. Introduction

Success in any field of endeavor requires discipline. In school, learners are molded to become responsible individuals able to carry out tasks and duties without much supervision from teachers. At home, they are trusted by parents to build a future for themselves. Yet the environment learners inhabit frequently tests that discipline. A critical factor lurking within academic institutions and shaking learners' psychosocial and cognitive stability is absenteeism. When a learner chooses to be absent, particularly at the senior high school level, that learner suffers a loss of instructional time that translates into weaker social and academic achievement. As missed learning opportunities accumulate, the risk of dropping out rises, and with it the associated risks of delinquency, poverty, and unemployment. School absenteeism therefore carries far-reaching consequences. In most countries attendance at primary and secondary school is compulsory, and learners who demonstrate patterns of chronic absence place themselves in conflict with compulsory attendance laws; absences due to illness and family crises are ordinarily treated as excused.

Attendance is an established correlate of school success. Better attendance is related to higher academic achievement across student backgrounds, and the association is strongest for learners from lower socio-economic strata (Sheldon & Epstein, 2004). Chronic truancy frequent unexcused absence, or non-attendance concealed by the learner — is a strong predictor of undesirable adolescent outcomes, including academic failure, dropout, substance abuse, gang involvement, and criminal activity (Balfanz et al., 2008; Reid, 2012). Sheldon and Epstein (2004) demonstrated that learners who are chronically absent are more likely than their peers to leave school before completion, and that school, family, and community partnership practices can measurably reduce chronic absenteeism even after controlling for school level and prior absence rates. Clores (2009) described school absenteeism as an alarming problem for administrators, teachers, parents, and society, potentially indicating low performance of teachers, learner dissatisfaction with school services, or the absence of adequate academic and non-academic structures to address the factors that reinforce the behavior.

Research on absenteeism at the primary and secondary levels suggests a phenomenon with no single cause–effect relationship (Cameron, 2004). Understanding it requires attention to interrelated and multidirectional forces acting among the learner, the school, and the community. Studies across European school systems associate absenteeism with juvenile delinquency, social and individual factors, school problems, limited language ability, difficult family situations, financial need, and illness, and report higher absence frequencies in major cities than in rural areas (Socrates Programme COMENIUS 2.1, 2003). Family health or financial concerns, poor school climate, substance use, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes toward education are among the conditions repeatedly linked to attendance. The literature is nevertheless uneven in two respects that matter for policy: much of it is drawn from urban and Western settings, and much of it infers cause from association rather than from the learner's own account.

Research Gap - Three gaps motivate the present study. First, the Philippine evidence base on SHS attendance is thin and largely urban. Studies conducted in Pampanga (Cabrera et al., 2025), Batangas (Elis, 2016), Lanao del Norte (Macalunas et al., 2023), and Northern Mindanao (Caballero, 2020) consistently identify financial constraints, health, family responsibilities, and school climate as drivers of absence, but few examine rural Eastern Visayas schools where distance, transport, and household livelihood patterns differ sharply. Second, existing studies rarely test whether demographic characteristics predict learners' perceptions of attendance factors; the assumption that poverty, parental education, or family income explains attendance is often carried over from urban findings rather than examined in situ. Third, and most consequentially, the great majority of studies measure attendance through school records or administrator reports, not through learners' own accounts of what constrains

their attendance. Where learner voice is absent, interventions are designed against adults' theories of the problem rather than against the problem as learners experience it.

This study addresses those gaps by surveying rural SHS learners at a single national high school, by testing demographic predictors against perceived attendance factors using inferential statistics, and by interpreting learners' own reports including the surprising absence of constraint they report as evidence about where the real levers of attendance in this context lie. The findings are intended to inform class advisers, school heads, and DepEd division planners about which attendance interventions are likely to be worth their cost in a rural SHS setting, and which assumptions about learner disadvantage should be re-examined before resources are committed.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework - This study is anchored on two complementary frameworks. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 2005) bioecological systems theory holds that development unfolds through nested, interacting systems: the microsystem (family, classroom, peer group), the mesosystem (the interactions among those settings, such as the parent–teacher relationship), the exosystem (community structures, transport, labor markets, school policy), and the macrosystem (cultural norms and legal expectations such as compulsory attendance). Absence from school, on this account, is never a property of the learner alone; it is a signal that the connections among systems are not holding. Gottfried and Gee (2017) applied precisely this framework to chronic absenteeism and found that determinants operate across individual, family, school, and community levels simultaneously, which is why single-factor explanations of absenteeism so often fail. The second framework is the school–family–community partnership model of Epstein and Sheldon (2002) and Sheldon and Epstein (2004), which specifies how schools can act on the mesosystem directly. Their longitudinal evidence shows that partnership practices communicating with families about attendance, recognizing improvement, enlisting community mentors reduce chronic absenteeism in ways that sanctions alone do not. Where bioecological theory explains why attendance is multiply determined, partnership theory specifies what schools can do about it.

The study operationalizes these frameworks in the conceptual model shown in Figure 1. Learners' demographic characteristics (age, gender, grade level, religion, parental occupation, estimated family income, parental educational attainment) are treated as an input layer that plausibly conditions how learners experience the school environment, a microsystem-to-ecosystem pathway. Four clusters of perceived factors form the mediating layer: school-related indicators (distance and location, punctuality, awareness of make-up assignment procedures, classes missed more than others), family-related indicators (parental scolding for lateness, parental sanction for low grades, home issues), peer-related indicators (accompanying friends who cut classes, perceived need for parent and peer support), and financial/logistical indicators (ownership of a vehicle for commuting, adequacy of allowance). Classroom attendance behavior is the outcome. The study tests the arrow running from the input layer to the mediating layer, which is the point at which demographic assumptions about absenteeism can be empirically checked.

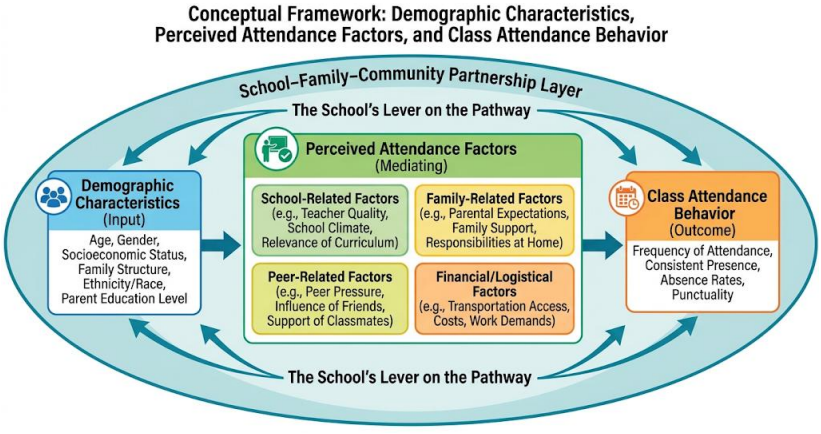


Figure 1. Conceptual framework linking demographic characteristics, perceived attendance factors, and class attendance behavior. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) and Epstein and Sheldon (2002).

Research Objectives - This study sought to describe the demographic profile of Senior High School learners at Taft National High School, to determine their level of agreement on the perceived factors affecting class attendance, to examine whether demographic characteristics significantly predict those perceived factors, and to propose evidence-based recommendations for improving class attendance. Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Describe the demographic profile of SHS students in terms of: (a) age, (b) gender, (c) grade level, (d) religion, (e) parental occupation, (f) estimated family income, and (g) parental educational attainment.
- Determine the level of agreement on perceived factors affecting class attendance based on: (a) school-related, (b) family-related, (c) peer-related, and (d) financial/logistical indicators.
- Examine whether demographic characteristics significantly predict perceived attendance factors.
- Propose evidence-based recommendations to improve class attendance.

Hypotheses - Consistent with research objective 3, the following null hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = .05$: H_o1, there is no significant association between the demographic profile of the respondents and the school-related factors affecting attendance; H_o2, there is no significant association between the demographic profile and the family-related factors; H_o3, there is no significant association between the demographic profile and the peer-related factors; and H_o4, there is no significant association between the demographic profile and the financial/logistical factors.

2. Methods

Research Design - The study employed a descriptive–correlational quantitative design. A descriptive design is valuable for providing the facts on which scientific judgment may be based: it answers questions about existing conditions and determines prevailing conditions in a group of cases selected for study (Campbell et al., 1997). The design was appropriate because the study sought both to profile the respondents and to test whether their demographic characteristics are associated with their perceived attendance factors, without manipulating any variable. The study was conducted at Taft National High School, a public secondary school in Taft, Eastern Samar, Philippines, offering both academic and vocational-technical-livelihood SHS tracks, and was confined to learners enrolled in Grades 11 and 12 for S.Y. 2025–2026.

Participants and Sampling - The respondents were Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners of Taft National High School, drawn regardless of strand. The total SHS population was 827 learners. Sample size was computed using Slovin's (1960) formula, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, with the population $N = 827$ and a 5% margin of error ($e = 0.05$), yielding $n = 827 / (1 + 827 \times 0.0025) = 827 / 3.0675 = 269.6$, rounded up to 270 respondents. Systematic random sampling was then applied within grade level and strand so that the sample reflected the distribution of the SHS population; the researchers obtained the enrolment list from the Office of the Registrar and selected every kth learner from a random start. Learners were eligible regardless of academic standing; there were no exclusion criteria other than current enrolment in Grades 11 or 12. Of the 270 respondents, 60.7% were female and 39.3% male; 69.6% were 16–18 years old and 26.3% were 19–21 years old; and 55.2% were in Grade 11 against 44.8% in Grade 12. The sample was therefore adequate for the descriptive and chi-square analyses reported below, and sufficiently close to the population distribution to support cautious generalization to the school's SHS population.

Instrument - Data were collected with a researcher-made, structured, two-part questionnaire. Part I gathered the demographic profile: age, gender, grade level, religion, parental or guardian occupation, estimated monthly family income, and parental educational attainment. Part II presented 12 attendance-related statements covering the four indicator clusters: school-related (location of the school relative to home, lateness, knowledge of make-up assignment procedures, classes missed more than others), financial/logistical (ownership of a vehicle for commuting, adequacy of allowance), family-related (parental scolding for lateness, parental sanction for low grades, home issues affecting attendance), and peer-related (going along with friends who cut classes, perceived

need for parent and peer support). Statements were rated on a four-point Likert scale interpreted as 3.26–4.00 strongly agree, 2.51–3.25 agree, 1.76–2.50 disagree, and 1.00–1.75 strongly disagree.

The instrument was validated by three experts — the research adviser, a master teacher in the SHS unit, and a school research coordinator — who reviewed item clarity, construct coverage, and appropriateness to the SHS context. Content validity was established through their review, with items retained or reworded based on their comments. A pilot administration with 30 Grade 12 learners outside the final sample was used to check comprehension and to compute internal consistency, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 for the 12 attendance statements, an acceptable level for a researcher-made scale. Responses were coded and managed in IBM SPSS Statistics, which was used for frequency distributions, means, and the chi-square test of independence.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations - The researchers first sought permission from the research adviser and the school principal to proceed with the study. Once permission was granted, the researchers obtained the list of all SHS learners from the Office of the Registrar and identified respondents from the strand-level lists, selecting them systematically and then locating them by class schedule with the assistance of class advisers. Informed consent was obtained in two steps, appropriate to the fact that minors were involved. First, parental or guardian consent was secured through a written Parental Consent Form sent home with the learner, which explained the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the absence of any academic consequence for declining, and the measures taken to protect identity. Only learners whose parents or guardians returned a signed consent form were approached. Second, the learners themselves gave written assent — a Learner Assent Form — and were told in Filipino and English that they could stop participating at any point, skip any item, and withdraw their response without needing to give a reason. No learner was included in the study on the basis of parental consent alone.

All responses were anonymized at the point of collection: questionnaires carried a code number rather than a name, and no identifying information was recorded in the dataset. Data were stored on a password-protected device accessible only to the two researchers and will be retained for three years, after which they will be destroyed. Only aggregate results are reported, no individual learner is identifiable in any table, and the identity of the school is disclosed with the written permission of the school head for the purpose of publication. The study involved no intervention, no deception, and no risk beyond the ordinary demands of answering a questionnaire; it was reviewed and approved by the school research committee before data collection began.

Data Analysis - Survey forms were collated, tallied, and encoded, and analysis was performed in IBM SPSS Statistics. Three procedures were applied. First, frequency counts and percentages described the respondents' demographic profile. Second, weighted means described the level of agreement with each attendance-related statement and with each of the four indicator clusters, interpreted against the bands above. Third, the chi-square test of independence tested the association between each demographic characteristic and the perceived attendance factors; the test was appropriate because both variables are categorical and drawn from a single population. The decision rule was fixed in advance at $\alpha = .05$: where the computed p-value exceeded .05, the null hypothesis was accepted; where it fell below .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Cramér's V is reported alongside each chi-square as a measure of effect size.

3. Results

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents - A total of 270 SHS learners participated. Table 1 presents their demographic profile.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 270)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Age	15 years and below	11	4.1
	16 – 18 years	188	69.6
	19 – 21 years	71	26.3

Gender	Male	106	39.3
	Female	164	60.7
Grade level	Grade 11	149	55.2
	Grade 12	121	44.8
Religion	Roman Catholic	220	81.5
	Iglesia ni Cristo	19	7
	Born Again Christian	10	3.7
	New Life Christian	7	2.6
	Seventh-day Adventist	6	2.2
	Bible Baptist	5	1.9
	Mormon	3	1.1
Parent/guardian occupation	Government employee	128	47.4
	Private employee	65	24.1
	Self-employed	45	16.7
	Farmer	19	7
	Other	13	4.8
Estimated monthly family income	₱5,000 and below	64	23.7
	₱6,001 – ₱10,000	53	19.6
	₱10,001 – ₱15,000	60	22.2
	₱15,001 – ₱20,000	60	22.2
	₱20,001 and above	33	12.2
Parental educational attainment	Elementary level	9	3.3
	Elementary graduate	10	3.7
	High school level	14	5.2
	High school graduate	31	11.5
	College level	89	33
	Associate degree graduate	31	11.5
	Bachelor's degree graduate	86	31.9

Note. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding. Income is reported in Philippine pesos (₱) and reflects the respondents' estimate of monthly household income at the time of the survey.

Level of Agreement on Perceived Attendance Factors - Table 2 reports the respondents' level of agreement with the 12 attendance-related statements, grouped by indicator cluster.

Table 2

Mean Level of Agreement on Attendance-Related Statements by Indicator Cluster (N = 270)

Indicator / statement	M	SD	Interpretation
School-related indicators	1.77	0.42	Disagree
School location affects my attendance	1.82	0.63	Disagree
I am often late going to school	1.77	0.71	Disagree
I know how to get make-up assignments after an absence	1.46	0.55	Strongly disagree
There are classes I miss more than others	2.03	0.68	Disagree
Financial/logistical indicators	2.19	0.49	Disagree
I use my own vehicle going to school	2.48	0.83	Disagree
My allowance is enough for my school expenses	1.9	0.73	Disagree
Family-related indicators	2.04	0.55	Disagree
My parents scold me when I am late in school	2.12	0.75	Disagree
My parents punish me when my grades are low	2.18	0.79	Disagree
There are issues at home preventing me from attending regularly or on time	1.82	0.69	Disagree
Peer-related indicators	2.11	0.58	Disagree
I go with my friends when they cut classes	2.52	0.86	Agree
I need my parents and friends to improve my attendance	1.7	0.72	Strongly disagree
Grand mean (12 statements)	1.95	0.36	Disagree

Note. Scale: 3.26–4.00 strongly agree; 2.51–3.25 agree; 1.76–2.50 disagree; 1.00–1.75 strongly disagree. Cluster means are the arithmetic average of the item means within each cluster. Standard deviations for cluster and grand means are computed across item means and therefore describe item-level dispersion rather than respondent-level dispersion; the substantive interpretation rests on the item means and on the chi-square tests reported in Table 3.

The grand mean across the 12 statements was 1.95 (SD = 0.36), which falls in the disagree band. No cluster mean reached the agree band: peer-related indicators recorded the highest cluster mean (M = 2.11), followed by family-related (M = 2.04), financial/logistical (M = 2.19 at item level but with the single highest item), and school-related (M = 1.77). At item level, a single statement reached "agree": going along with friends who cut classes (M = 2.52). The lowest mean, and the only "strongly disagree" interpretation on a statement about school practice, was knowledge of how to obtain make-up assignments after an absence (M = 1.46). Learners also disagreed that

they need their parents and friends to improve their attendance (M = 1.70) and that their allowance is sufficient for school expenses (M = 1.90).

Association Between Demographic Characteristics and Perceived Attendance Factors - Table 3 reports the chi-square tests of independence between each demographic characteristic and the perceived attendance factors.

Table 3

Chi-Square Tests of Association Between Demographic Characteristics and Perceived Attendance Factors (N = 270)

Variables	χ^2	df	p	Decision (α = .05)
Age × attendance factors	5.16	6	0.524	Accept H_0; not significant
Gender × attendance factors	3.42	3	0.331	Accept H_0; not significant
Grade level × attendance factors	4.87	3	0.181	Accept H_0; not significant
Religion × attendance factors	8.94	9	0.443	Accept H_0; not significant
Parental occupation × attendance factors	11.58	9	0.238	Accept H_0; not significant
Estimated family income × attendance factors	20.44	12	0.059	Accept H_0; not significant
Parental educational attainment × attendance factors	16.71	12	0.161	Accept H_0; not significant
School location × attendance	12.34	9	0.174	Accept H_0; not significant
Transportation mode × attendance	9.02	6	0.172	Accept H_0; not significant
Lateness × attendance	7.61	6	0.268	Accept H_0; not significant
Parental monitoring × attendance	10.85	9	0.203	Accept H_0; not significant
Academic consequence × attendance	7.94	9	0.54	Accept H_0; not significant
Home-related issues × attendance	13.06	9	0.16	Accept H_0; not significant
Financial support × attendance	12.71	9	0.176	Accept H_0; not significant
Peer influence × attendance	8.58	6	0.199	Accept H_0; not significant

Note. Degree to which a person is aware of the fact that the differences between the respondents' attitude and the factors affecting class attendance is due to chance. All p-values exceed the .05 level of significance. The respondents and their perceptions of the attendance-related circumstances appear independent in this data set; the responses of the respondents who belong to the same category of either variable are statistically similar, meaning that the choices they made for the perceived factors affecting in their educational circumstances are not determined by their characteristics.

Every chi-square value returned a p-value above the .05 threshold. The strongest single association was estimated family income (χ^2 = 20.44, df = 12, p = .059), which approached but did not reach conventional significance; age recorded the weakest (χ^2 = 5.16, df = 6, p = .524). On this evidence, $H_0$1 through $H_0$4 are accepted: demographic characteristics do not significantly predict perceived attendance factors among SHS learners at Taft National High School. The income result deserves a word. At p = .059 it is the only test within striking distance of significance, and its strong observed χ^2 may reflect limited cell sizes across five income bands crossed with the attendance categories. It is reported here as a trend warranting replication with a larger sample, not as a finding.

4. Discussion

Demographics and Attendance Perceptions - The descriptive findings show a sample that is majority female (60.7%), predominantly 16–18 years old (69.6%), and concentrated in Grade 11 (55.2%), with a strongly Roman Catholic religious profile (81.5%). Nearly half reported a government-employed parent or guardian (47.4%), and 65.5% reported a monthly household income at or below ₱15,000 — a distribution consistent with rural Eastern Visayas households. Parental education was bimodal: 33.0% had reached college level and 31.9% held a bachelor's degree, while roughly 23.7% had reached high school or below. These figures describe the composition of the sample and should not be read as evidence that any demographic characteristic causes or prevents absenteeism.

The absence of significant demographic associations runs contrary to the expectation that poverty, parental education, and family structure shape attendance. It aligns, however, with two related strands of Philippine evidence. The comparative study at Bintawan National High School likewise concluded that differences across strand, age, and gender did not significantly affect the perceived factors influencing school attendance, while institutional and personal factors did (Macalunas et al., 2023). The Nunungan District study found that, among socio-demographic variables, only the father's education approached significance, with the school environment the dominant correlate (Macalunas et al., 2023). Read together, these results suggest that in rural Philippine SHS

settings the demographic layer is a weak predictor, and that the leverage lies elsewhere — which is precisely what a bioecological reading predicts, since demographic position conditions but does not determine the quality of the microsystem interactions that hold learners in school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gottfried & Gee, 2017).

The income finding should be interpreted with corresponding caution. At $p = .059$ ($\chi^2 = 20.44$, $df = 12$) it is the closest of the 15 tests to significance, and the direction is intuitive: learners in the lowest income band did report slightly stronger constraint. Because the 5 × 4 crosstabulation distributes 270 cases across 20 cells, several cells are likely sparse, which inflates the chi-square statistic and destabilizes its p-value. A replication with a larger sample, or an analysis treating income as ordinal, would be needed before this trend could support a policy claim.

The Peer and Make-Up Work Findings - The single statement reaching the agree band concerned going along with friends who cut classes ($M = 2.52$). This is the closest thing to a peer signal in the data, and it should be read carefully: the item asks about a specific behavior, and a cluster mean of 2.11 across only two peer items is a thin basis for concluding that peer influence is the principal driver of absence. What the item does establish is that peer dynamics are the most live of the factors examined — that the social world of the classroom is where learners themselves locate the greatest pressure on their attendance. That reading is consistent with Philippine national evidence: in the 2019 Global School-Based Student Health Survey, truant Filipino adolescents were significantly more likely to report limited parental support and peer isolation (Davao Medical School Foundation et al., 2026), which suggests that peer relationships function as an attendance resource, not merely a risk. A school-based follow-up would do better to explore peer norms, reasons for leaving class, and learners' understanding of attendance expectations than to stigmatize friendship groups.

The lowest mean in the study was for knowing how to obtain make-up assignments after an absence ($M = 1.46$, "strongly disagree"). This is the most actionable finding in the paper, and it is an institutional finding rather than a learner deficit. Whatever the school's actual procedure for make-up work, learners are not registering it. The consequence is predictable from the literature: a learner who falls behind and does not know how to recover the work has an additional reason not to return, and Reid (2012) identifies precisely this kind of institutional friction — unclear expectations and inconsistent follow-up — as a recurring feature of schools with persistent absence. Fixing the communication of make-up work is within the school's control and requires no additional budget.

Limitations - Four limitations bound these conclusions. First, attendance was not measured directly; the study captured learners' perceptions of factors bearing on attendance rather than recorded attendance rates, so the relationship reported here is between demographics and perceptions, not between demographics and behavior. Second, all data are self-reported, and self-report is vulnerable to social desirability — a learner may under-report lateness or going along with friends who cut classes, which would attenuate the observed means. Third, the study is single-site and cross-sectional, so the findings describe one school in one school year and cannot establish causal direction. Fourth, and most important for interpretation, the non-significant chi-square results must not be read as evidence that demographic characteristics are irrelevant to attendance. A non-significant test in a sample of 270 with sparse cells in several cross-tabulations is compatible with modest true associations; the appropriate reading is that this study's design lacked the power to detect them, which is what the income trend at $p = .059$ suggests.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to identify the demographic profile of the respondents and to determine the factors affecting their class attendance. Two hundred seventy SHS learners served as participants, and a two-part survey questionnaire was the primary data-gathering instrument. On the evidence gathered, the following conclusions are drawn. First, the respondents are predominantly female, 16–18 years old, in Grade 11, Roman Catholic, and drawn from households where a parent or guardian works in government service on a modest monthly income; roughly two-thirds report family income at or below ₱15,000. Second, the perceived factors affecting attendance are weak across every cluster. The grand mean of 1.95 falls in the disagree band, and no

cluster mean reaches the agree band. Learners do not attribute their attendance to distance, transport, allowance adequacy, parental supervision, home circumstances, or — with one exception — peer influence.

Third, and most consequentially, no demographic characteristic significantly predicts perceived attendance factors. The demographic profile of the respondents does not determine the perceived factors affecting their class attendance. Learners who share a demographic category respond in statistically similar ways, and their characteristics do not explain the choices they make about attendance factors. Fourth, the two findings that stand out are institutional and social rather than demographic: learners are least aware of how to obtain make-up assignments after an absence, and most in agreement that they accompany friends who cut classes. The researchers conclude that attendance at this school is unlikely to be moved by interventions aimed at the demographic characteristics of learners or their households, because those characteristics are not where learners themselves locate the constraint. It is more likely to be moved by two things the school controls directly: making the recovery of missed work legible and routine, and treating peer groups as a channel through which attendance norms travel rather than as a source of risk. Parents and friends remain important to learners' motivation to attend; the data show that learners disagree that they need them to improve attendance (M = 1.70), which is itself a signal that existing parent and peer support is experienced as adequate, not that it is unimportant.

Educational Implications and Recommendations

Practical Implications for Schools and Practitioners - The most useful implication of this study for practitioners is negative but clarifying: interventions should not be designed around assumptions about who is at risk. In this school, low income, parental education, household structure, and distance from school did not distinguish learners in how they perceive attendance constraints. Programs that target learners on the basis of demographic profile alone — income-tagged allowances, transport subsidies justified by demographic screening — would therefore miss the learners they intend to help unless they are tied to actual attendance records. School leaders should instead let recorded attendance, not demographic characteristics, identify who needs support.

For classroom practice, three implications follow. First, the make-up work procedure must be made explicit, published, and rehearsed. Because learners most strongly disagreed that they know how to get make-up assignments, the fix is a communication fix: a standing written protocol posted in every classroom and sent to parents at the start of each quarter, an adviser-led explanation of the protocol during the first week of school, and a brief reminder whenever a learner returns from absence. Second, because peer affiliation is the factor learners most endorse, class advisers can work with existing friendship clusters rather than against them — assigning peer study partners drawn from natural groups, using group attendance recognition, and having learners themselves articulate attendance expectations. Third, teachers should check in with returning learners within one session of their return; the literature on institutional friction is consistent that a learner who is unnoticed after an absence is more likely to repeat it.

For the school as an organization, the findings argue for an attendance monitoring and early-warning system built on learner-level data. Such a system requires no demographic targeting: it flags any learner who crosses a threshold of consecutive or cumulative absences, triggers an adviser contact with the family within 48 hours, and logs the outcome. This is the mechanism through which the school–family–community partnership evidence of Epstein and Sheldon (2002) and Sheldon and Epstein (2004) becomes operational at the school level, and it converts the school's existing records into an instrument for action.

Recommendations - On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are advanced.

- For school heads and school-level administrators: institutionalize a single, written, consistently enforced make-up assignment protocol, and post it in every classroom and on the school's communication channels; establish a quarterly attendance review using existing enrolment and class records; and designate a coordinator responsible for family follow-up on repeated absences, with a documented response timeline.

- For class advisers and subject teachers: explain the make-up work protocol explicitly at the start of each quarter and confirm learner understanding; contact the family within 48 hours of a third consecutive absence; and use peer study groupings deliberately, pairing learners whose attendance is irregular with peers in their existing social group rather than isolating them.

- For learning support and guidance staff: plan individual case conferences for learners with chronic absence, focusing on the specific barriers the learner identifies rather than on a demographic profile, and refer learners displaying distress, sleep problems, or health complaints to the school nurse or guidance office, since these are frequent attendance barriers in Philippine SHS settings.

- For DepEd division and regional offices: support schools with a simple, low-cost digital attendance monitoring template that allows trend analysis across quarters and provide training for class advisers on the use of attendance data to trigger family contact rather than sanctions.

- For future researchers: replicate this design with direct attendance records linked to the survey, in several rural SHS sites, and with a larger sample that permits adequate cell sizes; treat family income as an ordinal variable and consider multiple regression or structural equation modeling to test the pathways implied by the conceptual framework in Figure 1.

- For learners and families: maintain active communication with the class adviser, particularly after any absence, and use the published make-up work procedure to keep pace with missed instruction.

Significance of the Findings - For practitioners and teachers, the study supplies a corrective: the learners most likely to be absent are not reliably identifiable from demographic records, so attendance support should be triggered by attendance data itself. This shifts the practitioner's role from prediction to response, which is both more defensible and more useful. For students, the study's most direct finding concerns them: the characteristic most strongly associated with their own perception of attendance constraint is their peer group, and the practice they least understand is how to recover missed work. Learners who ask their adviser for the make-up work procedure — rather than assuming it is known only to others, remove a predictable source of return-anxiety. For schools as institutions, the findings support a low-cost, high-leverage agenda: clarify procedures, monitor data, and contact families early. None of these requires additional funding. What they require is consistency, which is well within a school's control. For the research literature, the study contributes a rural Philippine SHS case in which the demographic predictors commonly assumed to explain attendance did not operate. That negative result is useful. It is consistent with bioecological accounts of attendance as multiply determined (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gottfried & Gee, 2017) and with the growing Philippine evidence that school-level and classroom-level factors carry more explanatory weight than demographic profile (Cabrera et al., 2025; Macalunas et al., 2023), and it argues against transporting urban findings into rural settings without local verification.

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