



## The Causes of Absenteeism and Truancy in Senior High School of Don Eulogio de Guzman Memorial National High School Towards A Proposed School Solution Strategies

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**Abstract** – This research used the causality research methodology with thirty-six (36) participants using purposive sampling. There were six (6) participants considered in the pilot test, which ran for a month. Likewise, the remaining thirty (30) participants were considered in the actual data gathering further identified as twenty-six (26) absentees and four (4) truants. This study used thematic analysis to interpret the root causes of absenteeism and truancy. Rankings and average weighted mean revealed the problems in the goal of Perfect Attendance of the learners. The participants' profile covered all Tracks and Strands offered in the Senior High School Department of Don Eulogio de Guzman Memorial National High School, the piloted school. The study had a hundred percent retrieval rate using a Likert scale. Findings revealed ten (10) root causes of absenteeism and truancy in the thematic analysis. As identified, the most roots were learners' laziness (20), cutting class (20) and learners who worked (20) to support the family financially, which were all noted from Strand B. Data revealed that five (5) Strands had zero rate absentees and truants. The topmost problems of Senior High School learners were: ranked 1 was transportation problems (4.90), ranked 3 were unexcused absences, juvenile delinquency, doing household chores rather than going to school (4.83), ranked 5 was peer influence (4.80) and ranked 6 was parents' lack of money (4.70) where all had descriptive equivalent ratings of "always." In support of Perfect Attendance in public schools, this research humbly recommended the following proposed strategies to achieve the objectives; 1) the launching of Skol-Tryk as means of transportation in reaching out learners, 2) Supervised-Work Based to source out "baon or allowances," 3) include Guidance and Counseling as a separate subject and the provision of Spiritual Nourishment to further reinforce school attachment, 4) assign a dedicated Teacher-Guidance Designate for monitoring, supervision, and assessment, and 5) request the concerned parents or guardians to regularly monitor their learners' statuses both in school and at home.

**Keywords** – Absenteeism, School Solution Strategies, Struggling Learners, Truancy

### INTRODUCTION

The learner is "the core of the educational system." Without their presence inside the classroom, the complete picture of a teaching-learning process will not become a reality. They add colors to the teaching profession, making it the noblest profession to consider among the professionals worldwide. The canvass compels the learner's everyday presence inside the classroom to complete the picture of teaching and learning experiences towards pursuing one's purposes in life, both on the educator and the learner.

Educational Philosophers Sir Hollis Caswell and Doak Campbell once cited "all children's experiences have under a teacher's guidance." Without the teachers on their side, no one will guide the learners to grasp knowledge appropriately. Further, Gene Shepherd and William Ragan stated: "the on-going experiences of children under the school's guidance presents an special environment for helping children achieve self-realization through active participation

within the school." From the presented educational perspectives, it is conclusive that the child should be investing time and effort to learn inside the school, which becomes an avenue wherein his knowledge, skills, and attitude honed. Otherwise, when the child missed out on lessons or no longer attending his subjects, then his learning experience seemed lacking and became less effective.

Therefore, it compels school interventions, which have jurisdictions to a learner with issues on his attendance while reinforcing his school's attachment.

One prevalent issue that the school currently facing today is seeing little or no improvement with its effective dealing with rampant absenteeism and truancy in Basic Education. Despite the different interventions' inducement, programs are still failing to motivate learners to continue attending school classes. DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2016 (Classroom Awards par 4) mandates the school system to award Perfect Attendance every recognition day to motivate both the learners and the parents. However, the implementation



of this would not warrant Perfect Attendance on the learner's part while completing the academic year. He would still miss-out on classes and thereby commit absences, then later became truant throughout the entire academic year if ignored and unattended.

In support, researcher Hocking (2008) made an Independent Samples Test. The data found on the learners' attendance proved to be statistically significant. His studies provided evidence that the attendance *Certificates* were an overall positive motivator for learners and helped increase learners' attendance at one school.

The conventional approach, which is a practice even up to these times to address absenteeism from the Basic Education, is through the conduct of "*home visitation*" by the Classroom Adviser. The Adviser personally visits the learner's house and explains to the parents and relatives the effect of non-attendance of their child in the school's engagements. However, based on observation, this intervention is somehow abused, and the problems continue to pile up in the educational system. Further, a random interview revealed that there is somewhat like Perfect Attendance among learners in a particular class come assessment and examination days only. Identified learners missed the school participation for a long time, longer than what the teachers might tolerate, and thus, they are now considered truants among the total class population.

At present, the researchers observed that even the School Form No 2 (SF 2) mandated by the Department of Education, prepared and submitted monthly by the Classroom Adviser, is adjusted to present an acceptable Attendance Report. The Adviser may always employ "*generosity error*" when reporting the total number of days present against the total number of committed absences for the month to favor the learner's attendance, which should not be the case. It does not accurately mirror the actual data of absenteeism and truancy at the teacher's level. It only somehow covers up what should alert The School Administrators to position school resources and strategies on this issue objectively.

By continue doing it, inadvertently, we are not providing solutions to at least fair its potential impact, but rather our teachers in the field are becoming an accomplice in the cycle. Sadly speaking, let us not expect any positive changes to address the booming numbers of absenteeism that eventually lead to truancy among multi-grade levels.

This research explored Basic Education,

particularly in the teaching-learning process, where the facilitators inside the classroom ensure the importance of Perfect Attendance to learner's life. This initiative served as lay-bare for the entire Division of La Union in advocating the beneficial impact of attendance at an acceptable level in the Department of Education.

The flexibility of any school programs and strategies' designs should align and support the goals of the Basic Education, i.e., "*inclusive education*," "*no one should be left behind*," "*no rejection policy*," and "*education for all*." The school's ability to unleash life-learning skills and competencies through learners' active participation in the school activities towards their voyage in the pursuit of becoming successful individuals in the field they wish to excel for in the future welcomes the idea of quality education. Perfect Attendance can mold our future leaders and the achievers, the Don Eulogio de Guzman Memorial National High School's primary goal, as the pilot school of this attempt.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to interpret the causes of absenteeism and truancy in public schools. The end view proposed school solution strategies to minimize the number or eradicate the potential effects among Senior High School learners and eventually reinforce school's attachment to continue their studies and the posed challenges that beset the Basic Education.

This study aimed to interpret the causality of absenteeism and truancy in Basic Education. The study analyzed the reasons behind the problems of learners why they missed out on classes.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions; 1) How many percentage do learners in the Senior High School for the First Semester of the Academic Year 2019 – 2020 consider absentees and truants?, 2) What are the problems encountered why a learner missed out on classes?, 3) What school strategies can help Senior High School learners maintain attendance in the school? and 4) What is the implication of the objectives of this research in Basic Education?

This initiative may consider in the Division Level (through the Education Program Supervisors) for subsequent review and simulation among Senior High Public Schools. It serves as a benchmark to leverage the increasing number of absenteeism and truancy in the Basic Education and design solution strategies to combat the potential effects.



**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research employed a causality research methodology. The study interpreted the reasons why a Senior High School learner missed out on classes. The thematic analysis categorized the associated problems that challenged Perfect Attendance in the Senior High School.

There was a pilot test that surveyed absentees and truants recorded per track and per strand. The pilot test ran for October 2019.

The pilot test had a total of six (6) participants with the most learners’ distressed situations based on the recommendations of expert panel judgment. There were two (2) participants for the launching of Skol-Tryk from house to school and vice every day to ensure that the learner will not miss their classes and subjects the whole day. Another two (2) participants considered for Supervised Work-Based. The learners had their solicited capital and rolled the same on their vacant time to source out daily “*baon*” to ensure his attendance every day. Lastly, two (2) participants who daily meet the temporary Teacher-Guidance designate in the Senior High School for appropriate guidance, counseling, and spiritual nourishment.

This study adopted the questionnaire used by researcher Hocking (2008), asking the many reasons why a learner missed out on classes and became absentee and eventually converted as a truant.

The questionnaire was composed of sixty-five (65) benchmark statements and taken “as is.”

The questionnaire was used both for pilot and actual data gathering.

The data was collected after the learner accomplished the questionnaires within 2-3 months.

The researchers used Excel, frequency count, weighted mean, and average weighted mean to analyze and present the data for discussions and interpretations.

The Likert scale following the adjectival descriptions of 5 means Always, 4 means Often, 3 means Sometimes, 2 means Seldom and 1 means Never were used. In interpreting the most frequent problems encountered by a Senior High School learner, the interval of 0.80 was employed.

The total sampling population was thirty-six (36) for the pilot test and actual data. From the sampling, 29 or translated into 81% were confirmed absentees and 7 or translated into 19% were confirmed truants.

It comprised 3% (36/1,190) of the Senior High School population for the First Semester of the

Academic Year 2019 – 2020.

Following ethical considerations, the researchers used dummies for the different Tracks and Strands in Senior High School.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The table below revealed the analysis of the root cause of absenteeism and truancy in the Senior High School Department for the First Semester of the Academic Year 2019 – 2020.

Thematic	Strand A	Strand B	Strand C	Strand D	Strand E	Strands F&G	Strand H	Strand I	R
distance	0	15	3	0	0	0	6	6	30
laziness	0	20	5	0	0	0	0	5	30
late	0	7	5	0	0	0	11	7	30
absences	0	7	7	0	0	0	7	9	30
teacher's factor	0	5	10	0	0	0	4	11	30
cutting class	0	20	2	0	0	0	4	4	30
family problem	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	10	30
health issues	0	2	7	0	0	0	8	13	30
working student	0	20	5	0	0	0	0	5	30
personal	0	9	5	0	0	0	10	6	30

Based on the findings, the learners revealed the ten (10) root causes of absenteeism and truancy in the Senior High School, such as distance, laziness, late, absences, teacher’s factors, cutting class, family problem, health issues, working, and even personal.

Further, data revealed that the reason for distance (15) was noted highest with Strand B, the reason for laziness (20) was noted highest with Strand B, the reason for late (11) was noted highest with Strand H, the reason for absences (9) was noted highest with Strand I, the reason for teacher’s factor (11) was noted highest with Strand I, the reason for cutting-class (20) was noted highest with Strand B, the reason for the family problem (10) were noted highest with Strands C, H, and I, the reason for health issues (13) was noted highest with Strand I, the reason for working student (20) was noted highest with Strand B, and the reason for personal (10) was noted highest with Strand H.

In summary, among the noted highest reasons why Senior High School learners challenged to attain Perfect Attendance were due to laziness (20), cutting-class (20), and working student (20), which were mostly happened under Strand B. It alerts now School Authorities to check and verify the reasons of Strand B learners.

The next table showed the rankings of the most





encountered problems of absentees and truants.

REASONS		Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent Rating	RANK
15	Transportation problems	4.90	Always	1
21	Unexcused absences	4.83	Always	3
24	Peer influence	4.80	Always	5
34	Juvenile delinquency	4.83	Always	3
44	Parents lack of money	4.70	Always	6
60	Doing household chores rather going to school	4.83	Always	3

The topmost problems that challenged the attainment of Perfect Attendance in public school were: ranked 1 was transportation problems (4.90), ranked 3 were unexcused absences, juvenile delinquency, and doing household chores rather than going to school (4.83), ranked 5 was peer influence (4.80), and ranked 6 was parents' lack of money (4.70) where all had descriptive equivalent ratings of "always."

Based on the analyses on the causes, reasons, and absenteeism and truancy problems, the following school solution strategies proposed to minimize or eradicate it. The proposed strategies were Skol-Tryk, Supervised-Work Based, the inclusion of Guidance and Counseling as a subject, installation of dedicated Guidance Counselor, and Parental support to regularly monitor their learners both in school and at home.

These proposals tried to provide solutions based on the identified root causes, reasons, and problems such as distance, financial, and other related matters that hampered Perfect Attendance in public schools.

The implications of this research in Basic Education can be an immediate solution to the booming numbers of absentees and trancies in the grassroots. It could be replicated in the entire academe if the educator's goal is to warrant his learners' attendance under his supervision and instruction. The root causes and the reasons behind absenteeism and truancy will continue to progress if it is not attended well and provided with appropriate solutions or strategies. The number will continue to rise. It could happen in all multi-grade levels. The identified problems alert the School Administrators to reposition the school resources and strategies to combat the problems. If the School Authorities are serious about eradicating the potential effects of absenteeism and truancy, a budget, a

process flow, and a Teacher-Guidance designate may immediately design to address it. Further, this study encouraged continuous improvements (Kaizen) to better appreciate the causes and reasons behind absenteeism and truancy because of learners' diversities and the challenges that beset the Basic Education overtime.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, these were the conclusions drawn.

The initial survey of twenty-nine (29) absentees and seven (7) truants with a total of thirty-six (36) learners who missed out on their classes might be a portion of the total numbers in the entire Division to date. It may conclude that each school, whether the Elementary or High School in the Region, could have progressing numbers of absenteeisms and trancies within their campuses.

The learners who frequently committed absences can be converted to truancy if left unattended. The identified twenty-nine (29) that translated into 81% absentees could contribute to seven (7) that translated into 19% registered truants if not handled.

For the identified seven (7) truants were once considered as absenteeisms only. Since the Classroom Adviser, the Subject Teachers, and the School Administrators somehow overlooked the learners' presence, they will eventually be considered drop-outs for the Semester.

The school has no Registered Guidance Counselor (RGC) to monitor and counsel the 36 identified learners who displayed different problems. Besides, the school has seemed no budget or available resources to finance any proposed solution strategies.

The data revealed that Strand B had the most numbers of struggling learners, where five (5) of the Strands registered zero rates.

The root causes of absenteeism and truancy in Senior High School are learners' laziness, cutting class, and leaners supporting the family financially.

Teachers-factor related could contribute to the increasing number of recorded absenteeism and truancy in Senior High School.

The objectives of the Behavioral Contract design in Senior High School become ineffective because it seemed mere compliance.

There are proposals shrink into three (3) platforms to address issues on distances, financial, and other relevant matters only to minimize the causes of absenteeism and truancy that require precision to



achieve Perfect Attendance's goal insistently.

The Open High School Program (Modular Approach), as supported by Parents, Teachers, and School Administrators, becomes the last resort for learners who have initially decided to leave the school for good. In turn, this strategy will have the possibility to get abuse in the long run.

The initiatives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it anchored the Basic Education, such as "*inclusive education*," "*no one left behind*," "*no rejection policy*," and "*education for all*" become the most significant challenges to warrant Perfect Attendance in all public schools.

In light of the identified conclusions, this research humbly recommended the following.

All the schools in the Department of Education – Division of La Union may survey possible numbers of absenteeism and trancies under their jurisdictions. Once the number is confirmed, we can collate the data and reach out to the Education Program Supervisors (EPSs) to seek recommendations addressing it seriously.

The pilot school confirmed Perfect Attendance by implementing the proposed solution strategies, i.e., the launching of Skol-Tryk for distant learners, Supervised Work-Based to source out "*baon or allowances*" in the school. Other related matters may solicit a Teacher-Guidance designate's help, where these strategies may be considered initial trials for the entire Division.

The School Administrators may consider the *rental* coming from the small businesses operating daily within the school perimeter to source out funds for the "*baon or allowances*" of the identified learners who suffer financially. It is one way of installing a direct solution in repositioning available resources. The possible review of the school resources on Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) and Gender and Development (GAD) might help. The responsible persons would be The Head Teachers, SHS Assistant Principal, and Principal since they are the Persons-in-Authority in the objective disbursements of school resources.

The teachers from Strand B may evaluate the techniques and strategies employed by Strand A, Strand D, Strand E, Strand F, and Strand G. Strand B may ask for their professional assistance and recommendation in achieving and maintaining zero rates in their Strands.

This research highly recommended installing a Registered Guidance Counselor to man the monitoring,

supervision, and assessment of the different cases of learners. As per observation, the pilot school has no yet Registered Guidance Counselor (RGC) in the Senior High School, considering one of the big schools with high population in the Division of La Union.

The Classroom Advisers and Subject Teachers of the different Strands are busy doing clerical work on top of their teaching loads that served as the main barrier to address any little progress of absenteeism and truancy under their care. The Master Teachers and SHS Assistant Principal may devise ways to design their defense group or create another team to man the job. In creating a Task Force, let us consider allocating funds, such as allowances, transportation, gasoline, and other "acceptable" incidental expenses.

There were teachers-factor related concerns that somehow contributed to the number of absenteeism and truancy in Senior High School. There must be closed coordination and discussion (PTA Meeting) with the parents of the 81% absentees and 19% truants, since "it takes a village to teach a child."

The researchers encourage replicating the research context for a more profound appreciation and understanding of the root causes and reasons behind absenteeisms and trancies in Basic Education with the ultimate goal to provide solution strategies to eradicate the problems.

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