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Determinants of University Students' Absenteeism: The Role of Financial, Parental and Institutional Factors

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Abstract: Financial issues, university environment, and parental issues have been investigated as factors influencing absenteeism among full-time undergraduate students in a local university in Selangor. An online survey was conducted among 350 students from a local university in Selangor. The survey respondents reported that most of them had absenteeism during their studies. The data collected was then analyzed and applied to a structural equation model (SEM) using Partial Least Squares, and the model consisted of a measurement and structural model. The finding revealed that parental issues do not significantly influence absenteeism among local university students. The results revealed that financial problems and elements of the university environment, like lecture quality, class participation, and support networks, significantly influenced absenteeism. In contrast, parental problems like family expectations, home conflicts, or guardians' pressure did not significantly influence students' attendance. This implies that even if students might experience pressure at home, these elements have less impact than their financial condition and the daily academic surroundings they negotiate. These findings emphasize the need to enhance financial support mechanisms and create a more interesting academic environment to lower absenteeism and support student retention.

Keywords: *Absenteeism, Financial Issues, University Environment, Parental Issues, Education.*

1. Introduction and Background

Absenteeism denotes being absent or unavailable in the educational setting for a full day. The absenteeism among students rises when they fail to attend the classroom or learning environment due to various factors, including insufficient consumable resources, absence of qualified academic staff for supervision, or lack of necessary equipment (Babakhanian et al., 2022). In addition, absenteeism refers to the practice of being frequently absent from the educational environment (Akkus & Çinkir, 2022). Students who cannot attend college or university classes are referred to as absent. Furthermore, students' absenteeism is associated with various contributing factors, including family background, behavioral issues, lack of motivation, and financial, structural, social, and environmental conditions (Gao et al., 2023). Absenteeism may result from factors such as disinterest in studies, disciplinary actions in school, household responsibilities, or peer influence (Sahin, 2023). Moreover, Sosu et al. (2021) found that financial issues constitute the primary concern and significant reasons for student non-attendance in classes, as many cannot pay university fees, cover expenses, or allocate funds for university activities.

Academic performance, retention rates, and overall student achievement can be adversely affected by the chronic problem of student absenteeism at universities (Bapela, 2024). Many full-time undergraduates at a nearby institution in Selangor have complained of absenteeism while enrolled in classes. Financial concerns, the university environment, and challenges relating to parents are some of the underlying elements that preliminary research points to as contributing to this problem (Gana, Rad & Stoian, 2023). Students may be less likely to regularly attend lessons if they are financially stressed, for example, because they cannot afford transportation, food, or academic resources. Similarly, students may be less inclined to attend lectures if they perceive their university atmosphere is uninteresting or unsupportive, with low-quality teaching, low motivation, or inadequate academic support (Perera, 2021). Problems at home, such as arguments or unreasonable expectations, can also strain children emotionally, which might diminish their dedication to schoolwork. New evidence suggests that parental influence could not substantially affect student absenteeism, contrary to previous notions regarding the role of family-related concerns (Gana, Rad & Stoian, 2023). These

findings highlight the critical necessity of investigating the significant influence of financial issues, university environment, and parental issues on absenteeism among students at local universities.

2. Literature Review

Financial Issues: Students from low socioeconomic levels (SES) have many obstacles to regular university attendance. Many studies support a clear relationship between financial difficulty and absenteeism. Researchers, including Ansari et al. (2020) and Mirzaei et al. (2020), have all found that financial hardships are a significant factor causing students to miss class, often regularly. These students are caught in a web of external responsibilities and constraints directly affecting their educational involvement; they are not just bored or indifferent. Financial difficulty often drives students to assume adult obligations beyond their years. Older children may have to look after younger siblings in low-income homes while parents work long hours or several jobs to support the family. Though anchored in survival, this dynamic disturbs the child's learning schedule. Furthermore, many students must help financially with the housework part-time or seasonally. Although the family depends on this work to survive, it can interfere with class hours and leave students too tired or absent to attend classes. Sometimes, students might put income above education just because the immediate financial gain seems more urgent than the long-term value of a degree, especially in settings where educational success does not guarantee upward mobility. Therefore, this study recognized the psychological effects of poverty. Particularly when students believe their efforts will not likely result in a significant change in their situation, students from low-SES backgrounds often suffer from stress, anxiety, and a lack of motivation. This hopelessness can lower involvement and raise absences. Furthermore, lacking basic needs like appropriate food, transportation, learning facilities, or internet access can directly or indirectly cause absenteeism among university students. Hence, the hypothesis of this study is developed as follows:
Hypothesis 1: Financial issues positively and significantly influence students' absenteeism.

University Environment: The university environment is a significant factor in absenteeism among local universities. For example, the student's social environment. According to Khan et. al (2024), students are more likely to skip class if they hang out with friends who struggle academically, are chronically absent, have substance abuse problems, or are criminals. On the other hand, when there are insufficient activities for students in the institution, the lack of suitable attire for the classroom, the too strict discipline, the student's sense of inadequacy toward the lesson (Majeed et. al, 2019), the teachers' or instructors' attitude toward the student could lead to absenteeism. School climate, administrator attitudes, learning styles, cultural differences, relationships with teachers, classmates, school, and curriculum could be why students dislike the institution (Guzman & Doronio, 2025).
Hypothesis 2: University environment issues positively and significantly influence students' absenteeism.

Parental Issues: One of the main practical elements influencing students' attendance is the parental issue; thus, it is crucial. Studies show that students' absenteeism at a rate of five percent is influenced by their family background. Due to family pressure and inadequate preparation of the student for school, students may be absent to draw attention from their families. Home environment, low-income family control, indecisiveness in education, bad parenting, economic conditions, lack of respect in society, drug addiction of family members, such as alcohol and drugs, children having to work, absence of a mother or father, death, marriage, and birth reasons, such as rapid changes in family members.
Hypothesis 3: Parental issues positively and significantly influence students' absenteeism.

3. Research Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted to investigate the significant influence of financial issues, university environment, and parental issues on absenteeism among 351 local universities. A convenience sampling technique was applied to distribute an online survey to the respondents. The items' measurement of absenteeism, financial issues, university environment, and parental issues was validated by previous research, with a reliability greater than 0.7. The five-point Likert scale was applied as 1- Strongly Agree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, and 5- Strongly Agree. The data collected was analyzed using the Structural Equation Model with Partial Least Squares. The analysis is divided into measurement and structural models. A measurement model assesses the convergent and discriminant validity of the items' measurement. Further, the structural

model assessed the study's hypotheses, including the Path coefficient and the effect size for each relationship. Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic profile. There is an imbalance in gender responses in the sample, with 66.1% of individuals identifying as female and 33.9% identifying as male. The survey primarily covers individuals in the normal age range for higher education undergraduates, as indicated by the fact that the majority of respondents (69.5%) are between the ages of 21 and 23. The percentage among those aged 18–20 (13.4%), 24-26 (12.5%), and 27 and up (4.6%) is much smaller. When broken down by faculty affiliation, most participants (42.2%) are affiliated with the Faculty of Business and Management. While the creative arts and dentistry departments each contribute just 1.4%, other significant faculties include accounting (11.4%), education (10.8%), and health sciences (9.7%). This suggests that different academic fields have varied enrolment or participation rates. The fact that all respondents admitted to missing class at least once shows that this cohort deals with absenteeism. The study's conclusions can be better understood in light of these demographic data, pointing to potential future research directions, especially in gender, age, and faculty-specific variables impacting absenteeism.

Table 1: Demographics Factor Analysis

Demographic Factors		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	119	33.9
	Female	232	66.1
	Total	351	100.0
Aged		Frequency	Percent
	18-20 years old	47	13.4
	21-23 years old	244	69.5
	24-26 years old	44	12.5
	27 years old and above	16	4.6
	Total	351	100.0
Faculty		Frequency	Percent
	Faculty of Accountancy	40	11.4
	Faculty of Pharmacy	23	6.6
	Faculty of Business and Management	148	42.2
	Faculty of Education	38	10.8
	Faculty of Health Sciences	34	9.7
	Faculty of Dentistry	5	1.4
	Faculty of Medicine	17	4.8
	Faculty of Hotel and Tourism	26	7.4
	College of Built Environment	15	4.3
	College of Creative Arts	5	1.4
	Total	351	100.0
Have you been Absent from Class?		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	351	100.0

4. Results

Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model assesses the factor loading, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. Recent studies suggest that the factor loading should be greater than 0.7, and AVE should have a minimum value of 0.50, meaning that a construct explains at least half of the variance in its components (Guenther, Guenther, Ringle, Zaefarian & Cartwright, 2023). Figure 1 and Table 2 illustrate the factor loadings for items measuring four key constructs: absenteeism, university environment, financial, and parental issues. All six items (DV1–DV6) show strong factor loadings for the construct of absenteeism, ranging from 0.704 to 0.815, indicating that these items are

dependable markers of the absenteeism construct and reliable for measuring absenteeism. Compared to the item of the university environment construct, which consists of seven items (EU1–EU7) with factor loadings between 0.644 and 0.801. These findings support the validity of the university environment scale by implying that it is suitable for strong relationships between the items and the underlying construct. Regarding financial issues, item FI1 was deleted because of a low factor loading of 0.321, and FI2 also has a relatively low loading of 0.409, which may indicate some measurement concerns; nevertheless, the remaining items (FI3–FI5) show good loadings (0.76, 0.821, and 0.781, respectively), so they effectively capture the financial issues construct. Seven items (PI1–PI7) total the parental issues construct; all show strong factor loadings from 0.68 to 0.807, verifying their relevance and dependability as item measurements of parental problems. Apart from the low-loading items in the financial issues construct, the factor analysis results show that most items are strong indicators of their respective constructions, supporting the validity and dependability of the measurement model applied in this study.

Table 2: Factor Loading

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading
Absenteeism	DV1	0.754
	DV2	0.741
	DV3	0.815
	DV4	0.704
	DV5	0.715
	DV6	0.719
University Environment	EU1	0.699
	EU2	0.772
	EU3	0.667
	EU4	0.784
	EU5	0.708
	EU6	0.801
	EU7	0.644
Financial Issues	FI1	0.321 (Deleted Item)
	FI2	0.409
	FI3	0.76
	FI4	0.821
	FI5	0.781
Parental _Issues	PI1	0.68
	PI2	0.745
	PI3	0.807
	PI4	0.767
	PI5	0.783
	PI6	0.778
	PI7	0.797

The following analysis represents the convergent validity result as stated in Table 3. The table presents reliability and validity statistics for four constructs: Absenteeism, Financial Issues, Parental Issues, and University Environment. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (rhoa and rhoc) are metrics of internal consistency, reflecting the degree of interrelatedness among the items within each construct. A Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability rating over 0.7 is typically considered satisfactory. First, Cronbach's alpha for Absenteeism is 0.837, with composite reliability ratings of 0.843 (rhoa) and 0.88 (rhoc), signifying robust internal consistency and dependable measurement. The Average Variation Extracted (AVE) is 0.551, exceeding the suggested minimum of 0.5, indicating that the construct accounts for almost half the variation of its indicators.

Next, the financial issues construct has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.679, marginally below the generally accepted standard of 0.7, indicating limited internal consistency. Nonetheless, the composite reliability values (0.75 and 0.796) and an AVE of 0.507 are satisfactory, signifying that the concept exhibits sufficient reliability and convergent validity. Furthermore, the parental issues measure demonstrates high reliability, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha of 0.882 and composite reliability scores of 0.886 and 0.909. The AVE is 0.587, significantly exceeding the criterion, affirming robust convergent validity. The university environment exhibits substantial dependability, evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.852, composite reliability scores of 0.878 and 0.887, and an AVE of 0.529. Therefore, all constructs satisfy the minimum criteria for reliability and validity, with parental issues, university environment, and absenteeism exhibiting notable reliability and validity, as assessed in this study.

Table 3: Convergent Validity

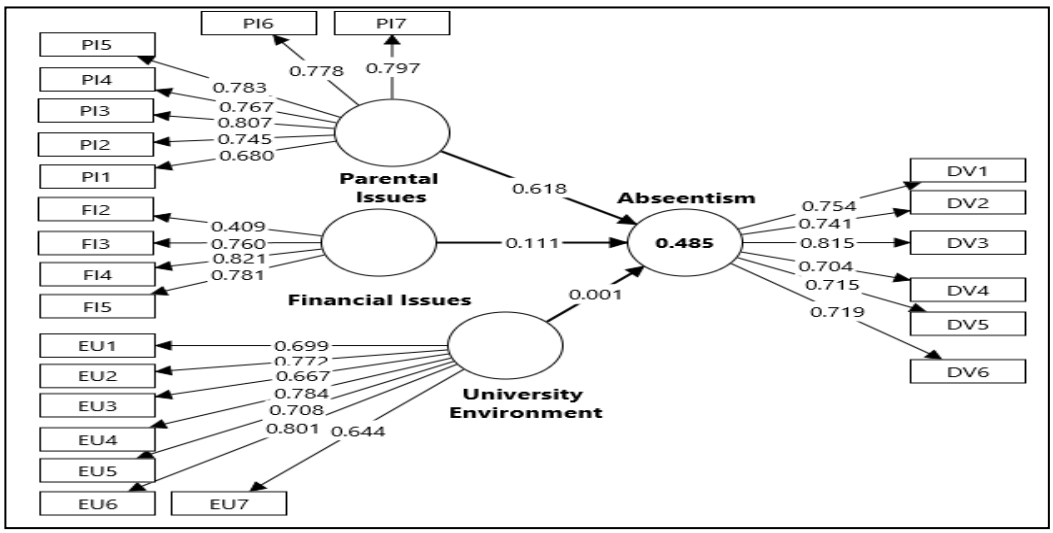
Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Absenteeism	0.837	0.843	0.88	0.551
Financial Issues	0.679	0.75	0.796	0.507
Parental Issues	0.882	0.886	0.909	0.587
University Environment	0.852	0.878	0.887	0.529

The correlation matrix in Table 4 illustrates the interconnections among the four primary constructs in the study: absenteeism, financial issues, parental issues, and university environment. The findings reveal that Parental Issues exhibit the most significant relationship with Absenteeism, demonstrated by a substantial correlation coefficient of 0.797. This indicates that students facing greater parental challenges are considerably more prone to report absenteeism, underscoring the critical impact of family dynamics on student attendance. Furthermore, a significant correlation exists between parental and financial issues (0.789), suggesting that students encountering financial hardships also deal with parental challenges, potentially increasing their likelihood of absenteeism. The analysis reveals a moderate positive correlation between financial issues and absenteeism (0.624), suggesting that financial stress plays a significant role in student absences. The university environment exhibits comparatively lower correlations with absenteeism (0.212), financial issues (0.289), and parental issues (0.297). The observed lower values indicate that, although the university environment contributes to the situation, its direct influence on absenteeism and other related constructs is less significant than familial and financial factors. The findings indicate that factors related to parental and financial circumstances play a more significant role in absenteeism compared to the university environment. The findings highlight the necessity of tackling familial and financial obstacles to effectively lower student absenteeism rates, while acknowledging that enhancements to the university environment, although advantageous, may produce relatively minor impacts. The results offer important guidance for university decision-makers and advisors, highlighting the necessity for thorough support frameworks considering socio-economic and family influences alongside institutional measures.

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1. Absenteeism				
2. Financial Issues	0.624			
3. Parental Issues	0.797	0.789		
4. University Environment	0.212	0.289	0.297	

Figure 1: Measurement Model



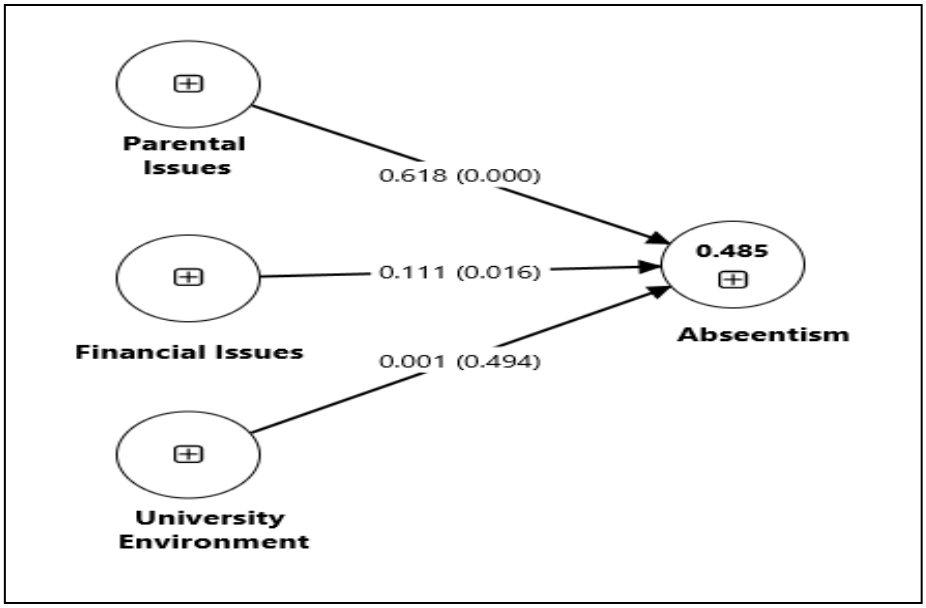
Structural Model

Table 5 outlines the structural relationships among financial issues, parental issues, and the university environment regarding student absenteeism. It employs beta coefficients, standard deviations, t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals to assess the significance and strength of these associations. The correlation between financial issues and absenteeism is positive and statistically significant, indicated by a beta coefficient of 0.111, a t-value of 2.146, and a p-value of 0.016, which falls below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This finding provides evidence for the hypothesis (H1) that financial difficulties are associated with higher absenteeism rates, albeit with a relatively modest effect size. Conversely, parental issues demonstrate a notably stronger and statistically significant positive correlation with absenteeism, evidenced by a beta coefficient of 0.618, a t-value of 10.989, and a p-value below 0.001. The 95% confidence interval for Parental Issues (0.521 to 0.706) underscores the strength of this relationship. Consequently, the evidence indicates that parental issues are a significant predictor of absenteeism (H2), establishing it as the most influential factor among those analysed. Conversely, the university environment exhibits a minimal and statistically non-significant influence on absenteeism (beta = 0.001, t-value = 0.016, p-value = 0.494), as evidenced by a confidence interval that encompasses zero, suggesting an absence of a substantial effect. The findings indicate that the hypothesis concerning the impact of the university environment on absenteeism (H3) lacks support. The collective findings indicate that financial and, notably, parental issues elevate the probability of absenteeism, whereas the university environment appears to lack a direct significant impact. The findings highlight the necessity of considering socio-economic and family-related factors to effectively mitigate absenteeism, since relying solely on institutional factors may not yield adequate results.

Table 5: Structural Model

Relationship	Beta	STDEV	T Values	P values	F Values	LL	UL	Result
Financial Issues -> Absenteeism	0.111	0.052	2.146	0.016	0.013	0.024	0.195	H1: Supported
Parental Issues -> absenteeism	0.618	0.056	10.989	0.00	0.403	0.521	0.706	H2: Supported
University Environment -> Absenteeism	0.001	0.042	0.016	0.494	0.00	-0.059	0.074	H3: Not Supported

Figure 2: Structural Model



Discussion

Examining the financial, parental, and university environmental issues that shape student absenteeism helps one to fully understand and justify the results, which show that financial and parental issues are major predictors of absenteeism. In contrast, the university environment is not supported. The financial difficulties create significant obstacles to academic involvement since students who are struggling financially may be forced to look for part-time jobs, battle with basic needs like their own needs and transportation, or suffer from increased stress and anxiety about their financial future (Pedroso, Alcarde, Gordon, & Ponesto, 2023). These demands can take away from their concentration on their studies and cause more absenteeism since students prioritize immediate financial concerns over classroom attendance. Moreover, parental problems, which are the most important determinant in this study, can cover a variety of difficulties, including conflict within the family, lack of parental support, strong expectations, and even parental health and financial instability (Marlow & Rehman, 2021). Students having parental issues could suffer from emotional pain, low motivation, or more household chores, all of which would affect their regular attendance in class. The close relationship between financial and personal problems implies that these elements often co-occur and aggravate their negative influence on students' educational involvement. On the other hand, the absence of a notable correlation between the university environment and absenteeism could suggest that institutional elements, including facilities, teaching quality, or extracurricular activities, are less immediate than personal and family-related challenges. Improvements in university infrastructure and support systems could also have already reached a point where they no longer significantly affect students' daily decisions to attend classes, or they could be seen as less important than the urgent reality of their home and financial situation.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The implications of this study should guide focused solutions towards addressing the underlying causes of absenteeism and their connection to financial and parental obligations. Universities could first increase financial support programs, including need-based scholarships, emergency grants, reasonably priced meal programs, and subsidized transportation, to help relieve the financial strains forcing students to choose between employment and study (Summer, McCoy, Trujillo, & Rodriguez, 2025). Personalized counseling and financial literacy seminars could help students properly handle their resources even more. Second, realizing the significant impact of family dynamics, institutions should fund thorough counseling and mental health programs offering students coping mechanisms and emotional support to negotiate parental problems (Jiang, 2024). By forming alliances with local businesses, one can help students and families dealing with more general socioeconomic issues, including health crises or unstable housing. Establishing peer support groups or mentoring initiatives can also give students resilience and a feeling of belonging, thus lessening their isolation

in the face of financial or family difficulty (Beals, Zimny, Lyons, & Bobbitt, 2021). Furthermore, helpful outreach initiatives involve parents and households, teaching them the value of regular attendance and providing tools to reduce family stress. Although the nature of the university environment did not show any apparent direct influence in this study, institutions should continue to develop in teaching quality, student involvement, and campus facilities since these could have long-term or indirect consequences (Bhardwaj, Zhang, Tan, & Pandey, 2025). Reducing absenteeism and improving student success requires a comprehensive, student-centered approach including financial aid, mental health support, family involvement, and community partnerships. The deeper personal and structural issues that students experience can be addressed by educational institutions, creating a more inclusive and encouraging learning environment that encourages regular attendance and academic success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aimed to investigate the significant influence of financial issues, university environment, and parental issues on absenteeism among students at local universities. The finding revealed that financial and parental issues positively and significantly influence students' absenteeism. In contrast, the university environment did not significantly influence students' absenteeism. Education programs' success heavily depends on students' regular presence in class and on campus. Students' presence is crucial for the success of educational policies and reforms. The top management in higher learning institutions is responsible for determining the root causes of student absences and taking appropriate action to eliminate them. The absence seems to influence students' academic performance and society's welfare. Taking actions for students who have disciplinary issues, fail, and show absenteeism is one of the university's natural responsibilities (Hayran & Anik, 2021). Many studies (Conry & Richards, 2018; **Sahin, 2023)** agree that school absenteeism is a complicated problem influenced by several multidimensional elements at the individual, family, school, teacher, and community levels.

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