
**BREAKING BARRIERS: EDUCATIONAL SUBSIDY ON STUDENT
ATTENDANCE IN KIDAPAWAN CITY**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of educational subsidy on the attendance of Grade 10 students in the Schools Division of Kidapawan City during the school year 2025–2026. Utilizing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, data were collected from 302 students across four districts through survey questionnaires and follow-up interviews. The findings revealed that students reported high levels of satisfaction with the educational subsidy and a very high level of attendance. Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between educational subsidy and student attendance. However, regression analysis indicated that among the three dimensions of subsidy, only the scope of educational expenses consistently influenced attendance, while the amount of assistance and regularity of disbursement demonstrated mixed effects. Qualitative findings further revealed that the subsidy functioned as a critical support system that helped students overcome socioeconomic barriers to schooling. The study concluded that educational subsidy significantly contributes to improved student attendance, although its effectiveness varies depending on how the assistance is structured and delivered.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental human right and a key factor in promoting individual and societal development. However, many students, particularly those from low-income families, face significant financial barriers that hinder their ability to attend school regularly. Expenses such as transportation, school supplies, uniforms, and daily allowances create burdens that often result in absenteeism or even school dropout. Educational subsidies are implemented by governments to address these challenges by providing financial assistance to students in need. While previous research has established the general benefits of

subsidies, there remains a gap in localized studies, particularly in Kidapawan City, where unique socioeconomic conditions may affect program effectiveness. Issues such as delayed disbursement, insufficient funding, and limited coverage of expenses raise concerns about whether these subsidies fully address students' needs. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between educational subsidy and student attendance, focusing on the amount of assistance, regularity of disbursement, and scope of educational expenses, as well as how these factors influence attendance rates, number of absences, and attendance patterns among Grade 10 students.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, consisting of quantitative and qualitative phases to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. In the quantitative phase, a descriptive-correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between educational subsidy and student attendance. A total of 302 Grade 10 students from remote schools in Kidapawan City were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire that measured the level of educational subsidy received in terms of amount, regularity, and scope, as well as student attendance indicators such as attendance rate, number of absences, and attendance patterns. The data were analyzed using weighted mean and multiple regression analysis to determine relationships and influences between variables. In the qualitative phase, a phenomenological approach was utilized to explore students' lived experiences regarding the impact of educational subsidy on their attendance. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis was then conducted to identify key themes and insights. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the study.

RESULTS

The results of the study indicated that students perceived the educational subsidy positively across all dimensions. The level of subsidy received in terms of amount, regularity, and scope was rated high, with the scope of educational expenses receiving the highest evaluation. Similarly, student attendance was found to be at a very high level, particularly in terms of attendance rate, where students strongly agreed that the subsidy helped them attend school regularly and reduced absences caused by financial constraints. Statistical analysis revealed a

significant relationship between educational subsidy and student attendance, confirming that financial assistance plays a vital role in promoting consistent school participation. However, regression analysis showed that only the scope of educational expenses had a consistent and significant influence on attendance, while the amount of assistance and regularity of disbursement showed inconsistent effects. Qualitative findings supported these results by highlighting that students viewed the subsidy as a financial safety net that helped them overcome barriers such as lack of transportation, school materials, and daily expenses. Despite these benefits, students also reported challenges such as delays in fund distribution and insufficient coverage of certain costs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study affirm that educational subsidy is a significant factor in improving student attendance by reducing financial barriers that hinder regular school participation. Consistent with Human Capital Theory, the reduction of educational costs encourages students to invest more in their education by attending school regularly. Among the dimensions of subsidy, the scope of educational expenses emerged as the most influential factor, suggesting that subsidies are most effective when they comprehensively cover various student needs rather than focusing on limited financial aspects. Although the amount and regularity of subsidy were perceived positively, their inconsistent influence indicates that simply providing financial aid is not sufficient; the manner in which it is distributed and utilized also matters. The qualitative findings further emphasized that subsidies provide not only financial relief but also psychological motivation, enabling students to focus on their studies without the burden of economic stress. However, persistent issues such as delays in disbursement and incomplete coverage of expenses highlight the need for program improvements. Overall, the study concludes that while educational subsidies significantly enhance student attendance, their effectiveness depends on their comprehensiveness, consistency, and alignment with students' real needs.