

Prevention & Retention: An analysis of a Community Law Office Youth Program Attendance Patterns

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Introduction



This study analyzed **attendance patterns** at the annual summer youth program of a public defense firm in the south, which is designed to prevent **juvenile justice involvement** and promote community engagement. Participants are not necessarily children of clients of the firm. The program consists of **educational** and recreational activities, such as reading workshops and physical activities. The program is facilitated by a program coordinator who is on staff at the firm and volunteers from the community.

Data Breakdown

Attendance records of **167 participants** were analyzed
Attendance records analyzed covered five summers: **2012-2016**
Total of **39 possible days** of attendance across five summers

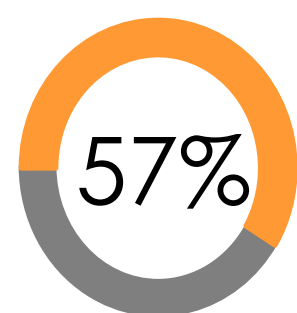
NUMBER OF STUDENTS

MALE
88

FEMALE
79

PERCENT OF STUDENTS

WHO HAD SIBLINGS WHO PARTICIPATED



AVG. DISTANCE

TRAVELED TO THE PROGRAM

4.7 mi

Std. Dev. 4.255

Is a student's gender, sibling participation, or distance traveled related to their attendance pattern at the youth program & which students are more or less likely to attend?

Research Question, Hypotheses & Methods

Hypothesis One: Female participants are more likely to attend the firm's youth program.

Hypothesis Two: Participants who come with siblings are more likely to attend the youth program.

Hypothesis Three: Participants who travel less distance are more likely to attend the youth program.



This was a **secondary data analysis** of attendance records collected and maintained by the public defense firm. A **linear regression** was used to analyze the data. Because the dependent variable was a count variable, **bootstrapped** confidence intervals were used; to increase statistical power 90% confidence intervals were used.

Results & Conclusions

Using the total number of days attended as the dependent variable, and controlling for gender, sibling participation, distance traveled to the program (measured in miles), and total number of days a youth could have participated, the regression model in the figure below was found to be **statistically significant at the .001 level**.

Numbers by arrows indicate ends of 90% bootstrapped confidence intervals.

Gender

Total possible days

Siblings

Total driving distance

ANOVA ^a	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	919.504	4	229.876	9.772	.000 ^b
Residual	3810.771	162	23.523		
Total	4730.275	166			

a. Dependent Variable: Total_Attended
b. Predictors: (Constant), Total_Possible, Gender, Siblings, Travel_Distance

Total number days attended

$R^2 = .19$

Someone who has a sibling participating, as opposed to someone who does not, controlling for all other variables, will attend between .001 and 2.4 more days.

Controlling for all other variables, the further away someone lives, the less likely they are to attend. For each increase in mile needed to be traveled, they will come between .06 and .33 fewer days.

R² (effect size): This analysis explains 19% of the variation in attendance.

Implications & Limitations

This study found that children who travel a **shorter distance** to the youth program, and **attend with a sibling**, are more likely to attend the program in the long run. It *did not find* that gender had a statistically significant effect on participant attendance.

As an **agency**, this public defense firm can focus on reducing barriers to attendance, such as traveling far distances and not having fellow students, such as siblings, to attend with by encouraging carpooling or providing transportation for students.

On a **broader level**, community engagement programs like this one should consider their location & ease of access as factors.

The **limitations** of this study lie in the omitted variables problem. There are many factors that could influence a student's attendance that this study did not examine, such as their age, criminal justice involvement, or family & support systems structure.