



DETERMINANTS OF TARDINESS AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN A RURAL PHILIPPINE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

Student tardiness remains a significant concern in secondary education due to its negative effects on instructional continuity, classroom participation, and academic performance. This study investigated the determinants of tardiness among 326 junior high school students in a rural Philippine public secondary school during the second semester of School Year 2025–2026 using a descriptive-correlational research design and stratified random sampling. Data gathered through a validated researcher-made questionnaire were analyzed using frequency count, percentage distribution, weighted mean, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed a high level of tardiness among students, particularly in frequent late arrivals and reduced learning engagement. Personal factors such as poor time management, inadequate sleep, and ineffective morning routines emerged as the strongest predictors, while transportation difficulties and long travel distances also significantly influenced punctuality. Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between the contributing factors and students' level of tardiness, with grade level likewise affecting tardiness behavior. The study concludes that tardiness is a multidimensional issue shaped by behavioral, environmental, institutional, and socioeconomic conditions, highlighting the need for integrated school-based interventions focused on attendance monitoring, parental involvement, time-management education, and community support systems to improve punctuality and academic engagement among adolescents in rural educational contexts.

Keywords: *student tardiness, punctuality behavior, rural education, secondary education, attendance behavior, academic engagement, time management, Philippine public schools*

INTRODUCTION

Student tardiness remains a persistent educational concern because it disrupts classroom instruction, reduces learning opportunities, and negatively influences academic achievement. Across educational systems worldwide, late arrival to school has been associated with poor classroom participation, decreased student engagement, and lower academic performance. According to Santana (2021), habitual tardiness reduces instructional time and weakens students' ability to understand foundational classroom concepts. Similarly, Gomez and Roberts (2020) found that punctuality is strongly associated with higher academic achievement in mathematics and reading.

In the Philippine educational setting, tardiness among junior high school students continues to challenge schools, particularly in rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Reyes and Dizon (2022) emphasized that Filipino students commonly arrive late because of household responsibilities, transportation difficulties, and financial limitations. Martinez (2023) further explained that tardiness negatively affects classroom participation and academic engagement, especially in subjects requiring continuous instruction. Del Rosario and Santos (2024) also reported that weak implementation of attendance policies contributes to increasing rates of habitual lateness among learners.

The issue of tardiness is multidimensional and is influenced by behavioral, social, environmental, and institutional factors. Keller (2022) explained that inadequate sleep, weak time-management practices, and low academic motivation are strongly associated with student lateness. Patterson (2023) likewise highlighted that students with lower self-regulation and motivation are more likely to develop chronic tardiness behaviors. In rural settings, transportation barriers and long travel distances further intensify the problem. Lopez (2021) identified poor road conditions and limited transportation systems as major causes of tardiness among students in rural schools.

School climate and family support also play significant roles in shaping punctuality behavior. Huang and Li (2024) found that supportive classroom environments and positive peer influence improve students' attendance behavior. Manalo (2023) emphasized that schools promoting strong teacher-student relationships and consistent attendance policies experience fewer tardiness cases. In addition, Santos and Perez (2022) observed that active parental involvement significantly improves student punctuality and attendance consistency.

Despite the growing body of literature regarding student tardiness, localized studies examining the specific factors influencing lateness among junior high school students in rural Philippine schools remain limited. Barobo National High School serves learners from various barangays with differing socioeconomic conditions, transportation challenges, and family responsibilities. Understanding the factors influencing tardiness within this specific context is necessary to formulate evidence-based interventions that improve punctuality and academic engagement.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the factors affecting tardiness among junior high school students at Barobo National High School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, gender, and grade level?
2. What is the level of tardiness among junior high school students in terms of frequency of late arrival, duration of lateness, class period affected, and impact on learning?
3. What factors contribute to tardiness in terms of personal, family-related, school-related, and community or environmental factors?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of tardiness and contributing factors when respondents are grouped according to demographic characteristics?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of tardiness and contributing factors?
6. What recommendations may be proposed to minimize tardiness and improve punctuality among students?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the demographic characteristics, level of tardiness, and contributing factors affecting junior high school students, as well as to examine the relationship between tardiness and contributing variables when grouped according to demographic characteristics. The study was conducted at Barobo National High School in Barobo, Surigao del Sur, Philippines, a public secondary school accommodating students from both urban and rural barangays, making it a suitable setting for investigating factors influencing tardiness. The respondents consisted of 326 junior high school students from Grades 7 to 10 during School Year 2025–2026, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across grade levels. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire composed of three parts: demographic profile, level of tardiness, and contributing factors to tardiness. The instrument utilized a four-point Likert scale with the following interpretations: 4 – Very High, 3 – High, 2 – Low, and 1 – Very Low. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the school principal, and the questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would remain confidential. The collected data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, weighted mean and ranking to determine the level of tardiness and contributing factors, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test significant differences among demographic groups, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the relationship between tardiness and contributing factors.

RESULTS

Table 1.
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12–13 years old	118	36.20%
	14–15 years old	149	45.70%
	16–17 years old	59	18.10%
Gender	Male	161	49.40%
	Female	165	50.60%
Grade Level	Grade 7	89	27.30%
	Grade 8	98	30.10%
	Grade 9	61	18.70%
	Grade 10	78	23.90%
Total		326	100%

Table 2.
Level of Tardiness Among Junior High School Students

Indicators of Tardiness	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Frequency of Late Arrival	3.18	High	1
Impact on Learning	3.11	High	2
Duration of Lateness	2.94	High	3
Class Period Affected	2.87	High	4
Grand Mean	3.03	High	

Table 3.
Factors Contributing to Tardiness

Contributing Factors	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Personal Factors	3.24	High	1
Community/Environmental Factors	3.17	High	2
Family-Related Factors	3.05	High	3
School-Related Factors	2.89	High	4
Grand Mean	3.09	High	

Table 4.
Significant Difference in the Level of Tardiness According to Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Computed F-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	2.11	0.083	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Gender	1.42	0.176	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Grade Level	4.37	0.005	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 5.
Relationship Between Tardiness and Contributing Factors

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Tardiness and Personal Factors	0.71	0.001	Significant Positive Relationship
Tardiness and Family Factors	0.64	0.003	Significant Positive Relationship
Tardiness and School Factors	0.58	0.005	Significant Positive Relationship
Tardiness and Community Factors	0.69	0.002	Significant Positive Relationship

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrated that junior high school students at Barobo National High School experience a high level of tardiness, particularly in terms of frequency of late arrival and impact on learning. These findings support Santana (2021), who explained that tardiness decreases instructional time and weakens students' academic engagement. Likewise, Hernandez and Seemiller (2020) emphasized that students who arrive late frequently miss important lessons and classroom activities that are essential to academic achievement.

Personal factors emerged as the strongest contributors to tardiness. This finding aligns with Keller (2022), who noted that ineffective time management, inadequate sleep, and weak morning routines significantly influence student punctuality. Patterson (2023) also argued that low self-regulation and reduced motivation contribute to chronic tardiness among adolescents. The results indicate that students struggle to manage their schedules effectively, resulting in repeated late arrivals.

Community and environmental factors also significantly influenced tardiness. Students traveling long distances and experiencing transportation difficulties demonstrated higher levels of lateness. This supports Lopez (2021), who identified transportation barriers and poor road conditions as major contributors to tardiness in rural schools. Garcia (2022) similarly found that weather disturbances and limited transportation systems negatively affect attendance and punctuality among learners living in remote communities.

Family-related factors were likewise associated with tardiness. Household responsibilities and inadequate parental supervision contributed to delayed school attendance. Reyes and Dizon (2022) emphasized that Filipino students often balance school responsibilities with household chores, leading to disruptions in morning routines. Santos and Perez (2022) further highlighted the importance of parental involvement in improving students' punctuality and attendance behavior.

The study also revealed that school-related factors significantly contribute to tardiness, although to a lesser extent than personal and environmental variables. Del Rosario and Santos (2024) explained that inconsistent implementation of attendance policies weakens students' compliance with punctuality expectations. Manalo (2023) additionally stressed that positive school climate and strong teacher-student relationships help reduce tardiness by increasing student engagement and accountability.

The significant relationship between tardiness and contributing factors confirms Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which explains that student behavior is influenced by interconnected environmental systems. The findings also support Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, which suggests that students' attitudes, motivation, and perceived behavioral control shape punctuality behavior. Furthermore, the results validate Lakein's Time Management Theory, emphasizing the importance of planning and self-organization in reducing lateness.

Overall, the findings suggest that tardiness among junior high school students is a multidimensional issue requiring collaborative interventions involving students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and the wider community.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Junior high school students at Barobo National High School demonstrated a high level of tardiness, particularly in terms of frequency of late arrival and impact on learning.
2. Personal factors such as poor time management, lack of sleep, and ineffective morning routines were the strongest contributors to tardiness.
3. Community and environmental factors, particularly transportation difficulties and long travel distances, also significantly contributed to students' lateness.
4. Grade level significantly influenced students' tardiness behaviors, while age and gender did not show significant differences.

5. Significant positive relationships existed between tardiness and personal, family-related, school-related, and environmental factors.
6. Tardiness negatively affects students' classroom participation, academic engagement, and overall learning performance.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. School administrators should strengthen attendance monitoring systems and consistently implement punctuality policies.
2. Teachers should integrate time-management and punctuality awareness activities into classroom and homeroom sessions.
3. Parents and guardians should establish structured morning routines and closely monitor students' school preparation.
4. Guidance counselors should conduct intervention programs focusing on self-discipline, motivation, and responsible time management.
5. The school should collaborate with local government units and community stakeholders to address transportation and environmental barriers affecting punctuality.
6. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using qualitative approaches or intervention-based designs to further explore strategies for minimizing tardiness.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study complied with the ethical and academic standards for educational research. Participation of respondents was voluntary, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Respondents were assured that all information gathered would remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The study adhered to the ethical principles of anonymity, confidentiality, respect for persons, beneficence, and non-maleficence. The study also followed the research guidelines and standards of the Department of Education (DepEd) and complied with the principles of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Proper citation and acknowledgment of sources were observed in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition format.

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APA Citation:

Hipulan, R. T. (2026). DETERMINANTS OF TARDINESS AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN A RURAL PHILIPPINE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION. *Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(6), 446–453. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20582518>

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