Demographic and Workplace Factors Affecting Absenteeism and Tardiness in a State University in Samar, Philippines

Jose Marlon J. Refuncion, Jr.[1], & Antonio P. Valles[2]
Samar State University, Catbalogan City, Samar
josemarlon.refuncion@ssu.edu.ph[1]; antonio.valles@ssu.edu.ph[2]

Abstract: Absenteeism and tardiness pose significant challenges in higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly in rural settings where socio-economic factors and workplace conditions often exacerbate these issues. This study examined 138 employees in a rural HEI during the 2021–2022 academic year, analyzing personal variables such as age, sex, number of children, transportation mode, distance to work, and economic status. Results showed absenteeism was predominantly occasional, with 83.33% classified as occasional absentees, 12.32% as semi-habitual, and 4.35% as habitual absentees. Tardiness was more prevalent, with 60.87% occasional, 27.54% semi-habitual, and 11.59% habitual. Significant relationships were found between absenteeism and family-related factors, including age (p = 0.002), number of children (p = 0.001), and the average age of children (p = 0.000), highlighting caregiving responsibilities' impact. In contrast, tardiness showed no significant correlations with personal variables, suggesting stronger links to organizational factors and work habits. Tailored interventions, such as flexible work arrangements, childcare support, and wellness programs, can help alleviate caregiving burdens, promote punctuality, and improve workplace efficiency, fostering employee satisfaction and productivity in HEIs.

1. Introduction

Absenteeism and tardiness are significant challenges for employees in higher education institutions (HEIs), disrupting institutional operations and reducing productivity. These issues have been widely recognized as critical factors affecting organizational efficiency and employee performance (Clores, 2019). In the Philippine context, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has established policies aimed at enhancing institutional

management and productivity, yet the responsibility for addressing attendance-related concerns largely falls on individual institutions (CHED, 2023). In rural areas such as Samar, socio-economic challenges, limited access to transportation, and workplace conditions exacerbate absenteeism and tardiness, necessitating targeted and context-specific solutions (Martinez & Santos, 2023).

Various factors contribute to absenteeism and tardiness among

employees in HEIs. Personal issues such as health problems, family responsibilities, and financial difficulties are significant contributors (Bautista, 2024). Furthermore, workplace factors like rigid organizational policies, lack of career growth opportunities, and insufficient employee engagement often exacerbate these behaviors (Ali et al., 2020). Studies highlight those employees in rural HEIs, such as those in Samar, often face additional barriers, including long commutes, limited infrastructure, and challenging work environments, which increase the likelihood of tardiness and absenteeism (Clores, 2019).

The consequences of absenteeism and tardiness for HEIs are considerable. These behaviors disrupt institutional workflows, reduce productivity, and negatively affect overall organizational performance (Martinez & Santos, 2023). Moreover, consistent absenteeism and tardiness among employees can lower workplace morale and create inefficiencies in service delivery, particularly in public institutions like state universities in Samar (Bautista, 2024). These challenges underscore the need for localized interventions to address the root causes of absenteeism and tardiness among employees in rural HEIs.

Recent interventions have shown promise in addressing absenteeism and tardiness among employees. Martinez and Santos (2023) emphasize the importance of creating supportive workplace environments, offering flexible work arrangements, and implementing clear attendance policies to encourage punctuality. Additionally, providing professional development opportunities and improving employee engagement have been found to reduce absenteeism and tardiness (Ali et al., 2020). However, these strategies must be adapted to the unique

socio-economic and cultural realities of Samar to ensure their effectiveness.

This study aims to examine the factors contributing to absenteeism and tardiness among employees in Samar's state universities and assess the effectiveness of existing interventions. By identifying key drivers of these behaviors and proposing actionable recommendations, this research seeks to contribute to more effective attendance management in HEIs. Aligning with CHED's goals for institutional excellence, this study aims to enhance organizational performance and employee satisfaction in Samar's higher education institutions (CHED, 2023).

2. Objectives

This study seeks to investigate what factors influence absenteeism and tardiness, where these issues occur within a state university in Samar, Philippines, who among the employees are affected, and their relationship to demographic and socio-economic profiles during the academic year 2021–2022.

Specifically, it sought to:

a. analyze factors such as age, sex, number of children, average age of children, mode of transportation, distance from home to office, and net salary;
b. identify primary causes of absenteeism and tardiness and propose management strategies to address these issues, and
c. determine the relationship between absenteeism, tardiness, and employee demographic profiles using statistical analysis.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between absenteeism, tardiness, and

employee demographic profiles using statistical analysis.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the demographic, socio-economic, and personal variables influencing absenteeism and tardiness among employees in a state university in Samar. This design is appropriate for identifying relationships between variables without manipulating the study environment, thereby providing insights into attendance behavior in real-world conditions.

The study's strength is its comprehensive analysis of personal and socio-economic factors influencing attendance. However, reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases. Future research could use mixed methods, including qualitative interviews, for deeper insights.

3.2. Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a survey questionnaire adapted from the study Challenges in Controlling Lateness, Absenteeism, and Labor Turnover at Christ Apostolic University College, Kwadaso, Kumasi (Kasu, 2014). Modifications were made to include demographic variables such as the number of children, mode of transportation to the office, and distance from home to the workplace. These adjustments aimed to align the questionnaire with the specific objectives of the study and to gather relevant data on factors influencing absenteeism and tardiness among employees.

To ensure the ethical integrity of the study, secondary data, including

records on absences, tardiness, and net take-home pay, were obtained from the Human Resource Management Office. To maintain confidentiality, all personal identifiers were anonymized by replacing employee names with respondent numbers. Additionally, the questionnaire was pretested to verify its clarity, reliability, and suitability for the research context, ensuring the data collection process adhered to ethical and methodological standards.

3.3 Research Sample

The researcher included all administrative positions and faculty with administrative designations in a state university in Samar. The population retrieved comprised a total of 138 respondents, which is considered sufficient to provide justification for identifying factors influencing absenteeism and tardiness.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher employed a "drop-and-pick-later" method for distributing the survey questionnaires. A formal request letter was sent to the University President, seeking approval to access data related to tardiness, absenteeism, and net take-home pay. All data were anonymized to protect the identity and confidentiality of respondents and were used strictly for research purposes.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics to outline respondent profiles and frequency distributions, as well as correlational analysis to explore relationships between personal variables and attendance behaviors. Specific tests, such as Pearson's correlation, were applied to determine the significance and strength of relationships.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Profile of the Research Respondents

As shown in Figure 1 sample population has a total of 138, with females having the most population of 83 (eighty-three) respondents and 55 (fifty-five) respondents for male.
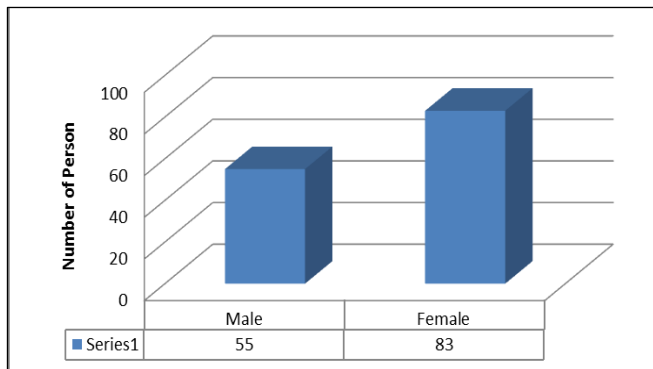

Figure 1. *Population by Sex*

Most of the ages 36-40 garnered 31 (22%) of the total population and the least are those ages more than 25 and below same as 60 and above as seen in Figure 2.
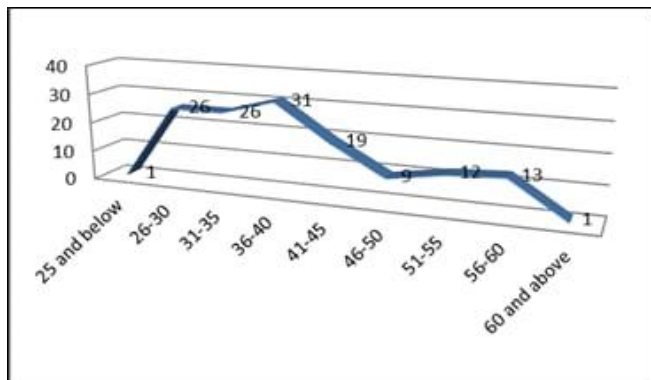

Figure 2. *Population by Age*

Respondents answered the questionnaire on how many children they have; most of them typically answered 1-2 children and least having 5 or more children as shown in Figure 3.
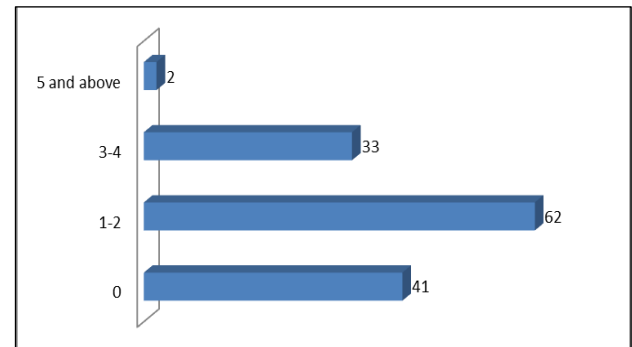

Figure 3. *Number of Children*

Eighty (80) employees from a state university in Samar primarily used privately owned vehicles as their main mode of transportation, followed by public transportation as the second most common means.
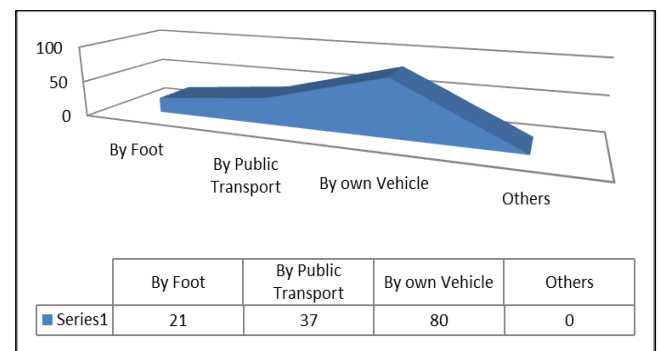

	By Foot	By Public Transport	By own Vehicle	Others
Series1	21	37	80	0

Figure 4. *Mode of Transportation for Work*

The location of employees by distance is measured by walk or drive, most of the employees came from their homes for 15 (fifteen) minutes to arrive at the office, seconded by 5 (five) minutes' walk or drive as revealed in Figure 5.

The major result of employees' net take home 25% having below Php 5,000.00, Php 10,000.00 to less than Php 15,000.00 garnering 24% of the population and 23% Php 15,000.00 to less than 20,000.00 as seen in Figure 6.
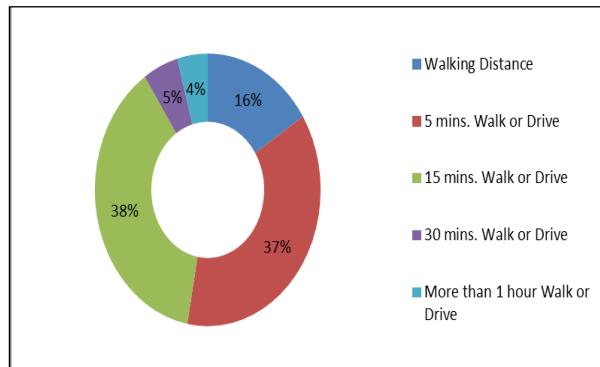
Figure 5. *Distance from Home to Office*
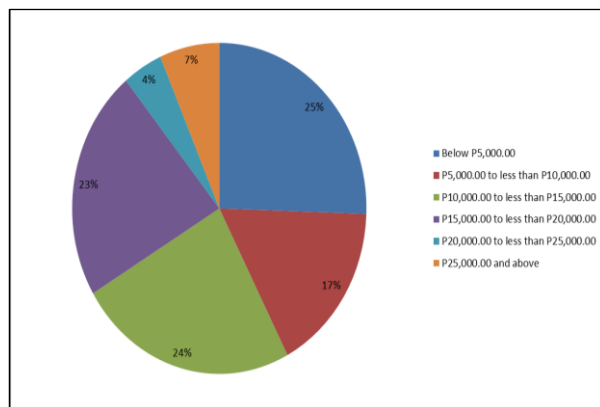
Figure 6. *Net Monthly Salary*

The data reveals (Figures 1 to 6) that female employees account for 60% of the population, highlighting the need to consider gender-specific factors such as caregiving responsibilities and work-life balance, which can significantly impact attendance (Perez & Garcia, 2021).

The age distribution indicates that employees aged 36–40 years represent the largest group at 22%. This age range is often associated with heightened family obligations and career pressures, which may affect punctuality. Addressing these age-related challenges is essential to creating interventions that improve attendance (Lopez & Cruz, 2020). Moreover, family-related factors, such as the number of children, further compound the complexity of managing work-life balance. Most respondents have 1–2 children, suggesting that support mechanisms, such as flexible scheduling, could alleviate tardiness (Santos et al., 2022).

Transportation data shows that most employees rely on privately owned vehicles, followed by public transportation. Despite the short commuting distances, transportation delays remain a factor, indicating a need to assess and improve commuting conditions (Reyes & Villanueva, 2023).

Additionally, economic data highlights that a significant proportion of respondents earn less than Php 5,000 per month, with financial stress likely contributing to attendance issues. Offering financial wellness programs or salary adjustments could help address this concern (Martinez & Santos, 2023).

These findings underscore the importance of demographic and socio-economic factors in addressing absenteeism and tardiness. Developing targeted and context-specific interventions tailored to these variables could significantly improve attendance and workplace efficiency.

4.2 Respondents' Absenteeism

Table 1 reveals that 83.33% (115 employees) fall under the "occasional absenteeism" category, reflecting isolated absences that do not meet thresholds for semi-habitual or habitual absenteeism. Occasional absenteeism is often attributed to personal reasons like illness or family emergencies (Kumar et al., 2020). This suggests that most employees maintain consistent attendance, with absences not posing a systemic issue.

Conversely, 12.32% (17 employees) exhibited semi-habitual absenteeism, where absences approached habitual levels but were less frequent. This pattern could suggest early signs of disengagement or challenges in balancing personal and professional responsibilities (Rahman & Nasir, 2021). Management may need to monitor this group closely to

Table 1

Levels of Absenteeism of the Employees

Levels	f	%
Occasional (Isolated incidents of unauthorized absences that fall below the threshold for semi-habitual absenteeism. Unauthorized absences for less than 1 month.)	115	83.33
Semi-Habitual (Recurring unauthorized absences that approach, but do not meet, the threshold for habitual absenteeism. Unauthorized absences for 1–2 months in a semester, or absences that are sporadic but regular over several month.)	17	12.32
Habitual (Unauthorized absences exceeding the allowable 2.5 days/month of leave credits. At least 3 months in a semester, or at least 3 consecutive months during the year.)	6	4.35
Total	138	100.00

prevent progression to habitual absenteeism.

Lastly, 4.35% (6 employees) were identified as having habitual absenteeism, a critical concern due to its potential impact on organizational performance and employee productivity. Habitual absenteeism is often associated with deeper organizational issues, such as low employee morale, poor workplace conditions, or dissatisfaction with management (Garcia et al., 2022). Addressing this group requires targeted interventions, such as employee engagement programs and wellness initiatives.

The findings suggest that occasional absenteeism is manageable with proactive support systems and flexible leave policies. However, the presence of habitual absenteeism, though minimal, underscores the need for strong mechanisms to address underlying causes and prevent further escalation. Implementing regular attendance tracking, providing counseling services, and

fostering a supportive work environment could mitigate these challenges effectively.

4.3 Respondents' Tardiness

Table 2 highlights that 60.87% (84 employees) demonstrated "occasional tardiness," which reflects isolated or infrequent late arrivals. This is likely influenced by situational factors, such as traffic, unforeseen delays, or minor time management issues. Occasional tardiness, while not alarming, still affects workplace efficiency and should be addressed through policies encouraging punctuality and better time management (Chiu & Tsai, 2019).

The "semi-habitual tardiness" group accounted for 27.54% (38 employees), representing a significant portion of the workforce whose tardiness occurs regularly but does not reach habitual levels. This trend may reflect deeper issues such as work-life balance struggles, lack of motivation, or inadequate workplace policies (Duran et al., 2020). Without timely interventions,

Table 2

Levels of Tardiness of the Employees

Levels	f	%
Occasional (Tardiness (regardless of the number of minutes late) occurring 10 times/month for: at least 2 months in a semester, or at least 2 consecutive months in a year. At least 20 instances of tardiness over 2 months.)	84	60.87
Semi-Habitual (Recurring instances of tardiness that approach, but do not meet, the threshold for habitual tardiness. Tardiness occurring 6–9 times/month for 1–2 months).	38	27.54
Habitual (Unauthorized absences exceeding the allowable 2.5 days/month of leave credits. At least 3 months in a semester, or at least 3 consecutive months during the year.)	16	11.59
Total	138	100.00

this group could progress to habitual tardiness.

Finally, 11.59% (16 employees) exhibited habitual tardiness, which could signal systemic issues like disengagement, poor work ethics, or dissatisfaction with organizational leadership. Habitual tardiness is a strong indicator of a disengaged workforce, as corroborated by recent research showing its link to reduced productivity and team morale (Kim & Park, 2022). Management must prioritize addressing this through structured disciplinary measures and employee engagement strategies.

The findings underscore the importance of cultivating a culture of punctuality while addressing the underlying causes of habitual tardiness. Management interventions should focus on clear attendance policies, rewards for punctuality, and flexible work arrangements to support employees facing challenges in arriving on time. Regular communication and training programs to enhance time management skills could

further reduce semi-habitual and habitual tardiness.

4.4 Personal Variables Contributing to Absenteeism

The analysis of Table 3 reveals that specific personal variables significantly influence absenteeism. Age (r = 0.256, p = 0.002) exhibits a weak but significant positive correlation, suggesting that older employees are slightly more prone to absenteeism. This trend could be attributed to age-related health concerns or increased personal responsibilities, aligning with findings from studies that emphasize the impact of life stages on workplace attendance (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

Similarly, the number of children (r = 0.283, p = 0.001) shows a weak but significant positive correlation, highlighting that employees with more children face challenges in balancing work and caregiving responsibilities (Hobson et al., 2021). The strongest correlation is observed with the average age of children (r = 0.329, p = 0.000), indicating that employees with younger children are more

Table 3

Personal Variables Contributing to Absenteeism

Personal Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Age	0.256	0.002	Reject Ho/Significant
Sex	0.046	0.592	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Number of Children	0.283	0.001	Reject Ho/Significant
Average Age of Children	0.329	0.000	Reject Ho/Significant
Location/Distance	0.011	0.898	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Mode of Transportation	0.043	0.617	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Economic Status (Net Income)	-0.155	0.069	Accept Ho/Not Significant

If the p-value is < 0.05, reject the null hypothesis (Ho), significant

If the p-value is > 0.05, accept the null hypothesis (Ho), not significant

likely to be absent due to the intensive demands of childcare (Delgado et al., 2022).

On the other hand, other variables such as sex ($p = 0.592$), location/distance ($p = 0.898$), mode of transportation ($p = 0.617$), and economic status ($p = 0.069$) do not demonstrate significant relationships with absenteeism, as their p-values exceed the 0.05 threshold. These findings suggest that absenteeism is influenced more by family-related factors, such as caregiving responsibilities, than by logistical or financial conditions. Previous research supports this perspective, emphasizing the substantial impact of family demands over geographical or economic factors on employee attendance (Kumar & Mishra, 2021).

The findings highlight the need for systemic organizational strategies to address absenteeism effectively. Interventions such as flexible work arrangements, on-site childcare support, and workload redistribution can help employees better manage their responsibilities. These initiatives enable employees, especially those with caregiving duties, to achieve a healthier work-life balance, ultimately improving productivity, morale, and overall workplace efficiency (Gallup, 2022).

4.5 Personal Variables Contributing to Tardiness

The findings from Table 4 indicate that none of the examined personal variables significantly influence tardiness among employees in the state university. Variables such as age ($r = -0.005$, $p = 0.954$), sex ($r = 0.040$, $p = 0.641$), number of children ($r = 0.115$, $p = 0.179$), average age of children ($r = -0.033$, $p = 0.701$), location/distance ($r = 0.011$, $p = 0.898$), mode of transportation ($r = -0.002$, $p = 0.998$), and economic status ($r = -0.121$, $p = 0.157$) all have p-values exceeding the 0.05 threshold, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. The negligible correlations, as indicated by r-values ranging from -0.121 to 0.115, suggest that tardiness is not substantially impacted by demographic or socio-economic characteristics.

These results imply that tardiness among employees is more likely influenced by organizational factors, workplace conditions, or individual work habits rather than personal variables. This aligns with studies that highlight systemic issues—such as workplace stress, inadequate managerial practices, or low employee engagement—as more significant contributors to tardiness (Khalid et al., 2022; Saez et al., 2021).

Table 4

Personal Variables Contributing to Tardiness

Personal Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Age	-0.005	0.954	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Sex	0.040	0.641	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Number of Children	0.115	0.179	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Average Age of Children	-0.033	0.701	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Location/Distance	0.011	0.898	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Mode of Transportation	-0.002	0.998	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Economic Status (Net Income)	-0.121	0.157	Accept Ho/Not Significant

If the p-value is < 0.05, reject the null hypothesis (Ho), significant

If the p-value is > 0.05, accept the null hypothesis (Ho), not significant

The contrasting patterns observed between absenteeism (from Table 3) and tardiness highlight the need for tailored interventions. While absenteeism may require broad organizational strategies addressing family-related responsibilities, tardiness interventions should focus on systemic and workplace-specific factors. For instance, improving job satisfaction, enhancing managerial practices, and fostering a supportive work environment can mitigate tardiness effectively. Flexible work arrangements, childcare support programs, and hybrid work options may also help employees balance work and personal responsibilities (Miller & Kaplan, 2023).

Addressing tardiness through such targeted measures not only improves punctuality but also demonstrates organizational commitment to employee well-being. This, in turn, can lead to higher job satisfaction and productivity, creating a more harmonious work environment. By implementing context-specific solutions for both absenteeism and tardiness, the state university can foster better attendance and punctuality while contributing to a deeper understanding of workplace attendance dynamics.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The contrasting dynamics of absenteeism and tardiness among employees in a state university highlight unique patterns and influencing factors. Absenteeism was predominantly occasional, with minimal habitual absenteeism, reflecting consistent attendance despite occasional disruptions. Factors such as age and family responsibilities, particularly the number of children, significantly impacted absenteeism, emphasizing the importance of family-centered interventions. Flexible work arrangements, on-site childcare, and workload redistribution are essential strategies to help employees balance personal and professional obligations effectively. These measures not only improve attendance but also foster a supportive and inclusive work environment.

In contrast, tardiness was influenced more by systemic and organizational factors than by personal variables. Semi-habitual and habitual tardiness indicated deeper challenges, such as workplace engagement, operational inefficiencies, and logistical barriers. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions, such as improving job satisfaction, enhancing managerial practices, and mitigating transportation-related delays. Implementing time management training, attendance reward systems, and flexible scheduling can help reduce tardiness while promoting a culture of accountability and employee well-

being. Together, these strategies can enhance productivity, morale, and overall workplace harmony.

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