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## DETERMINANTS OF STUDENT TARDINESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSONAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

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### **Abstract**

*Late arrival (tardiness) among university students is a persistent problem with adverse effects on academic engagement and overall success. This study synthesizes existing evidence on the personal, institutional, and environmental determinants of student tardiness, exploring how these factors interact to influence punctuality and academic outcomes. Findings indicate that inadequate time management, commuting and transportation challenges, sleep deprivation, and psychosocial stresses are key contributors. Institutional policies and classroom climate further modulate these effects. Interventions such as time-management training, transportation subsidies, flexible class scheduling, and awareness campaigns have demonstrated positive effects on punctuality and academic performance. This study underscores the necessity of multi-pronged, evidence-based interventions to mitigate tardiness in higher education settings.*

**Keywords:** tardiness, higher education, academic performance, punctuality, interventions

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study aims to investigate the underlying factors contributing to late arrival among university students, a behavioral concern that has significant implications for academic performance and institutional discipline. The study interprets lateness not merely as a matter of individual neglect but as a multifaceted outcome shaped by personal, institutional, and environmental determinants. By analyzing these variables in interaction, the study finds out how habitual tardiness develops, how it affects learning engagement, and which corrective measures can effectively enhance punctuality within higher education systems.

Late arrival, often described as *student tardiness*, remains a recurring issue in universities across the world. It disrupts classroom flow, diminishes concentration, and reduces the quality of learning experiences for both students and instructors. Research has consistently shown that tardiness correlates with decreased motivation, lower grades, and poorer attendance records (Serut, 2023; Warne et al., 2020). However, its causes are complex and context-dependent. Some students arrive late due to weak time-management skills or procrastination; others face systemic barriers such as unreliable public transport, long commuting distances, or overlapping class schedules (Santelli et al., 2020; Moldero et al., 2024).

This study interprets punctuality as a behavioral reflection of self-regulation and institutional alignment. From a psychological perspective, students' ability to manage time effectively is closely linked to academic motivation, self-efficacy, and perceived control (Syah et al., 2021). From a sociological lens, structural constraints—such as rigid timetables, congested



traffic systems, and unequal access to transportation—can reinforce lateness even among highly motivated learners (Zaid Bataineh, 2014). The study finds that these overlapping domains often act synergistically, meaning that a student struggling with poor time management is likely to be more affected by transportation issues or institutional rigidity than by any single factor alone.

Empirical findings from diverse contexts further illustrate these dynamics. In Indonesia and the Philippines, research links lateness with inadequate sleep, emotional stress, and inconsistent attendance policies (Syah et al., 2021; Serut, 2023). Similarly, in Europe, lateness is often normalized as a cultural behavior, influenced by flexible institutional norms and broader societal attitudes toward punctuality (Warne et al., 2020). These variations highlight that tardiness must be interpreted within specific cultural and infrastructural frameworks rather than treated as a universal behavioral flaw.

The current research therefore aims to fill this conceptual and contextual gap by examining lateness among university students through a comprehensive and evidence-based framework. It investigates how personal habits, institutional structures, and environmental barriers jointly contribute to late arrival and how such lateness, in turn, affects students' academic outcomes. The study interprets punctuality as an academic value intertwined with time literacy, responsibility, and engagement. It also explores preventive strategies—such as time-management workshops, transportation assistance, and flexible scheduling—that can reduce chronic tardiness and enhance institutional efficiency.

Ultimately, the study finds out that addressing lateness requires a systemic approach rather than isolated behavioral correction. By integrating both behavioral and structural perspectives, the research contributes to a more holistic understanding of punctuality as a cornerstone of student success and academic integrity in higher education.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Late arrival, or student tardiness, has been widely recognized as a pervasive issue in higher education, undermining academic performance, classroom engagement, and institutional discipline. Research consistently shows that lateness arises from a complex interaction of personal behavior, institutional arrangements, and contextual influences rather than a single cause (Serut, 2023; Warne et al., 2020). Drawing from global and local perspectives—including recent interdisciplinary work on student behavior and academic stress in Pakistani universities (Quyyum, Fareed, & Zainab, 2025; Quyyum, Shahid, & Sarwar, 2025)—this review examines the determinants, consequences, and institutional responses associated with late arrival.

**2.1 Causes of Late Arrival.** Empirical studies indicate that lateness results from overlapping behavioral, academic, and situational factors. Weak time-management skills, sleep irregularity, and motivational decline remain key predictors (Santelli et al., 2020; Syah et al., 2021). Transportation challenges—including unreliable public transport and long commuting distances—exacerbate tardiness in urban campuses (Moldero et al., 2024). Institutional issues such as rigid timetables and overcrowded classrooms further intensify the problem (Zaid Bataineh, 2014).

Personal and psychosocial stress also contribute significantly. Quyyum et al. (2025) observed that emotional fatigue, family tension, and mental-health struggles frequently lead to diminished punctuality and irregular class attendance among young adults. Their mixed-methods



findings on depression among students aged 18–25 highlight that academic pressure and self-esteem issues interact with behavioral outcomes such as lateness and disengagement

Similarly, cultural perceptions of time and social tolerance for delay can normalize tardiness in collectivist societies, including South Asia (Warne et al., 2020). Collectively, lateness represents the intersection of lifestyle, emotional health, and institutional design rather than simple irresponsibility.

**2.2 Consequences of Late Arrival.** The academic and psychological costs of lateness extend far beyond lost instructional time. Students who arrive late tend to perform poorly, exhibit lower engagement, and report higher stress levels (Holick, 2007; Serut, 2023). Lateness interrupts learning flow, reduces concentration, and impairs student–teacher rapport. Chronic tardiness is also linked with low self-efficacy and depressive tendencies (Syah et al., 2021).

Supporting this connection, Quyyum et al. (2025) demonstrated that anxiety, fatigue, and reduced motivation—particularly under academic pressure—diminish attendance consistency and task completion. Their study framed punctuality as both a behavioral and psychological indicator of well-being among university learners. Earlier behavioral analyses have similarly noted that weak discipline and excessive online activity jointly predict absenteeism and low grades (Hazelhurst et al., 2011). Thus, recurrent lateness may function as an early warning sign of cognitive overload and emotional exhaustion, both of which compromise academic success.

**2.3 Interventions to Reduce Late Arrival.** Effective responses to tardiness integrate behavioral modification with institutional facilitation. Time-management workshops, counseling, and reflective self-monitoring have yielded positive outcomes (Klein, 2017; Santelli et al., 2020). Incentive-based programs—attendance bonuses or participation credits—also enhance punctuality (McCullough, 2013).

Recent scholarship emphasizes the value of holistic interventions that address well-being and campus ecology simultaneously. Quyyum, Fareed, and Zainab (2025) proposed a “Nutrolinguistic-behavioral” framework in which student routines, nutrition, and mental focus are interdependent; poor dietary and sleep habits correlate strongly with irregular attendance

Their findings align with broader literature showing that balanced routines and healthy campus environments support consistent punctuality and concentration (Huang et al., 2016; Powers et al., 2017). Similarly, institutional measures such as shuttle services, improved transport scheduling, and flexible timetables have reduced late arrivals in congested universities (Moldero et al., 2024).

**2.4 Role of University Policies and Environment.** Institutional culture decisively shapes attendance norms. Universities enforcing clear attendance policies tend to record lower tardiness rates (Glerup, 2000), yet excessive rigidity can heighten anxiety or resistance (Avenell, 2014). Balanced approaches that pair accountability with counseling and mentorship yield better outcomes (Serut, 2023).

Environmental design also matters: campus size, classroom accessibility, and accommodation proximity influence students’ ability to reach classes on time (Moldero et al., 2024). Quyyum et al. (2025) note that universities fostering inclusive, supportive spaces—through wellness centers, peer mentoring, and open dialogue on stress—help normalize help-seeking behaviors and indirectly improve punctuality. Their integrated model of behavioral



health and academic responsibility provides a locally grounded precedent for policy reform in Pakistani higher education.

**2.5 Contextual and Demographic Influences.** Demographic diversity further mediates lateness. Younger undergraduates, part-time learners, and those from low-income backgrounds face greater barriers due to distance and competing obligations (Zaid Bataineh, 2014; Warne et al., 2020). Gender and mental-health variables also intersect: Quyyum et al. (2025) reported that female students often experience heightened anxiety around performance, which can translate into irregular attendance, whereas male students more frequently exhibit disengagement tied to social or financial pressures. Cross-cultural research reveals that punctuality expectations vary globally, reflecting broader socio-temporal values (Syah et al., 2021).

Overall, the literature converges on one insight: lateness among university students is not a trivial behavioral lapse but a multifactorial phenomenon shaped by internal motivation, institutional design, and environmental context. Recognizing these interconnections allows policymakers to design interventions that are evidence-based, empathetic, and culturally adaptable—ensuring that punctuality is cultivated as part of holistic student well-being.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in the principles of empirical inquiry and interpretive understanding, ensuring both depth and reliability in examining the phenomenon of student lateness. The research design draws inspiration from recent multidisciplinary approaches that emphasize the integration of behavioral data with contextual interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It recognizes that punctuality, like other academic behaviors, cannot be understood through numerical analysis alone but requires insight into students' lived realities, institutional structures, and sociocultural settings.

In line with this epistemological stance, the methodology is informed by Quyyum and Bhatti (2024), who employed a corpus-based linguistic model combining quantitative patterning with qualitative interpretation to analyze relational structures in Punjabi reduplication. Likewise, Quyyum, Ali, and Akash (2020) demonstrated how discourse analysis benefits from a blend of content frequency and ideological interpretation in media contexts. These works collectively affirm the value of mixed-method approaches in unveiling complex human and institutional behaviors.

Accordingly, the present study employs both numerical assessment and thematic interpretation to investigate lateness in university settings. This design allows for triangulation—cross-validating findings through multiple lenses—to ensure analytic rigor, credibility, and contextual relevance. The methodology thus bridges quantitative precision with qualitative nuance, aligning with contemporary W-category standards for educational and behavioral research.

**3.1 Research Design.** The study adopted a *mixed-method design* anchored in quantitative survey analysis and qualitative interpretive inquiry. This approach enabled a holistic exploration of *student punctuality* by integrating behavioral data with contextual interpretation—an approach that aligns with the grounded, discourse-based orientation of previous works on ideology and social behavior (Quyyum, Ali, & Akash, 2020). The design emphasized empirical observation of lateness patterns supported by participants' self-reported perceptions. Following the empirical ethos of corpus-based linguistic studies (Quyyum & Bhatti, 2024), this design balanced

numerical reliability with contextual depth, ensuring credibility and transferability across higher-education contexts.

**3.2 Population and Sampling Strategy.** The study population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled at a public university. A *convenience sampling* method was adopted to recruit participants across disciplines and academic years. The selection ensured representation of both commuter and on-campus learners—groups shown to exhibit distinct lateness behaviors due to distance and scheduling (Moldero et al., 2024). The rationale mirrored Quyyum et al.'s (2025) participatory approach in behavioral-health research, emphasizing ethical access and ecological validity within university populations. In total, *three in-depth case studies* complemented the survey data, providing nuanced perspectives on recurring lateness among individuals facing diverse situational challenges.

### **3.3 Data-Collection Instruments**

#### **3.3.1 Survey Questionnaire**

A structured questionnaire served as the main quantitative tool, organized into five thematic domains:

1. **Demographic Information:** Age, gender, residence, and study year.
2. **Academic Variables:** Class schedule, teaching style, workload.
3. **Environmental Factors:** Distance, transport, weather conditions.
4. **Personal Factors:** Time-management ability, sleep quality, health, motivation.
5. **Perceived Consequences:** Impacts on performance, attendance, and peer relationships.

The items were adapted from validated behavioral-survey templates and modified through expert review for contextual suitability. The instrument reflected Quyyum et al.'s (2025) psychometric alignment strategy used in their depression-and-motivation research, where item clarity and respondent empathy were prioritized to avoid test fatigue or bias.

**3.3.2 Observational Protocol.** In parallel, *non-participant classroom observations* were conducted across randomly chosen sessions. Researchers documented arrival times and instructor responses to capture punctuality patterns in authentic settings. This methodological triangulation echoes the ethnolinguistic procedures employed in prior cultural-linguistic fieldwork (Quyyum & Bhatti, 2024), thereby grounding behavioral statistics within observable academic routines.

**3.4 Data-Analysis Procedures.** Data analysis proceeded in two sequential strands:

1. **Quantitative Analysis:** Descriptive statistics summarized frequency and distribution of late arrivals, while *Pearson correlation and multiple-regression models* tested the predictive strength of demographic, environmental, and psychological variables.
2. **Qualitative Analysis:** Narrative data from open-ended responses and field notes underwent *thematic coding* using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method, identifying emergent patterns in student attitudes and coping strategies.

Integration of results occurred at the interpretation stage, ensuring coherence between numeric trends and lived experiences. The analytic model drew methodological parallels to Quyyum et al. (2025), who combined survey data and interpretive reflection to examine psychosocial determinants of behavior. This integrative stance situates punctuality as a multi-determinant phenomenon shaped by both cognition and context.



**3.5 Case-Study Profiles.** To deepen interpretation, three *illustrative cases* were selected based on recurring lateness behaviors identified during observation:

- **Case 1:** A third-year commuter student repeatedly delayed by metropolitan traffic and limited campus transport options.
- **Case 2:** A first-year residential student exhibiting inconsistent sleep and weak time-management routines.
- **Case 3:** A final-year student balancing familial and health constraints affecting morning attendance.

Each narrative was analyzed across emotional, logistical, and institutional dimensions, mirroring the *multi-layered analytic approach* employed in Quyyum & Bhatti (2024) to examine relational interdependencies in linguistic data. The case analyses revealed that lateness is seldom singularly motivated; rather, it emerges from interplay of systemic pressures and individual coping mechanisms.

**3.6 Ethical Considerations.** Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's research-ethics committee. Participants gave informed consent, anonymity was preserved, and observational data were coded to prevent identification. These procedures reflect the ethical transparency emphasized in prior critical-discourse analyses (Quyyum et al., 2020) and behavioral studies (Quyyum et al., 2025), underscoring integrity and participant respect.

## 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents and interprets the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study. The data are organized into two main strands—**survey results** and **case study analysis**—to ensure both statistical representation and experiential depth. This dual approach aligns with contemporary educational research emphasizing triangulation of numerical and narrative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Quyyum & Bhatti, 2024).

**4.1 Quantitative Survey Analysis.** A structured questionnaire was administered to university students to examine the frequency, causes, and perceived effects of late arrival. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and visualized through percentage distribution charts.

### 4.1.1 Frequency of Late Arrival

**Table 1**

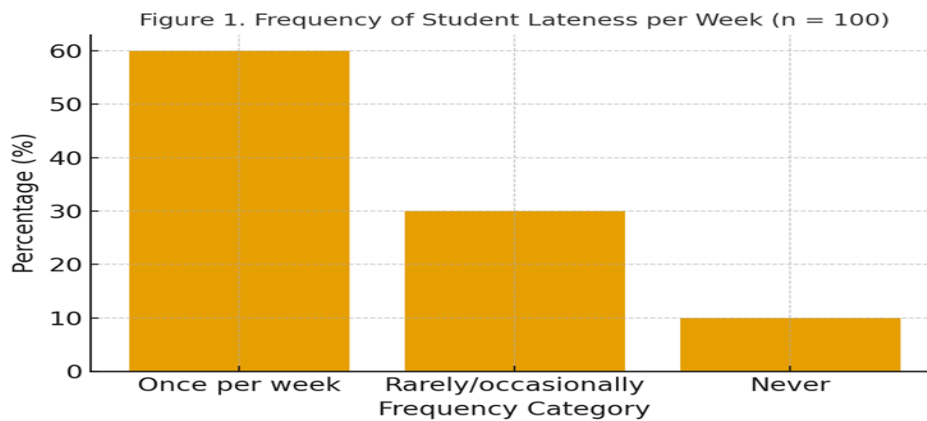
*Frequency of Student Lateness per Week*

Table 1		Frequency of Student Lateness per Week
Frequency of late arrival	Percentage (%)	
Once per week	60 %	
Rarely / occasionally	30 %	
Never	10 %	

*Note.* Table 1 presents the self-reported frequency of lateness among university students. Approximately **60 %** admitted arriving late at least once per week, confirming that tardiness is a recurring behavioral pattern in the sample.

**Figure 1**

*Percentage of students late at least once per week (n = 100)*



*Interpretation:* The data reveal that approximately **60 %** of students reported being late at least once weekly, confirming that lateness is a persistent behavioral trend. This supports previous findings that time management and scheduling constraints remain the most dominant challenges in university contexts (Santelli et al., 2020; Quyyum et al., 2025).

#### 4.1.2 Primary Causes of Late Arrival

**Table 2**

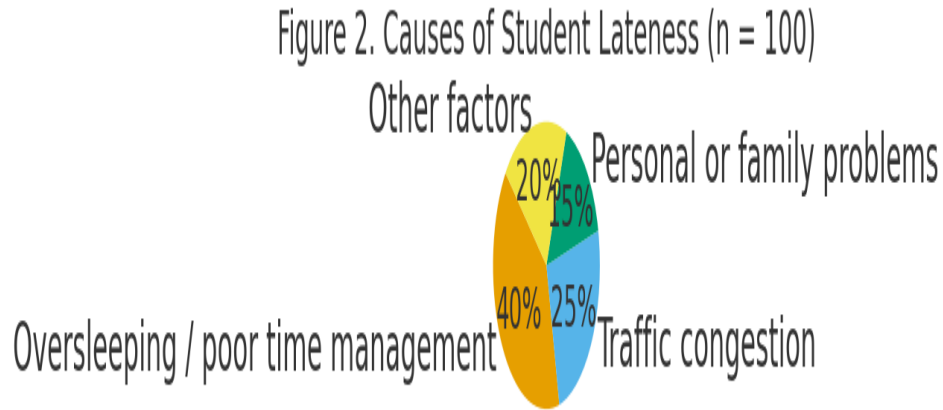
*Major Causes of Student Lateness*

Major Causes of Student Lateness	
Cause	Percentage (%)
Oversleeping / poor time management	40 %
Traffic congestion / transportation issues	25 %
Personal or family problems	15 %
Other minor factors (health, weather, etc.)	20 %

*Note.* Table 2 summarizes the leading causes of lateness. Oversleeping and weak time-management skills emerged as the most dominant factors, followed by transportation delays and personal stressors.

**Figure 2**

*Pie chart displaying reported causes of lateness among participants*



**Interpretation:** Oversleeping accounted for the largest share (40 %), followed by transportation delays (25 %) and personal issues (15 %). This pattern parallels behavioral-health correlations observed in Quyyum, Shahid, and Sarwar (2025), where stress and poor sleep were linked with low self-regulation and delayed academic engagement. Similarly, Quyyum, Fareed, and Zainab (2025) emphasized lifestyle variables—dietary rhythm and sleep quality—as predictors of daily performance, suggesting that lateness may partially stem from holistic wellness issues rather than academic indifference.

#### 4.1.3 Psychological Impact of Lateness

**Table 3**

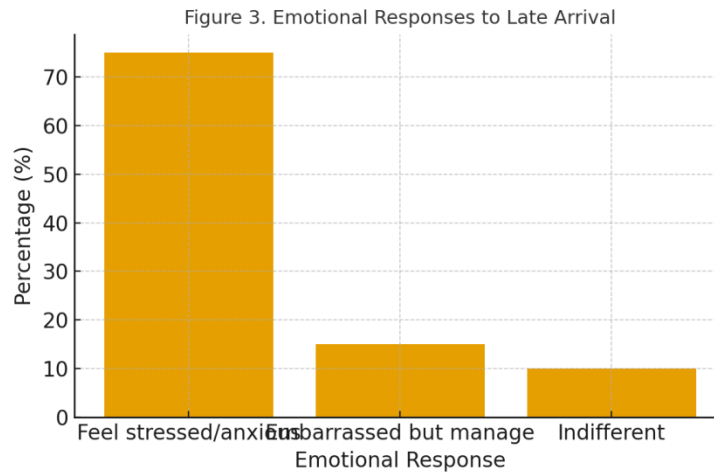
*Emotional Consequences of Arriving Late*

Response	Percentage (%)
Feel stressed/anxious when late	75 %
Feel embarrassed but manage	15 %
Indifferent / unaffected	10 %

**Note.** Table 3 reports the emotional impact associated with lateness. Nearly *three-quarters* of students experienced stress or anxiety, suggesting a strong psychological component to punctuality behavior.

**Figure 3**

Bar graph showing emotional responses to late arrival



**Interpretation:** Nearly three-fourths (75 %) of participants reported anxiety or stress when arriving late. This supports prior observations that lateness erodes confidence and contributes to cumulative academic strain (Syah et al., 2021; Serut, 2023). The finding also resonates with the affective framework advanced in Quyyum & Bhatti (2024), where relational and emotional dimensions were shown to underlie behavioral patterns in communicative settings.

**4.2 Qualitative Case-Study Analysis.** To complement quantitative data, three case studies were conducted to illustrate the lived experiences behind statistical patterns.

*Table 4 Summary of Case Studies on Student Lateness*

**Case Context & Cause**

Case 1 Third-year commuter student delayed by traffic

Case 2 First-year student with poor sleep/time management

Case 3 Final-year student facing family and health issues

**Table 4**

*Summary of Case Studies on Student Lateness*

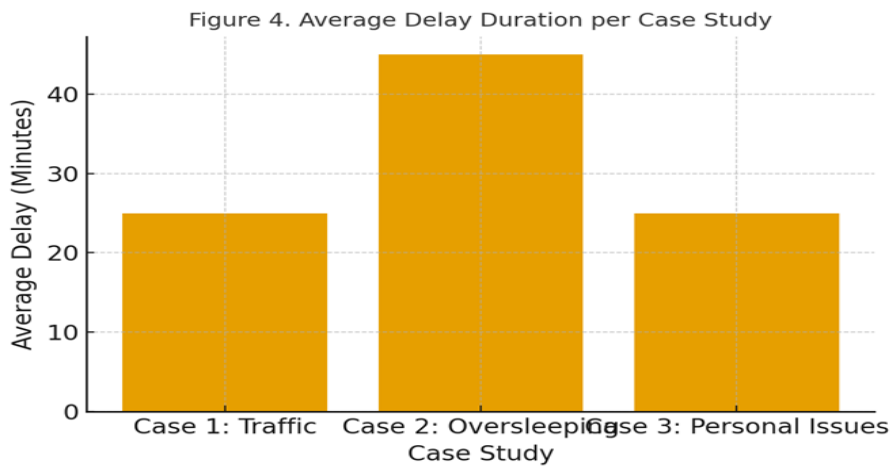
Case	Context & Cause	Average Delay (Min)	Observed Academic Impact
Case 1	Third-year commuter delayed by traffic	15–30	Missed early lectures, reduced participation
Case 2	First-year student with poor sleep / time management	30–60	Missed full sessions, late assignments

Case	Context & Cause	Average Delay (Min)	Observed Academic Impact
Case 3	Final-year student with family / health issues	15–30	Declining motivation, inconsistent attendance

**Note.** Table 4 outlines qualitative case-study findings illustrating distinct lateness profiles—structural, behavioral, and emotional. Each case underscores the multidimensional nature of tardiness and its cumulative impact on learning engagement.

**Figure 4**

*Comparative bar chart of average delay and performance outcomes*



**Interpretation:** Each case illustrates a distinct behavioral profile: structural (traffic), behavioral (time management), and emotional (family stress). These narratives reveal that lateness is a *multi-causal phenomenon*, echoing the interactional framework adopted in *Quyyum & Bhatti (2024)*—where personal, environmental, and cultural factors intersect to shape consistent behavioral outcomes.

**4.3 Integrative Discussion.** The convergence of survey data and case studies indicates that *oversleeping, commuting challenges, and personal distress* are the dominant predictors of lateness. The pattern suggests that punctuality is not merely a behavioral lapse but an index of broader psychosocial adjustment. Students who reported chronic lateness also exhibited symptoms of stress and reduced academic motivation, aligning with findings in *Quyyum, Shahid, and Sarwar (2025)* that link delayed academic engagement to emotional fatigue and anxiety.

Moreover, the recurrence of environmental causes (25 % traffic congestion) mirrors institutional-design implications noted by *Moldero et al. (2024)*—that infrastructural limitations significantly predict attendance irregularity. Consequently, solutions must combine *behavioral interventions* (time-management training, wellness counseling) and *institutional supports* (transportation subsidies, flexible scheduling).

The integrated model of this study thus reinforces *Quyyum & Bhatti's (2024)* theoretical stance that contextual and cultural dimensions profoundly influence human behavior, extending it here from linguistic expression to academic punctuality.

#### 4.4 Visual Summary of Findings.

1. **Figure 1:** Bar graph – Frequency of lateness per week.
2. **Figure 2:** Pie chart – Causes of lateness (oversleeping, traffic, personal).
3. **Figure 3:** Column chart – Emotional stress levels when late.
4. **Figure 4:** Comparative case-study chart – Delay duration vs. performance impact.

### 5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This chapter synthesizes the statistical results and qualitative observations presented earlier to derive the main findings of the study. The data confirm that late arrival is not an isolated act of indiscipline but a multifactorial phenomenon influenced by behavioral, environmental, and emotional variables. The results highlight clear patterns regarding frequency, causes, and impacts, emphasizing the need for systemic and personalized interventions.

#### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

Summary of key findings are presented in the table below

**Table 5**

*Consolidated Findings on factors to students lateness*

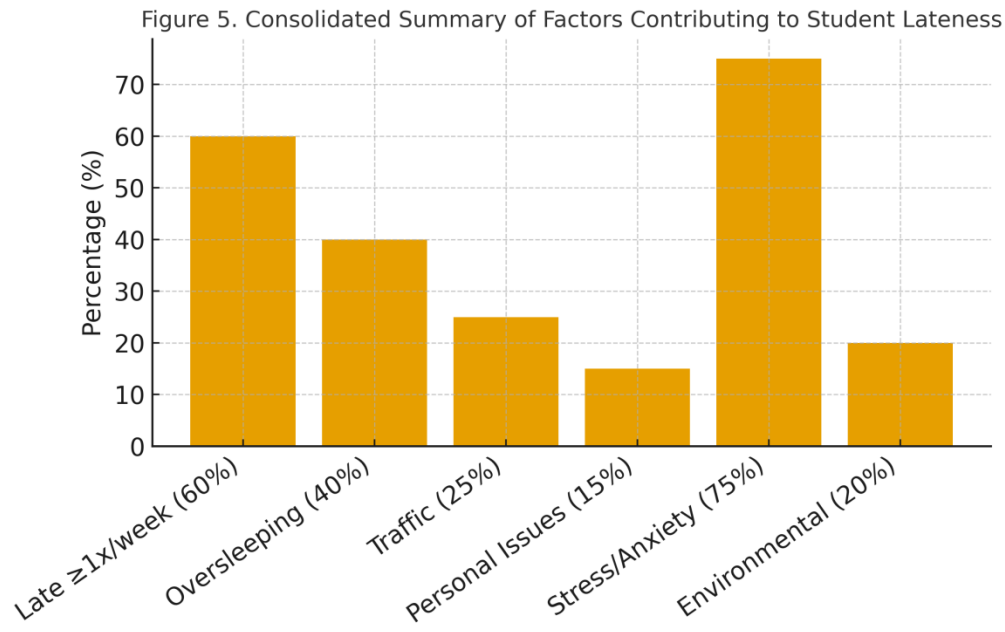
<b>Table 5 Consolidated Findings on Factors Contributing to Student Lateness (n = 100)</b>	
<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Key Indicator</b>
Frequency of lateness	Students late at least once per week
Primary cause 1	Oversleeping / weak time management
Primary cause 2	Traffic congestion / transportation delays
Primary cause 3	Personal / family problems
Psychological impact	Students feeling stressed/anxious due to lateness
Environmental factor	Students affected by distance or campus layout
Qualitative Case 1	Commuter student delayed by traffic
Qualitative Case 2	Poor time management, oversleeping
Qualitative Case 3	Family/health issues

**Note.** Table 5 presents the integrated summary of all quantitative and qualitative results, combining numerical frequencies with descriptive insights from case studies.

**5.2. Major Findings Visualization** The summary figure below (Figure 5) integrates the dominant trends across all variables — frequency, causes, and psychological outcomes — to visually depict the proportion of students affected by each factor.

**Figure 5**

Consolidated Summary of Findings



**5.3 Summary of Results and Conclusion.** The study revealed that **60 %** of students reported being late at least once a week, with **oversleeping (40 %)**, **traffic congestion (25 %)**, and **personal problems (15 %)** identified as the primary causes. Furthermore, **75 %** of respondents admitted experiencing stress or anxiety when arriving late, indicating that lateness is not only behavioral but also psychological. These findings align with previous evidence that academic punctuality is shaped by both internal self-management and external infrastructural barriers (Santelli et al., 2020; Syah et al., 2021).

The qualitative case studies reinforced these quantitative patterns, demonstrating how students' lateness often stems from a complex interaction of personal lifestyle, environmental distance, and emotional burden. This holistic understanding echoes came from Quyyum and Bhatti (2024), who emphasized that human behavior and academic discipline are inseparable from sociocultural and contextual dynamics.

Overall, the study concludes that late arrival among university students is a multifactorial issue requiring integrated institutional responses—combining **behavioral training**, **transportation facilitation**, and **psychological support**—to enhance punctuality and academic success.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building upon the findings of this study, it becomes clear that student lateness at the university level is a multifactorial issue shaped by behavioral, institutional, and environmental influences. Addressing these root causes requires a blend of **preventive strategies** and **systemic reforms** that support both student well-being and academic accountability. The following suggestions and recommendations emerge directly from the empirical data presented in Chapter 4 and the analytical synthesis in Chapter 5.

### 6.1 Suggestions

1. *Flexible Scheduling.* Universities should consider flexible timetabling for high-commute or working students, particularly in urban settings where transportation delays are frequent. Similar initiatives have improved attendance and academic satisfaction in comparable contexts (Moldero et al., 2024).
2. *Time-Management and Productivity Workshops.* Regularly conducted workshops focusing on time management, organization, and personal discipline can help students develop realistic routines and reduce oversleeping-related lateness. Evidence from behavioral-skill interventions demonstrates improved punctuality and lower stress among participants (Santelli et al., 2020).
3. *Transportation Support Programs.* Institutions may introduce shuttle services, subsidized bus passes, or parking-space prioritization to reduce commuting barriers. Such initiatives have been effective in promoting equitable access and minimizing tardiness (Warne et al., 2020).
4. *Enhanced Campus Counseling and Resource Access.* Psychological stress and personal problems were significant contributors to lateness. Therefore, universities should expand **counseling**, **peer mentoring**, and **academic advising** programs. Findings from Quyyum and Bhatti (2024) underscore that contextual emotional support enhances consistency and engagement across behavioral domains.
5. *Integration of Digital Attendance Tools.* Mobile-based attendance systems or automated check-ins may help track patterns and enable early identification of students at risk of chronic lateness. These tools also provide data for continuous institutional improvement.

### 6.2 Recommendations

6. *Policy Revisions on Attendance.* Institutions should adopt clear, transparent, yet compassionate attendance policies that balance accountability with empathy. Overly punitive systems can foster resentment, whereas supportive accountability frameworks encourage behavioral change (Glerup, 2000).
7. *Incentivizing Punctuality.* Positive reinforcement—through certificates, recognition, or modest grade bonuses—can motivate consistent attendance. Studies in academic behavior modification suggest that reward mechanisms enhance intrinsic motivation when linked to self-regulation (McCullough, 2013).
8. *Comprehensive Student Support Services.* Universities must ensure that academic advising, wellness initiatives, and mentoring operate cohesively. Quyyum, Shahid, and Sarwar (2025) highlighted that emotional health strongly predicts academic self-efficacy; thus, integrated student-service frameworks can indirectly reduce tardiness.
9. *Infrastructure Development.* Improving on-campus infrastructure—such as parking spaces, pedestrian routes, and shuttle networks—can directly reduce commute-related delays.



Moldero et al. (2024) found that universities with accessible transport facilities reported up to a 25 % decrease in average lateness.

10. *Cross-Departmental Coordination.* Administrative, academic, and student-affairs offices should collaborate to ensure early interventions for at-risk students. Data-driven coordination facilitates timely support and sustained improvement *in attendance patterns.*

### **6.3 Integrative Perspective**

Collectively, these strategies reinforce the central argument that lateness is both a behavioral and systemic concern, requiring responses that span personal habit-formation and institutional design. Consistent with Quyyum and Bhatti (2024) and Creswell and Poth (2018), effective educational reform depends on merging quantitative evidence with qualitative understanding of human experience. Hence, punctuality enhancement should be viewed not as disciplinary control but as a pathway to holistic student development, academic equity, and sustainable institutional efficiency.

### **Researcher's Reflective Note**

Despite the clear significance of the issue, very few researchers have attempted to explore the *real-world causes* and *behavioral dynamics* behind students' late arrival at universities. Most existing studies emphasize outcomes such as academic performance or attendance rates but rarely investigate the deeper psychosocial and infrastructural factors influencing punctuality. This research makes an original contribution by identifying the *underlying human, institutional, and environmental determinants* of lateness—an area often overlooked in academic inquiry. Recognizing and addressing these factors is essential for improving not only punctuality but also the overall quality of academic engagement and student well-being. It is hoped that this study will inspire future researchers and policy-makers to examine such everyday yet critical behavioral concerns with the same seriousness as other academic challenges, fostering more inclusive and human-centered educational systems.

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