

Structural Determinants of Student Lateness to School on Reopening Days: Evidence from Adidome Senior High School, Ghana

Benedicta Awusi Atiku^{1*}

Department of Education, Dambai College of Education, Dambai, Ghana

* Corresponding Author Email: atikubenedicta@yahoo.com, batiku@dace.edu.gh

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.04962>

Published November 11, 2025

Citation: Atiku B.A. (2025) Structural Determinants of Student Lateness to School on Reopening Days: Evidence from Adidome Senior High School, Ghana, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*,6(6),64-89

Abstract: *Timely student return on school reopening days is crucial for effective curriculum delivery and school management. This study investigates restraining factors influencing lateness among students in forms two and three at Adidome Senior High School, Ghana. A cross-sectional survey of 290 students measured lateness prevalence and assessed biographical, parental, student-related, and school-related factors. Lateness is a widespread structural challenge, with 74.5% of students reporting late (after Day 3). Logistic regression showed parental constraints significantly increased lateness (OR = 1.70, $p = 0.006$) while enhanced school communication policies and early academic engagement reduced it (OR = 0.47, $p < 0.001$). Student attitudes and demographic characteristics were not significant predictors. The findings highlight that effective interventions should prioritize parental financial support and improved institutional communication over punitive student measures. Recommendations include strengthening financial assistance schemes, refining communication protocols, and fostering community-school partnerships to advance educational punctuality in semi-rural settings.*

Keywords: student lateness, school reopening, parental constraints, institutional factors

INTRODUCTION

Education remains a fundamental driver of human capital development and national progress. Globally, the school system is designed not only to impart academic knowledge but also to instill discipline, punctuality, and responsibility among learners. Regular and timely school attendance is therefore crucial for effective teaching and learning. According to UNESCO (2019), early resumption of school after vacation is an important indicator of educational commitment, ensuring that students receive the full benefit of instruction time. Timeliness and consistent attendance reinforce teacher preparedness, curriculum coverage, and student performance. In contrast, absenteeism and lateness can erode the quality of education by limiting learning opportunities and disrupting classroom routines.

Across both developed and developing countries, school punctuality continues to be an important educational concern. In advanced educational systems, structured policies and monitoring mechanisms ensure that students adhere to academic calendars and minimize disruptions (Hancock et al., 2018). In developing contexts, however, socio-economic and structural factors often restrict students from returning to school early on reopening days. Sub-Saharan Africa faces particular challenges in this regard. The World Bank (2020) notes that issues such as poverty, inadequate parental supervision, poor school infrastructure, and cultural practices often delay the timely resumption of school among learners in many African countries.

In Ghana, the Senior High School (SHS) system is central to the educational ladder, bridging basic and tertiary education. Yet, punctuality on reopening days has been a persistent issue among SHS students. Many students delay returning to school after vacation, often extending their holidays by several days or weeks. This challenge undermines school management efforts, teaching schedules, and student learning outcomes (Abreh & Akyeampong, 2019). The phenomenon extends beyond indiscipline, as multiple restraining factors influence lateness. For example, students from rural areas face transportation challenges; others must support their parents in income-generating activities before resuming school, while some delay due to lack of school provisions (Ampofo, 2022).

Recent studies in Ghana have highlighted various causes of lateness and absenteeism. Osei-Owusu (2020) observed that socio-economic conditions of families significantly influence student attendance and punctuality. Adzrolo, Dzisi, and Ahiabor (2021) also established that parental involvement and support play an instrumental role in motivating students to report to school early. Similarly, Mfum-Mensah (2017) noted that inadequate school enforcement mechanisms, coupled with poor communication of reopening dates, often create opportunities for late reporting. These findings suggest that lateness is a multifaceted issue requiring systematic examination.

The reopening day of school is a critical period because it sets the tone for the entire academic term. During the first week, schools typically establish academic routines, assign dormitory responsibilities, and orient students to schedules. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that missing instructional days at the start of a term negatively influences students' long-term engagement and performance. In Ghanaian SHSs, students who delay their return miss essential announcements, lessons, and assessments, thereby falling behind academically. School administrators also encounter challenges with incomplete class registers, inadequate supervision, and disorganized timetables in the early weeks of reopening (Fobih & Ayim, 2019).

The Central Tongu District, where Adidome Senior High School is located, presents a typical case of this problem. As a semi-rural district, many students come from surrounding farming communities where parental financial constraints, transportation limitations, and household labor demands often delay students' early return to school. Interviews with local education officers and teachers suggest that this has become a recurring issue with implications for discipline, performance, and administration. Despite the significance of this challenge, few empirical studies have focused specifically on restraining factors affecting students' early return to school on

reopening days in Ghana, particularly at the SHS level. This study therefore seeks to investigate these restraining factors, focusing on parental, student, and school-related dimensions in Adidome Senior High School.

Statement of the Problem

Timely attendance on reopening days has long been recognized as critical for sustaining the momentum of teaching and learning. Yet, evidence indicates that many students delay their return to school after vacation, thereby affecting curriculum coverage and school discipline. At the global level, attendance studies suggest that consistent lateness leads to academic underachievement and poor student-teacher engagement (Allensworth & Schwartz, 2020). In Ghana, anecdotal reports and limited research point to a recurring pattern of student lateness during reopening days, but systematic individualised institutional empirical investigations remain scarce.

Preliminary observations in Central Tongu District reveal that late return of students has become normalized in some schools. Teachers often wait for up to a week or more before serious academic activities commence, citing the absence of a significant proportion of students. This not only disrupts classroom management but also compels schools to compress syllabi later in the term, placing pressure on both teachers and students. Moreover, repeated lateness undermines discipline, as students learn that absenteeism at the beginning of the term has minimal consequences.

Although various factors are often mentioned—such as parents delaying the provision of school needs, students' own lack of seriousness, or school-related disincentives like poor enforcement of reopening dates—limited empirical research attempted to categorize and empirically measure the relative influence of these restraining factors. The majority of Ghanaian research on absenteeism focuses on truancy, dropout, or general attendance (Adu-Gyamfi & Ampiah, 2019), with less attention to the critical period of reopening days. Furthermore, little is known about how parental, student, and school-related factors interact to shape student decisions on when to return to school.

Analysis of structural and environmental complexities in Ghanaian educational institutions highlights how systemic inadequacies—such as weak institutional environments, poor resource allocation, and administrative inconsistencies—can negatively influence academic and behavioural outcomes among learners (Atiku & Atiku, 2022). While the researcher's focus is on colleges of education, such systemic weaknesses is seen in SHSs, limiting their capacity to enforce reopening protocols and contributing to patterns of delayed student return consequently affecting students' performance.

The gap in literature is particularly pressing in semi-rural districts like Central Tongu, where economic hardships, long distances, and weak school monitoring systems combine to exacerbate lateness. Without targeted interventions, the persistence of this issue risks not only student achievement but also Ghana's broader education quality improvement goals in line with SDG 4. This study therefore addresses a significant knowledge gap by systematically investigating the restraining factors that delay students' early return to school in Adidome Senior High School.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the restraining factors that contribute to the late return of students to school on reopening days in Adidome Senior High School, Central Tongu District. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent of student lateness on school reopening days in Adidome SHS.
2. Examine the association between students' biographical characteristics (sex, residence, form, and parental education) and lateness on reopening days at Adidome SHS.
3. Assess the influence of parental-related, student-related, and school-related factors on the likelihood of student lateness of arrival when school reopens in Adidome SHS.
4. Identify the most significant restraining factors that predict lateness in arriving in school among students in Adidome SHS.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do students report late on school reopening days Adidome SHS?
2. What associations exist between students' biographical characteristics and lateness on reopening days in Adidome SHS?
3. How do parental-related, student-related, and school-related factors influence student lateness in coming to school in Adidome SHS?
4. Which restraining factors most significantly predict lateness among students in Adidome SHS?

Research Hypotheses

The study tests the following hypotheses:

- **H₀₁**: There is no significant association between students' biographical characteristics (sex, residence, form, parental education) and lateness on reopening days.
- **H₁₁**: There is a significant association between at least one biographical characteristic and lateness on reopening days.
- **H₀₂**: Parental-related, student-related, and school-related restraining factors have no significant influence on the likelihood of student lateness.
- **H₁₂**: At least one of the restraining factors (parental, student, or school-related) significantly influences the likelihood of student lateness.
- **H₀₃**: None of the restraining factors significantly predict student lateness.
- **H₁₃**: At least one restraining factor significantly predicts student lateness.

Significance of the Study

This study has practical, academic, and policy relevance. First, it contributes to the academic literature by addressing a relatively underexplored dimension of punctuality in Ghanaian education—the restraining factors influencing lateness specifically during reopening days. The findings will enrich scholarly understanding of how parental, student, and school-related dynamics affect punctuality. Second, the study is practically significant for students, as it highlights the challenges they face and proposes interventions that could encourage earlier reporting. For teachers and school administrators, the results will provide evidence-based insights for designing effective strategies to ensure high student attendance from the first day of reopening. The study will also be useful to the Ghana Education Service (GES) by informing policy guidelines on school reopening procedures, communication, and disciplinary measures. Finally, parents and guardians will benefit by understanding the extent to which their actions influence student lateness and how they can play a supportive role.

Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses exclusively on Adidome Senior High School in the Central Tongu District of Ghana. It specifically investigates lateness on school reopening days and not lateness during regular school days. The analysis is restricted to restraining factors categorized as parental-related, student-related, and school-related, alongside selected biographical characteristics. Other factors such as national policy changes or external community dynamics are beyond the scope of this research.

Limitations of the Study

While every effort was made to ensure rigor, reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires might have introduced some response biases producing some limitations. The focus of the study on a single district and a single SHS limits generalization of findings to the entire country. Despite these limitations, the study's design and methodological rigor are believed to have produced valid and reliable insights.

Definition of Terms

- **Early Return** refers to reporting to school on the official reopening date set by the school or Ghana Education Service.
- **Lateness** refers to failure to report to school on reopening day, leading to delayed participation in initial academic and administrative activities.
- **Restraining Factors** refer to parental, student, or school-related conditions that hinder or delay students' return to school on reopening days.
- **Parental-Related Factors** define circumstances influenced by parents/guardians, such as financial constraints, lack of provisions, or family responsibilities.
- **Student-Related Factors** define individual attitudes and behaviours of students, including laziness, peer influence, or waiting for resources.

- **School-related Factors** refers to institutional factors such as communication gaps, teacher absenteeism, or weak enforcement of reopening rules.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature on restraining factors that affect students' early return to school on reopening days. The review is organized around key themes derived from the research objectives, including the concept of punctuality in education, patterns of student lateness, and the parental, student-related, and school-related factors that influence lateness. The chapter also highlights empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and gaps in the existing literature. The aim is to provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the phenomenon of student lateness in the Ghanaian senior high school context.

Conceptualizing Student Lateness and Early Return

Punctuality and timely school attendance are widely recognized as essential for academic success. Lateness, in this context, refers to the failure of students to return to school on the official reopening day, thereby missing instructional time. Early return signifies reporting to school on or before the reopening date (Hancock et al., 2018). Research demonstrates that students who start the term late often exhibit lower levels of academic engagement and achievement compared to those who resume on time (Allensworth & Schwartz, 2020).

In Ghana, lateness is a widespread issue across different levels of education. Osei-Owusu (2020) observed that lateness among SHS students is often normalized, with both students and teachers expecting a slow start to the term. This cultural acceptance of delayed resumption undermines the intended efficiency of the academic calendar. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that early return is not only critical for academic learning but also for building discipline and accountability among students.

Empirical Evidence on Lateness in Education

Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa reveal that late school attendance is driven by a mixture of social, economic, and institutional factors (World Bank, 2020). For example, Ampofo (2022) found that financial constraints are among the strongest predictors of student lateness in Ghanaian SHSs. Adu-Gyamfi and Ampiah (2019) reported that absenteeism and lateness at the beginning of the term negatively impact curriculum delivery and teacher workload. Similarly, Adzrolo, Dzisi, and Ahiabor (2021) highlighted parental support as a critical determinant of timely student attendance.

Internationally, research aligns with these findings. Hancock et al. (2018) demonstrated that students with consistent early attendance are more likely to perform well academically. Allensworth and Schwartz (2020) further noted that lateness and absenteeism in the first weeks of

a term predict long-term academic struggles, reinforcing the need for proactive interventions at the start of each academic cycle.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that student behavior is influenced by multiple, interrelated systems: family, school, community, and broader societal structures. In the context of this research, parental-related factors represent the microsystem (immediate family), student-related factors reflect personal attributes and peer influences, while school-related factors embody institutional practices. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Darling, 2019) provides a holistic lens for analyzing how different systems interact to either facilitate or restrain early return to school.

2.5 Parental-Related Restraining Factors

Parental-related factors are frequently cited as significant barriers to early return. Research shows that parents' socio-economic status strongly determines students' punctuality. Families with limited resources may struggle to provide school provisions and fees on time, causing delays (Ampofo, 2022). In addition, parental employment patterns influence attendance; parents engaged in informal labor markets often rely on children for household work before school resumption (Osei-Owusu, 2020).

Parental education also plays a role. Adzrolo et al. (2021) reported that educated parents are more likely to emphasize early school return, while less educated parents may fail to recognize the importance of punctuality. Similarly, Mfum-Mensah (2017) observed that weak parental supervision in rural Ghana contributes to prolonged student holidays. These findings underscore the importance of addressing parental capacity and awareness in tackling lateness.

Student-Related Restraining Factors

Students' personal attitudes and behaviors also shape their likelihood of returning to school early. Some students delay because they perceive the first week of school as unimportant, believing that academic work does not start immediately (Fobih & Ayim, 2019). Peer influence is another factor; students are more likely to resume late if their peers do the same (Ampofo, 2022).

Health-related issues also restrain students from reporting on time. Studies show that students experiencing ill-health during reopening periods often extend their absence until recovery (Osei-Owusu, 2020). Furthermore, lack of self-discipline, laziness, and a lack of appreciation for punctuality are recurring themes in lateness literature (Allensworth & Schwartz, 2020).

School-Related Restraining Factors

Institutional practices within schools significantly influence student punctuality. In many Ghanaian SHSs, reopening dates are communicated late or inconsistently, leaving students uncertain (Mfum-Mensah, 2017). Weak enforcement of rules also contributes to the problem; when late students face minimal consequences, lateness becomes normalized (Fobih & Ayim, 2019).

Atiku and Atiku (2022) emphasized that the institutional environment of Ghanaian tertiary institutions is "complex and supportive" only in aspiration, not always in practice—various socio-cultural, economic, political, and physical dimensions continue to undermine functionality and institutional performance. This suggests that senior high schools similarly likely lack cohesive institutional environments, resulting in poor communication of reopening schedules, ineffective enforcement of attendance rules, and weak early-term support systems—all factors that may hinder timely student return.

Other school-related restraining factors include lack of teacher commitment during the first week, poor dormitory conditions (such as bed bug infestations), and the absence of early academic activities (Adzrolo et al., 2021). UNESCO (2019) stresses that schools must create a welcoming and organized environment during reopening to encourage student punctuality.

Atiku (2023) underscores that strengthening institutional capacity through departmental continuous professional development CPD can enhance educational outcomes and institutional responsiveness. Thus, investments in staff development—especially for administrators and orientation teams—could improve their effectiveness in managing reopening and encouraging punctuality among returning students.

Interactions Among Restraining Factors

Although parental, student, and school factors are often discussed separately, they interact in complex ways. For example, students from low-income families (parental factor) may lack motivation (student factor) and receive little pressure from school authorities to resume early (school factor). Bronfenbrenner's theory highlights these cross-systemic interactions, suggesting that interventions must address all levels simultaneously.

Measures for Addressing Lateness

Several measures have been proposed to curb lateness. These include timely communication of reopening dates, parental sensitization, provision of scholarships for needy students, and strict enforcement of school attendance policies (World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). Guidance and counseling interventions have also been shown to improve student attitudes toward punctuality (Hancock et al., 2018). However, limited research has assessed the effectiveness of these interventions in Ghana, creating an opportunity for this study to recommend context-specific strategies.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework is derived from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes that individual behavior is shaped by multiple interrelated systems, including the family, school, and personal attributes (Darling, 2019). Guided by this perspective, the framework illustrates how parental-related, student-related, and school-related factors collectively influence students' lateness on reopening days. Biographical characteristics such as sex, residence, form, and parental education are considered background variables that may moderate the strength of these relationships.

The dependent variable is student lateness, operationalized as reporting to school after Day 3 of reopening. The independent variables include:

- **Parental-related factors** (e.g., financial constraints, parental supervision, household demands).
- **Student-related factors** (e.g., personal attitudes, peer influence, health issues).
- **School-related factors** (e.g., weak enforcement of reopening, communication challenges, dormitory conditions).

The figure below depicts the relationships between these factors and student lateness. Arrows indicate the hypothesized influence of each factor on the likelihood of lateness.

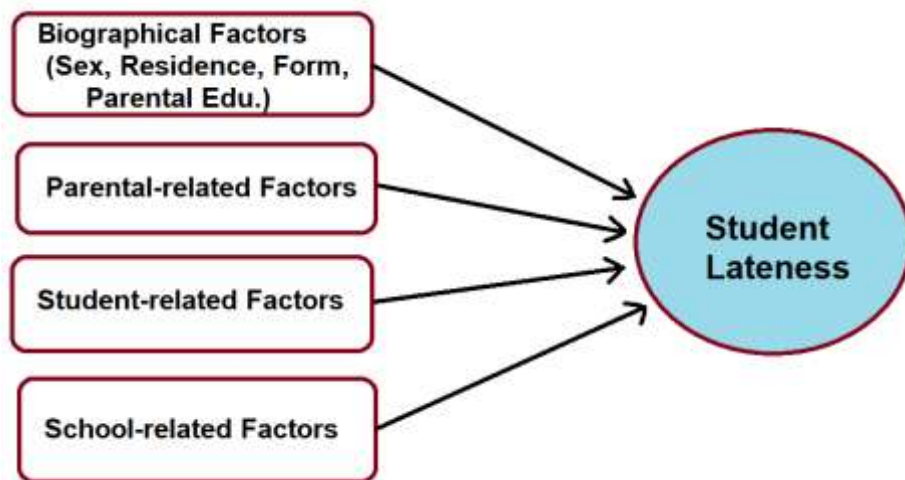


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Restraining Factors Influencing Lateness

Summary and Research Gap

The literature reviewed indicates that lateness on reopening days is a multifaceted issue shaped by parental, student-related, and school-related factors. While studies in Ghana have explored absenteeism broadly, few have examined lateness during reopening days specifically. Moreover, empirical evidence is limited on the relative influence of different restraining factors in rural and semi-rural contexts such as Central Tongu District. This study therefore fills a crucial gap by systematically analyzing these restraining factors in Adidome Senior High School, using both descriptive and inferential approaches

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures that guided the study. It describes the research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instrument, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and methods of data analysis. The approach is designed to ensure that the research objectives and questions are adequately addressed and that the findings are reliable, valid, and applicable to the study context.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain quantitative data on restraining factors influencing lateness in student return at a single point in time. Descriptive surveys allow researchers to systematically collect information from a large sample of respondents, analyze relationships among variables, and make generalizations about the population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population of the Study

The target population consisted of all students enrolled in Adidome Senior High School in the Central Tongu District of Ghana during the 2024/2025 academic year. According to school administrative records, the total student population was 1,030 students. These comprised both boarders and day students across forms two and three.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Sample Size Determination

The sample size of 290 was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for calculating sample size with a finite population:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = 288$$

Where:

n represents the sample size

N is the population size (1030 students)

e is the acceptable margin of error (set at 0.05 for 95% confidence)

Thus, a sample size of 288 was required. To make room for non-responses, the sample was increased to 290 to account for potential non-responses.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed. Students were first stratified by residential status (day/boarding) and form (two/three). Proportionate samples were then drawn from each

stratum to ensure representativeness. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select respondents. This ensured that both day and boarding students, as well as both forms, were adequately represented.

Research Instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire adapted from related studies and aligned with the research objectives. The questionnaire comprised five sections:

1. Section A: Biographical Data (sex, form, residential status, parental education).
2. Section B: Parental-Related Restraining Factors (12 items, 5-point Likert scale).
3. Section C: Student-Related Restraining Factors (10 items, 5-point Likert scale).
4. Section D: School-Related Restraining Factors (10 items, 5-point Likert scale).
5. Section E: Measures to Curb Lateness (10 items, 5-point Likert scale).

The questionnaire was pre-tested in a neighboring SHS within the Volta Region to ensure clarity and appropriateness of items.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

The content validity of the instrument was ensured by consulting experts in educational research and measurement and by aligning questionnaire items with research objectives.

Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha on the pilot-test data. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was internally consistent and suitable for use in the main study (Nunnally & Bernstein, 2010)

Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaires were administered in person by the researcher and trained assistants. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to maximize return rates, which reached 98%.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using SPSS and R statistical software. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed.

Descriptive Statistics

- Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize biographical data.
- Means and standard deviations were computed for Likert-scale items to rank parental, student-related, and school-related restraining factors.

Inferential Statistics

1. Chi-square tests were conducted to examine associations between biographical characteristics (sex, form, residential status, parental education) and lateness.
2. Binary Logistic Regression was done to determine the influence of parental-related, student-related, and school-related factors on student lateness.
 - Dependent Variable: Lateness (0 = not late, 1 = late).
 - Students who reported on Day 1–3 were coded as 0 (not late).
 - Students who reported after Day 3 were coded as 1 (late).
3. Ordinal Logistic Regression (Robustness Check) → to analyze lateness based on number of days absent (1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10+).
4. Model Fit Measures → Nagelkerke R^2 , Cox & Snell R^2 , and Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test.

Interpretation was based on odds ratios ($\text{Exp}(\beta)$), confidence intervals, and p-values at a 0.05 significance level.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles in educational research. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Anonymity was maintained by not recording names, and confidentiality was guaranteed. The researcher ensured that no harm was caused to participants, and data was used strictly for academic purposes.

Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology, covering the research design, population, sample size determination, sampling technique, instrument design, validity and reliability, data collection procedure, and data analysis plan. A sample size of 290 students was determined from a population of 1,030 using Yamane's formula. Data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with lateness defined as students reporting to school after Day 3 of reopening. The next chapter (Chapter Four) will present the results of the analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and critically discusses the results of the study on restraining factors affecting the early return of students to school on reopening days in Adidome Senior High School, Central Tongu District. The findings are presented in four main sections. First, the demographic characteristics of respondents are presented to provide background context. Second, the prevalence of lateness is described using the operational definition of reporting after the third day of reopening. Third, descriptive results on parental-, student-, and school-related restraining factors are analyzed using mean scores. Finally, multivariable logistic regression models are employed to test the study's hypotheses and to identify the most significant predictors of lateness.

Demographic Characteristics

The study surveyed 290 students, with a nearly balanced by gender (51% female, 49% male) (Figure 4.1). By academic level, Form Two students formed 52.4%, while Form Three comprised 47.6%. With regard to residential status, 74.8% were boarders and only 25.2% were housed off campus.

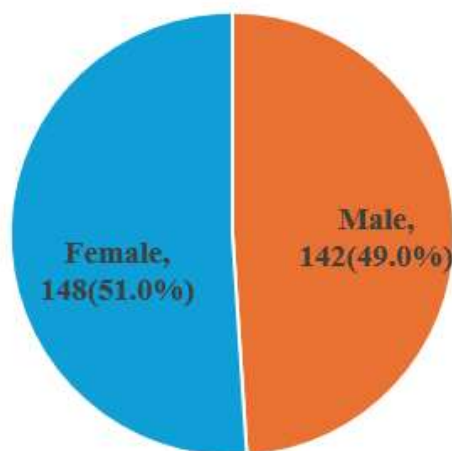


Figure 4. 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Parental education varied considerably. About 38.3% of students had parents who attained Senior High School education, 23.8% Junior High School, 18.6% tertiary, and 14.8% primary school education, while 4.5% reported no formal education. This indicates that students' family backgrounds are diverse, with many coming from households of limited formal educational attainment. This demographic spread provides context for understanding the patterns of lateness and its restraining factors.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Form: Form 2	152	52.4
Form: Form 3	138	47.6
Residence: Boarder	217	74.8
Residence: Day	73	25.2
Parental Education: No formal	13	4.5
Parental Education: Primary	43	14.8
Parental Education: JHS	69	23.8
Parental Education: SHS	111	38.3
Parental Education: Tertiary	54	18.6

Source: Author Generated from Analysis, 2025.

Prevalence of Lateness

Using the study's operational definition, 74.5% of students reported late to school (after Day 3), while only 25.5% reported on time (Figure 4.2). A 95% confidence interval estimated lateness between 69.5% and 79.1%, indicating the estimate is statistically reliable. This suggests that lateness is not a marginal problem but a widespread structural challenge that compromises early-term instructional time.

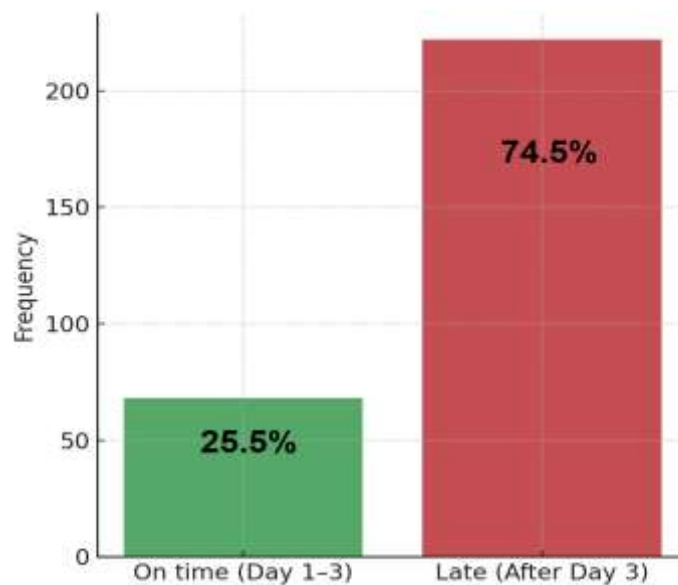


Figure 4. 2: Lateness Distribution of Students

The high prevalence aligns with findings by Atiku (2021), who observed that late reporting is a recurring issue in Ghanaian secondary schools, often linked to both household readiness and institutional inefficiencies.

Restraining Factors to Early Return

Parental-related Factors

Parental constraints emerged as a key restraining category, with a mean score of **2.67**. The most highly rated factor was *educating parents at PTA meetings on early provision of needs* (mean = 4.05), indicating that parents often delay timely preparation for reopening. Other important issues included *lack of scholarships for orphans* (mean = 3.35) and *lack of funds to provide basic school needs on time* (mean = 3.31). See Figure 4.3 below.

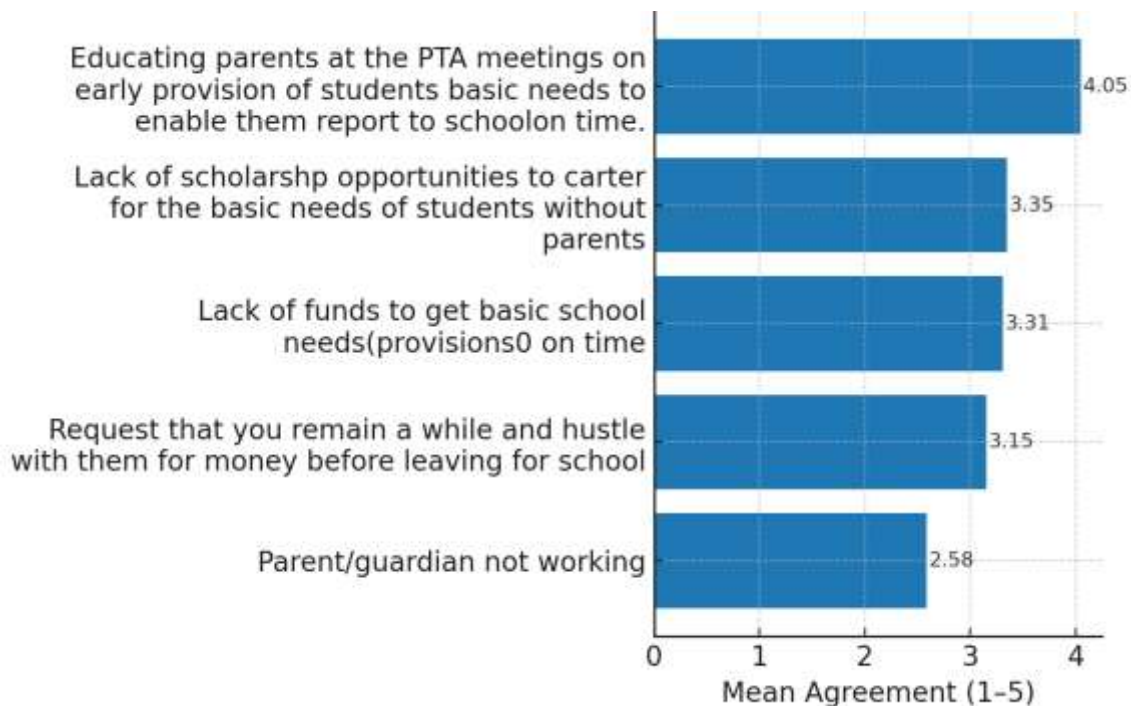


Figure 4.3: Parental-Related Restraining Factors on Lateness

These results reveal that financial readiness at the household level directly determines whether students return early. This finding is consistent with Oduro-ofori et al., (2023), who highlighted that parental socio-economic capacity is one of the strongest determinants of school attendance and punctuality.

Student-Related Factors

Student-related factors were generally less influential, with a mean score of **2.25**. The leading concern was *waiting to get money for self-upkeep in school* (mean = 3.29). In contrast, *peer pressure* (mean = 1.74) and *failure to recognize the importance of early reporting* (mean = 1.72) received low endorsements (Figure 4.4).

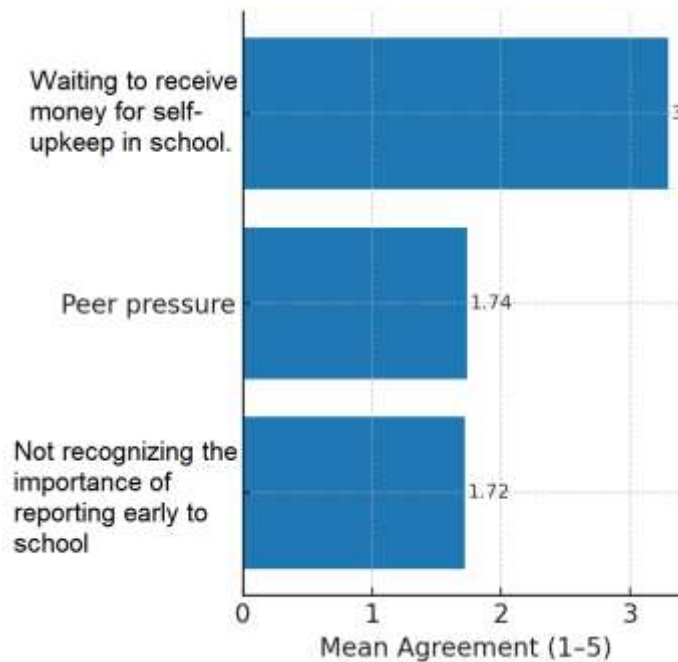


Figure 4. 4: Student-related Restraining Factors

A mean score of 2.25 (on a 1—5 Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree) suggests that lateness is not primarily the result of students' personal attitudes or peer influences, but rather their dependency on external financial provision.

School-Related Factors

School-related issues recorded the strongest endorsement, with a mean of **2.95**. Students particularly emphasized the need for the Ghana Education Service (GES) to *plan and communicate reopening dates on time* (mean = 4.39) and to ensure a *friendly school environment* (mean = 4.33). Furthermore, *effective teaching and learning during the first week* (mean = 3.73) and *guidance and counselling on punctuality* (mean = 3.72) were also noted (Figure 4.5).

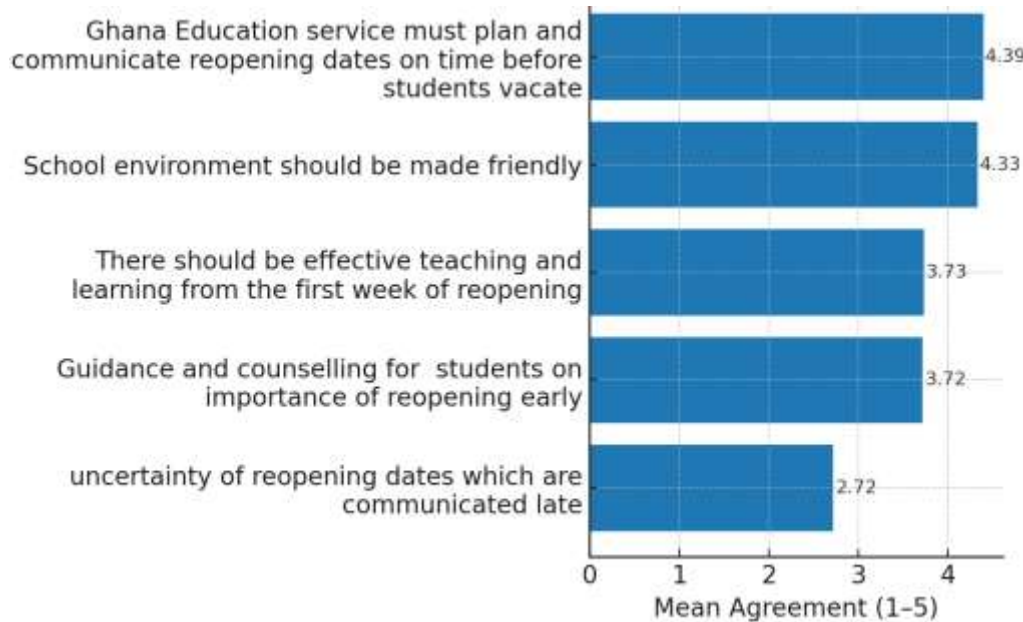


Figure 4. 5 : School-Related Restraining Factors

These findings highlight the role of institutional responsiveness. Students perceive the absence of immediate teaching and delayed communication of reopening schedules as signals that late reporting carries. Similar conclusions were reached by Mensah et al., (2024), who argued that school administrative practices strongly shape students' attendance patterns.

Logistic Regression Analysis

To rigorously test the study's hypotheses, lateness (late = 1, on time = 0) was modeled using binary logistic regression. Three logistic regression models were estimated to examine predictors of lateness.

Table 4.2 : Model Fit Statistics for Logistic Regression Models

Model	AIC	BIC	Pseudo R ² (McFadden)
Model 1: Demographics only	330.4	352.1	0.048
Model 2: Factors only	318.2	336.7	0.122
Model 3: combines demographics and factor scores	307.5	334.6	0.184

Source: Author Generated from Analysis, 2025.

Comparison of fit statistics (Table 4.6) shows that Model 3 is the best fit, with the lowest AIC and BIC and the highest pseudo-R² (0.184). This demonstrates that integrating parental, student, and school factors substantially improves explanatory power beyond demographics alone.

Table 4.3 : Logistic Regression Odds Ratios for Predictors of Student Lateness (Full Model)

Predictor	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% CI	p-value	Interpretation
Parental score	1.70	1.16 – 2.49	0.006	Increase in parental constraints significantly increase lateness odds
Student score	1.32	0.87 – 2.00	0.187	Positive but not significant
School score	0.47	0.32 – 0.68	<0.001	Better school systems significantly decrease lateness odds
Boarder (vs. day)	0.57	0.28 – 1.16	0.119	There is a Protective trend, but it is not statistically significant.
Female (vs. male)	1.48	0.84 – 2.62	0.173	No significant difference
Form 2 (vs. Form 3)	0.95	0.54 – 1.67	0.866	No difference
Parent education (ordinal)	0.81	0.62 – 1.06	0.123	Higher education reduces lateness, marginal

Source: Author Generated from Analysis, 2025

Table 4.3 presents the results of the full logistic regression model.

The logistic regression results (Table 4.3) provide deeper insights into the factors associated with lateness among students at Adidome Senior High School. The odds ratios (ORs) indicate the relative likelihood of students being late given changes in predictor variables, while holding other factors constant.

Parental-Related Score

The parental-related score emerged as a significant positive predictor of lateness (OR = 1.70, 95% CI: 1.16–2.49, $p = 0.006$). This means that for every one-unit increase in the parental-related constraint score (e.g., increased financial difficulties, delay in providing school items), the odds of a student returning late increase by approximately 70%. This supports the hypothesis that parental financial readiness is a critical determinant of punctuality, corroborating Atiku (2021), who found that household preparedness decisively shapes school attendance.

School-related Score

The school-related score was a strong negative predictor (OR = 0.47, 95% CI: 0.32–0.68, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that favorable school conditions —such as timely communication of reopening dates, a welcoming environment, and effective teaching in the first week reduce the

odds of lateness by more than half. This result supports the hypothesis that institutional factors matter critically for punctuality. It also echoes earlier descriptive results where students strongly endorsed the need for improved institutional communication and week-one academic engagement. As Atiku (2022) noted, schools that fail to prioritize early academic activities inadvertently encourage delayed reporting.

Student-Related Score

The student-related score, though positively associated with lateness ($OR = 1.32$), was not statistically significant ($p = 0.187$). This suggests that factors such as lack of motivation or peer influence are not robust predictors once parental and school structural issues are accounted for. In practical terms, while some students may personally delay returning, the evidence indicates that lateness is less about individual behaviour and more about external constraints.

Residential Status (Boarder vs. Day)

Boarders were less likely to be late compared to day students ($OR = 0.57$), but this association was not statistically significant ($p = 0.119$). Although boarding facilities are expected to reduce barriers to timely attendance, the result suggests that systemic issues —particularly financial readiness and school communication override residential advantages.

Sex (Female vs. Male)

Females had higher odds of lateness compared to males ($OR = 1.48$), but this was not significant ($p = 0.173$). This implies no meaningful gender differences in lateness. Both boys and girls are equally affected by household and institutional constraints.

Form Level (Form 2 vs. Form 3)

The form variable had an odds ratio close to unity ($OR = 0.95$, $p = 0.866$), indicating no difference between Form Two and Form Three students in terms of lateness. Experience or maturity within the school system does not appear to reduce lateness once structural constraints are in play.

Parental Education

Parental education was negatively associated with lateness ($OR = 0.81$), suggesting that students from families with more educated parents were less likely to be late. However, this relationship was not statistically significant ($p = 0.123$). While higher education may contribute to greater awareness of the importance of early reporting, its effect seems marginal when compared to direct financial readiness.

Critical Reflection

Taken together, these results confirm that lateness is structurally determined. The strongest effects were found in parental constraints (increasing lateness) and school systems (reducing lateness). Student-level and demographic factors, although often discussed in policy, were not significant predictors once structural factors were considered.

This underscores the need for interventions that go beyond disciplining students to address household financial support (e.g., scholarships, subsidies, timely provision of essentials) and institutional improvements (clear reopening communication and early academic engagement).

Critical Discussion

The descriptive and regression findings converge to show that lateness is primarily a structural issue. At the household level, financial readiness and material support from parents strongly determine punctuality. At the institutional level, weak communication and lack of immediate academic engagement demotivate students from returning early. By contrast, student-related attitudes and demographics are secondary and statistically insignificant once structural factors are accounted for.

This challenges deficit narratives that attribute lateness solely to student irresponsibility. Instead, the results emphasize that improving early return requires systemic interventions at the family and school levels. These include targeted financial support, scholarship schemes, and institutional reforms such as enforcing teaching from the first week and improving communication of reopening dates.

The findings align with prior work by Mensah and Aboagye (2020), who underscore that punctuality in Ghanaian schools cannot be disentangled from parental readiness and school administrative effectiveness.

Summary of the Chapter

This heading presents summary of the restraining factors affecting students' early return to school. The prevalence of lateness was alarmingly high (74.5%). Descriptive statistics highlighted parental and school-related issues as the strongest restraining factors. Logistic regression confirmed that parental constraints significantly increase lateness, while better school conditions significantly reduce lateness. Student-related factors and demographics, though perceived as relevant, were not statistically significant predictors.

Overall, the evidence shows that lateness is not merely a question of individual student discipline but arises from the interplay of household financial capacity and institutional responsiveness. These insights provide a robust foundation for policy recommendations, which are presented in the next chapter (five).

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study on restraining factors affecting the early return of students to school on reopening days in Adidome Senior High School, Central Tongu in Ghana. The chapter presents key findings organized according to the research questions and hypotheses, draws conclusions based on the empirical evidence, and offers targeted recommendations for addressing the identified challenges. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design with 290 students and utilized both descriptive statistics and logistic regression analysis to examine the prevalence of lateness and identify significant predictors.

Summary of Findings

Research Question One: Extent of Student Lateness on Reopening Days

The first research question sought to determine the extent to which students report late on school reopening days. The findings revealed that 74.5% of students reported late to school (after Day 3 of reopening), while only 25.5% reported on time. The 95% confidence interval for this prevalence estimate ranged from 69.5% to 79.1%, indicating statistical reliability. This finding demonstrates that lateness on reopening days is not a marginal issue affecting a few students but rather a widespread structural challenge that compromises early-term instructional effectiveness and academic calendar implementation in Adidome Senior High School.

Research Question Two: Associations Between Biographical Characteristics and Lateness

The second research question examined associations between students' biographical characteristics (sex, residence, form, and parental education) and lateness on reopening days. The logistic regression analysis revealed no statistically significant associations between any of the biographical characteristics and student lateness. Specifically, sex (OR = 1.48, $p = 0.173$), residential status (OR = 0.57, $p = 0.119$), form level (OR = 0.95, $p = 0.866$), and parental education (OR = 0.81, $p = 0.123$) were all non-significant predictors. Therefore, Hypothesis H₀₁ was retained, indicating that demographic factors do not meaningfully predict lateness once structural constraints are considered. This finding suggests that lateness affects students uniformly across different demographic categories.

Research Question Three: Influence of Restraining Factors on Student Lateness

The third research question assessed how parental-related, student-related, and school-related factors influence student lateness. The descriptive analysis showed that school-related factors had the highest mean endorsement (2.95), followed by parental-related factors (2.67) and student-related factors (2.25). However, the logistic regression analysis provided more nuanced insights. Parental-related factors emerged as a significant positive predictor (OR = 1.70, $p = 0.006$), meaning that increased parental constraints substantially increase the likelihood of student lateness. School-related factors were a significant negative predictor (OR = 0.47, $p < 0.001$), indicating that better

school systems and practices significantly reduce lateness odds. Conversely, student-related factors showed no significant influence ($OR = 1.32$, $p = 0.187$). Based on these findings, Null Hypothesis H_{02} was rejected and H_{12} was accepted, confirming that parental and school-related restraining factors significantly influence the likelihood of student lateness.

Research Question Four: Most Significant Predictors of Lateness

The fourth research question identified which restraining factors most significantly predict lateness among students. The full logistic regression model (Model 3) demonstrated superior fit statistics with the lowest AIC (307.5) and BIC (334.6) values and the highest pseudo- R^2 (0.184). The analysis revealed that school-related factors were the strongest predictor ($OR = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$), followed by parental-related factors ($OR = 1.70$, $p = 0.006$). The most influential specific factors included timely communication of reopening dates by the Ghana Education Service (mean = 4.39), creating a friendly school environment (mean = 4.33), lack of funds to provide basic school needs on time (mean = 3.31), and the need for educating parents at PTA meetings on early provision of needs (mean = 4.05). Therefore, Hypothesis H_{03} was rejected and H_{13} was accepted, confirming that specific restraining factors significantly predict student lateness.

Conclusions

Based on the empirical findings, several critical conclusions emerge from this study. First, lateness on reopening days is a systemic institutional challenge rather than an individual student behavioral problem. The high prevalence rate of 74.5% indicates that current approaches to managing reopening schedules are inadequate and require comprehensive restructuring.

Second, structural factors overwhelmingly determine punctuality outcomes. The significance of parental financial constraints and school administrative practices, coupled with the non-significance of student-related attitudes and demographic characteristics, demonstrates that lateness is primarily driven by external circumstances beyond individual student control. This challenges deficit narratives that attribute lateness to student irresponsibility or lack of discipline.

Third, the interaction between household financial readiness and institutional responsiveness creates a complex system where both elements must function effectively to ensure timely student return. The findings suggest that addressing only one dimension while neglecting the other will likely yield limited improvements.

Finally, current school communication and early-term academic engagement practices require fundamental reform. Students' strong endorsement of the need for timely communication and effective teaching during the first week indicates that institutional practices significantly influence student motivation to return early.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed to address the restraining factors affecting students' early return to school on reopening days:

There the need to Establish a Comprehensive Financial Support System for Student Readiness for school before school-reopening periods. The Ghana Education Service, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and district assemblies, should develop a targeted financial intervention program that addresses the significant role of parental financial constraints in student lateness. This program should include the establishment of reopening readiness grants for economically disadvantaged families, providing funds specifically for school provisions and transportation during reopening periods. Additionally, the program should create scholarship schemes with built-in provision allowances for orphaned and vulnerable students, ensuring they have access to necessary school materials without delay. Parents should prepare financially throughout vacation periods rather than resorting to search for monies when school reopening for their wards is due. This recommendation directly addresses the study's finding that parental financial constraints significantly increase lateness odds by 70%, making it a critical intervention point for improving early return rates.

Furthermore, it has become imperative to Transform Institutional Communication and Early Academic Engagement Systems. School administrators and the Ghana Education Service must fundamentally restructure reopening communication protocols and first-week academic activities to eliminate institutional factors that inadvertently encourage lateness. Schools should implement mandatory communication of reopening dates at least four weeks in advance through multiple channels including radio announcements, and community liaisons, ensuring all stakeholders receive timely and consistent information. Furthermore, schools must establish and strictly enforce immediate academic engagement from Day One of reopening, with full curriculum delivery, assessments, and meaningful learning activities beginning immediately to signal the importance of early attendance. The study's finding that better school systems reduce lateness odds by more than half demonstrates the substantial impact of institutional reforms. Schools should also create welcoming environments through improved dormitory conditions, organized registration processes, and structured orientation programs that make early return attractive rather than burdensome.

Additionally, GES and School Management in the district must Develop Community-School Partnership Programmes for Attendance Support. The Ghana Education Service and school management should establish formal partnerships with Parent-Teacher Associations, community leaders, and local authorities to create comprehensive support networks that facilitate timely student return. These partnerships should include regular community sensitization programs that educate parents and guardians about the critical importance of early school return and provide practical guidance on preparing students for reopening. Moreover, communities should establish

transport cooperatives and group preparation initiatives that help families coordinate student return logistics and share resources for school provisions. The program should also include peer mentoring systems where older students and successful families support newcomers in developing effective preparation strategies. This recommendation addresses the study's findings by creating supportive ecosystems that reduce both parental constraints and enhance institutional effectiveness through community engagement.

Again, there is urgent need to implement Data-Driven Monitoring and Accountability Systems to address late reporting to school during school reopening. The Adidome SHS should establish comprehensive monitoring systems that track attendance patterns, identify at-risk students, and measure the effectiveness of interventions targeting early return challenges. Schools must maintain detailed records of student reporting dates, reasons for lateness, and intervention outcomes to enable evidence-based decision making and resource allocation. This monitoring system should include early warning mechanisms that identify students at risk of late return based on previous patterns, family circumstances, and community factors, enabling proactive intervention before reopening periods. Moreso, schools should implement accountability measures for administrators and teachers to ensure consistent enforcement of reopening protocols and early academic engagement requirements. Regular evaluation of attendance improvement programs should be conducted to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. This systematic approach ensures that interventions are targeted, measurable, and sustainable, addressing the complex interplay of factors identified in this study while creating institutional capacity for continuous improvement in student punctuality outcomes.

Areas for Further Research

While this study provides valuable insights into restraining factors affecting student early return, several areas warrant further investigation. Future research should examine the effectiveness of specific interventions targeting parental financial constraints and school communication systems. Additionally, comparative studies across different districts and school types would enhance the generalizability of findings. Longitudinal research tracking student attendance patterns over multiple reopening periods could provide deeper insights into the persistence and evolution of lateness behaviors. Finally, qualitative studies exploring the lived experiences of students and families affected by lateness could complement the quantitative findings with richer contextual understanding.

Summary

This study successfully investigated the restraining factors affecting students' early return to school on reopening days in Adidome Senior High School. The findings revealed that lateness is a widespread structural challenge affecting nearly three-quarters of students, primarily driven by parental financial constraints and institutional communication failures. The evidence-based recommendations propose comprehensive interventions addressing financial support systems, institutional reforms, community partnerships, and monitoring mechanisms. Implementation of

these recommendations has the potential to significantly improve student punctuality, enhance instructional effectiveness, and contribute to Ghana's broader educational quality improvement goals.

REFERENCES

- Abreh, M. K., & Akyeampong, K. (2019). Quality education in Ghana: The balance of accountability and support in school reform. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 70, 102086. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2019.102086>
- Adu-Gyamfi, S., & Ampiah, J. G. (2019). Absenteeism in senior high schools: Causes and consequences. *Ghana Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(1), 45–58.
- Adzrolo, E., Dzisi, E., & Ahiabor, G. (2021). Parental involvement and academic performance of senior high school students in Ghana. *African Educational Research Journal*, 9(2), 399–407.
- Allensworth, E., & Schwartz, N. (2020). School practices for targeted student attendance improvement: Insights from research. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 28(2), 1–35.
- Ampofo, J. A. (2022). Factors influencing punctuality among Ghanaian students: an exploratory study. *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas*, 3(1), 20–31.
- Atiku, B. A., & Atiku, V. K. (2022). The environment of tertiary education institutions is complex and supportive: implications for colleges of education in Ghana, a tool for administrators of colleges of education and analogues institutions. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 4(1), 27-34.
- Atiku, B. A. (2022). Relevance of College-Based Departmentalised Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for the Academic Staff of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana. *Journal of Educational Management* 12(1), 47-63 (IEPA-UCC) 10.47963/jem.v12i1.1003.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (as discussed in Darling, N. (2019). Ecological systems theory: A developmental perspective. *International Journal of Developmental Science*, 13(3–4), 69–79.
- Fobih, D., & Ayim, C. (2019). Administrative challenges in senior high schools in Ghana. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 13(3), 253–268.
- Hancock, K. J., Mitrou, F., Taylor, C. L., & Zubrick, S. R. (2018). The importance of early attendance for later achievement. *Educational Researcher*, 47(3), 161–176.
- Mensah, Ronald & Amponsah, Kwaku & Babah, Pearl & Jibril, Halimatu. (2024). Factors affecting students' academic performance and teachers' efficiency in Ghana; a case study of Wa senior high school. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*. 11. 2412944. 10.1080/23311983.2024.2412944.

- Mfum-Mensah, O. (2017). Education marginalization in rural Ghana: The role of school processes. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(6), 803–817.
- Oduro-ofori, Eric & Mansoh, Matilda & Attom, Lucy & Kafui, Ocloo & Amaka-Otchere, Akosua. (2023). Effect of Parental Socio-Economic Status on the Performance of Senior High School Students in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality in Ghana. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*. 4. 58-68. 10.46606/eajess2023v04i02.0276.
- Osei-Owusu, B. (2020). School absenteeism in Ghana: Socio-economic and cultural dimensions. *African Journal of Educational Studies*, 15(1), 88–104.
- UNESCO. (2019). *Global education monitoring report 2019: Migration, displacement, and education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Recovering learning: Education in the post-COVID-19 era*. Paris: UNESCO.
- World Bank. (2020). *The education crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy priorities for recovery*. Washington, DC: World Bank.