



# REDUCING STUDENT TARDINESS THROUGH STRATEGIC REWARD SYSTEM: AN ACTION RESEARCH

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Completed 2019



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the tardiness of ten respondents in Grade 10, Section Benigno B. Aquino, at Mati National Comprehensive High School. Its aim was to improve students' punctuality by providing rewards and incentives. Questionnaires were distributed to gather reliable information. The results were categorized into factors affecting their punctuality in attending classes. Data for this action research were collected through observations using a researcher-made attendance sheet. Face-to-face interviews with the students were conducted for analysis. The intervention was provided to identified students over three months. After six months, the researcher discovered that the number of tardiness incidents had decreased. This indicates that the intervention was effective. The results were presented in tables and graphs. It was learned that teachers must be serious and consistent in checking attendance in class, and students should also be taught time management. Moreover, imposing positive discipline is highly encouraged to help students feel a sense of belonging, inspire them to sleep and wake up early, and conduct counseling once a week for frequently tardy students.

Keywords: *tardiness, reward system, punctuality*



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Our action research paper is successfully done with the help of the following people. Our team would like to thank the Almighty Father for giving us His blessings, knowledge and wisdom, values and skills for making this paper. We also acknowledge and thank our Schools Division Superintendent, Reynaldo M. Guillena, CESO V; Dr. Leorisyl D. Siarot, Senior Education Program Specialist for Social Mobilization and Networking; Dr. Maria Genevieve T. Francisquete, OIC - ASDS of the Schools Division of the City of Mati; Mrs. Villa C. Salanio, Education Program Supervisor; Dr. Alicia R. Astronomo, Principal IV of Mati National Comprehensive High School; Joan Christella A. Cereno, Senior Education Program Specialist for Planning and Research in SDO-Mati City, with his very supportive husband Prof. Donnell C. Cereno; and Dr. Asterio G. Olandria of Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology.

We would like to thank Mr. Teody Ramon and Mr. Jireh Rosales for their expertise especially in the poster making and most of all to our family for being supportive in this endeavor.



## **I. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE**

Growth and development in a country require, among other factors, investment in human capital through quality basic education. In the Philippines, fulfilling Education for All (EFA) indicators is a top priority. Consequently, reforms were introduced, and additional funding was allocated. However, there are still performance gaps. For secondary schools in the years 2005 to 2013, the participation rate was approximately 65 percent, the completion rate was 73 percent, and the average survival rate was only 78 percent (EFA 2015 National Review Report for the Philippines). These rates are also affected by absenteeism and tardiness.

According to Romero (2018), chronic tardiness increases the likelihood of chronic absenteeism, ultimately leading to dropout rates or lower participation and survival rates. Her study also revealed that students from low-income families are more frequently tardy than those from middle- or upper-income households.

Furthermore, students who are regularly late to class may exhibit defiance. Some justify their tardiness by citing traffic jams, parental care responsibilities, or job commitments as hindrances to punctuality. Arriving late to class can disrupt the flow of lectures, distract other students, and disturb the teaching and learning process. Frequent tardiness can also negatively influence other students (Bataineh, 2014).

Tardiness is one of the most common problems not only in the Philippines but also in other parts of the world. Being late for school is a prevalent behavior in Canadian high schools, where, for example, two-thirds of Grade 12 students (64%) are regularly late (Prairie Research Associates, 2005). In Nigeria, tardiness has presented a significant challenge to basic education administrators, leading



to inefficiencies in school operations (Dafiaghor, 2011). This problem can substantially reduce instructional time at the secondary level, impacting the ability of the entire student population to meet rigorous academic standards (Gettinger & Ball, 2008; Sprick, 2003).

In Kidapawan City National High School's Grade 10 class, approximately 20 percent of its students arrived late to class. This can be attributed, among other factors, to the distance between home and school, the mode of transportation, and their dislike for certain subjects (Paren, 2015). Similarly, Mati National Comprehensive High School (MNCHS) witnessed a similar occurrence. Its students arrived late for the first-period morning classes as well as in the afternoon. The gathering of these students in the school's covered court for a special and separate flag ceremony caught the attention of the researchers.

As it's assumed to become chronic, school- or system-level intervention is a necessity. In an investigation of a large comprehensive high school in California's Central Valley, its intervention program was found to have a positive effect on improving student tardy rates and academic achievement (Rivard, 2013).

It is for this reason and with the hope that a similar behavioral change scheme under the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, in the context of Mati City, can be timely and appropriate. Thus, this attempt to test a reward system for tardiness among the ten Grade 10 Section Benigno Aquino students.

## **II. INNOVATION, INTERVENTION AND STRATEGY**

This action research comprises two distinct interventions, both of which have proven to be highly effective based on existing literature.



The first intervention is the Reward System, which involves giving students rewards each time they demonstrate punctuality. Students were also provided with the Reward System Mechanics and Criteria, which were thoroughly explained to ensure their clear understanding. This intervention was implemented from August 2018 to October 2018. The person responsible for checking had to record the exact school time and minutes of tardiness in designated boxes. Each entry was then verified, agreed upon, and signed by the checker. Additionally, in the first week of every month, each student had a discussion with their subject teacher to review their punctuality progress.

The second intervention involves informing parents about their child's tardiness. Every week, a letter detailing the progress of their son or daughter was sent to the parents. This communication helped parents become aware and provided guidance. For students whose performance did not improve, their parents were required to visit the school for a conference. These interventions were clearly communicated to all participants.

To delve deeper into the details, the rewards are based on descriptors or indicators designed by the researcher, and these descriptors increase every month. To determine which descriptor a student meets, a simple computation is performed. Since every month has four weeks, and the ESP teacher meets the students twice every week, there are a total of eight meetings every month. This implies that the maximum possible punctuality score for students every month is 8. For instance, if a student is punctual 5 times in a month, their percentage is calculated by dividing 5 by 8 and multiplying the quotient by 100  $[(5/8)*100]$ . The result is 62.5%, which means they will receive one (1) congratulatory card and sweets, one (1) ballpoint pen, and one (1) pad of paper as rewards. Below are tables presenting the different rewards and their corresponding descriptors.



Table 1. Punctuality Reward Criteria for the First Month

| <b>Punctuality Percentage</b> | <b>Rewards</b>  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 % to 25%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> </ul>  |
| 26% to 50%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 Ballpen</li> </ul>   |
| 51% to 75%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 Ballpen</li> <li>• 1 Intermediate pad</li> </ul>               |
| 76% to 100%                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 Ballpen</li> <li>• 1 Yellow Pad</li> <li>• 1 Binder</li> </ul> |

Table 2. Punctuality Reward Criteria for the Second Month

| <b>Punctuality Percentage</b> | <b>Rewards</b>  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 41% to 60%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 Notebook</li> </ul>  |
| 61% to 80%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 binder</li> <li>• 1 Ballpen</li> </ul>                               |
| 81% to 100%                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 binder</li> <li>• 1 ballpen</li> <li>• 1 pair of scissors</li> </ul> |

Table 3. Punctuality Reward Criteria for the Third Month

| <b>Punctuality Percentage</b> | <b>Reward (Third Month)</b>  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 51% to 65%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 binder</li> </ul>                                     |
| 66% to 85%                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 binder</li> <li>• 1 pad intermediate paper</li> </ul> |
| 86% to 100%                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Congratulatory card and sweets</li> <li>• 1 Back Pack</li> <li>• Wrist Watch</li> </ul>           |

Every student was provided with copy of these criteria for their guidance.



### **III. ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the above-mentioned purpose of the study, the present study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of student's tardiness in school?
2. What strategic reward system is applicable to the target students?
3. What is/are the effects of strategic reward system on the tardiness of the target students.

### **IV. ACTION RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Participants and/or Other Sources of Data and Information**

The participants of this research were the ten (10) students of Grade 10-Benigno Aquino who committed habitual tardiness based on the data gathered. Consent was sought from their parents, the teachers, and the School Head.

#### **Data Gathering Methods**

The data for this action research was collected through observations using a researcher-made attendance sheet. In the attendance sheet, the researcher indicated or tallied each instance when a student demonstrated punctuality in arriving for class. Punctuality was defined as arriving before or on time, regardless of the specific time.

Furthermore, the necessary information for analysis was gathered through face-to-face interviews with the students. When interviews became impractical or impossible, questionnaires were employed as an alternative method. Descriptive statistics were used to address the first research question. Below, the parameters used to determine the level of students' tardiness are outlined.

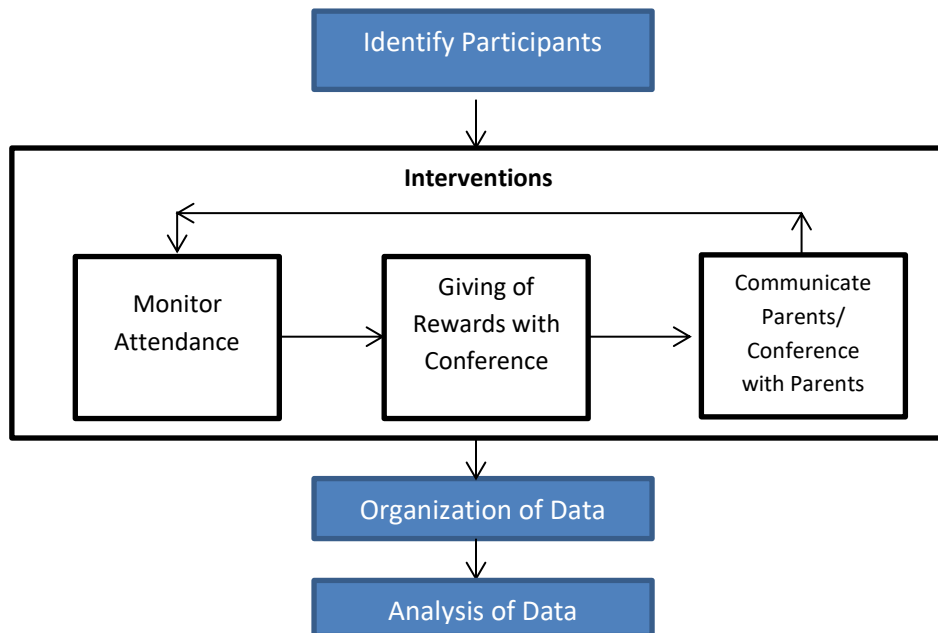


Table 4. Parameter Limits and Description of Students' Tardiness

| <b>Parameter Limits</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|-------------------------|---|
| 7-8                     | This means that the level of student's tardiness in the subject is Very High. |
| 4-6                     | This means that the level of learner's tardiness in the subject is High.      |
| 2-3                     | This means that the level of learner's tardiness in the subject is Moderate.  |
| 1                       | This means that the level of learner's tardiness in the subject is Low.       |

The second research question was answered through the Copy of Punctuality Reward Criteria. The third research question was answered through the Table and Graph. Specifically, this will explain whether or not the intervention has positive effect to the tardiness of the students.

The diagram below illustrates the whole process.





## V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTION

Table 5 presents the punctuality of the students before and after the intervention.

Table 5. Number of Tardiness of Students per Month

| STUDENTS | Percentage of Tardiness |       |                    |       |                        |       |                    |       |                    |       |
|----------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
|          | Before the Intervention |       |                    |       | After the intervention |       |                    |       |                    |       |
|          | June 2018               |       | July 2018          |       | August 2018            |       | September 2018     |       | October 2018       |       |
| CODE NO. | No. of times Tardy      | %     | No. of times Tardy | %     | No. of times Tardy     | %     | No. of times Tardy | %     | No. of times Tardy | %     |
| 1        | 5                       | 62.50 | 5                  | 62.50 | 2                      | 25.00 | 1                  | 12.50 | 1                  | 12.50 |
| 2        | 5                       | 62.50 | 6                  | 75.00 | 3                      | 37.50 | 0                  | 0.00  | 2                  | 25.00 |
| 3        | 2                       | 25.00 | 3                  | 37.50 | 0                      | 0.00  | 0                  | 0.00  | 0                  | 0.00  |
| 4        | 4                       | 50.00 | 4                  | 50.00 | 3                      | 37.50 | 0                  | 0.00  | 0                  | 0.00  |
| 5        | 4                       | 50.00 | 3                  | 37.50 | 3                      | 37.50 | 2                  | 25.00 | 0                  | 0.00  |
| 6        | 5                       | 62.50 | 6                  | 75.00 | 3                      | 37.50 | 1                  | 12.50 | 1                  | 12.50 |
| 7        | 5                       | 62.50 | 6                  | 75.00 | 1                      | 12.50 | 1                  | 12.50 | 0                  | 0.00  |
| 8        | 2                       | 25.00 | 6                  | 75.00 | 1                      | 12.50 | 0                  | 0.00  | 1                  | 12.50 |
| 9        | 2                       | 25.00 | 6                  | 75.00 | 3                      | 37.50 | 2                  | 25.00 | 0                  | 0.00  |
| 10       | 2                       | 25.00 | 2                  | 25.00 | 2                      | 25.00 | 0                  | 0.00  | 0                  | 0.00  |
| Total    | 36                      | -     | 47                 | -     | 21                     | -     | 7                  | -     | 5                  | -     |
| Mean     | 3.6                     | -     | 4.7                | -     | 2.1                    | -     | 0.7                | -     | 0.5                | -     |



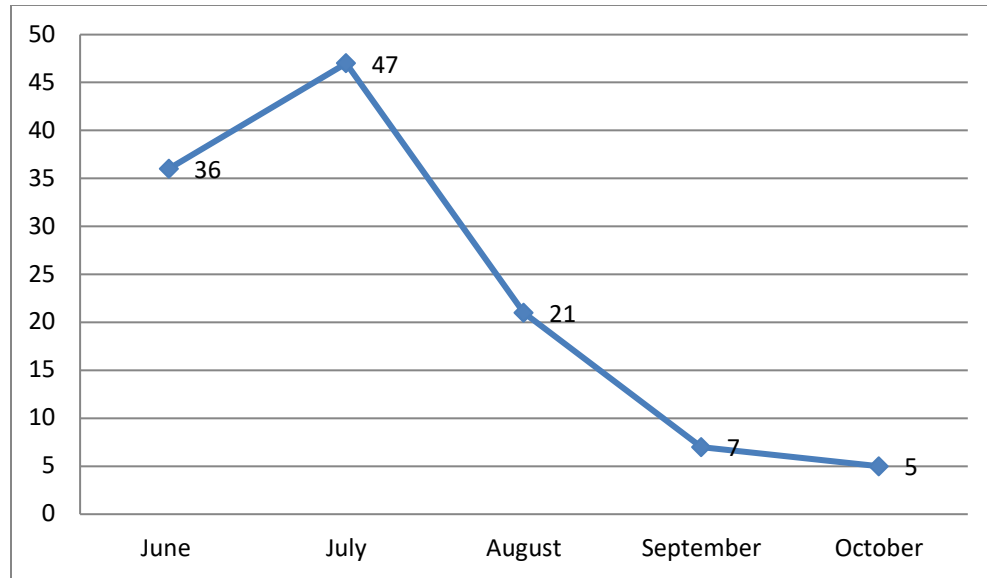


Figure 1. Total Number of Tardiness of Students Every Month

Based on Tables 5 and Figure 1 above, the number of students who were tardy has decreased by 31 out of a total of 36 (86.11%). The average tardiness before the intervention was 3.6, while after the intervention, it is 0.5. This suggests that the intervention has been effective. To gain a deeper understanding, the punctuality of the students is further detailed in Table 6.

Table 6. Number of Punctuality of Students per Month

| STU<br>DEN<br>TS | Percentage of Punctuality                  |       |  |       |  |       |  |        |  |       |
|------------------|--|-------|--|-------|--|-------|--|--------|--|-------|
|                  | Before the Intervention                    |       |  |       | After the intervention                     |       |  |        |  |       |
|                  | June 2018                                  |       | July 2018                                  |       | August 2018                                |       | September 2018                             |        | October 2018                               |       |
| COD<br>E<br>NO.  | No.<br>of<br>time<br>s<br>Pun<br>ctu<br>al | %     | No.<br>of<br>tim<br>es<br>Pun<br>ctu<br>al | %     | No.<br>of<br>tim<br>es<br>Pun<br>ctu<br>al | %     | No.<br>of<br>tim<br>es<br>Pun<br>ctu<br>al | %      | No.<br>of<br>tim<br>es<br>Pun<br>ctu<br>al | %     |
| 1                | 3  | 37.50 | 3  | 37.50 | 6  | 75.00 | 7  | 87.50  | 7  | 87.50 |
| 2                | 3  | 37.50 | 2  | 25.00 | 5  | 62.50 | 8  | 100.00 | 6  | 75.00 |



|           |    |           |    |       |    |            |    |            |    |            |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|-------|----|------------|----|------------|----|------------|
| <b>3</b>  | 6  | 75.0<br>0 | 5  | 62.50 | 8  | 100.0<br>0 | 8  | 100.0<br>0 | 8  | 100.<br>00 |
| <b>4</b>  | 4  | 50.0<br>0 | 4  | 50.00 | 5  | 62.50      | 8  | 100.0<br>0 | 8  | 100.<br>00 |
| <b>5</b>  | 4  | 50.0<br>0 | 5  | 62.50 | 5  | 62.50      | 6  | 75.00      | 8  | 100.<br>00 |
| <b>6</b>  | 3  | 37.5<br>0 | 2  | 25.00 | 5  | 62.50      | 7  | 87.50      | 7  | 87.5<br>0  |
| <b>7</b>  | 3  | 37.5<br>0 | 2  | 25.00 | 7  | 87.50      | 7  | 87.50      | 8  | 100.<br>00 |
| <b>8</b>  | 6  | 75.0<br>0 | 2  | 25.00 | 7  | 87.50      | 8  | 100.0<br>0 | 7  | 87.5<br>0  |
| <b>9</b>  | 6  | 75.0<br>0 | 2  | 25.00 | 5  | 62.50      | 6  | 75.00      | 8  | 100.<br>00 |
| <b>10</b> | 6  | 75.0<br>0 | 6  | 75.00 | 6  | 75.00      | 8  | 100.0<br>0 | 8  | 100.<br>00 |
|           | 44 |           | 33 |       | 59 |            | 73 |            | 75 |            |

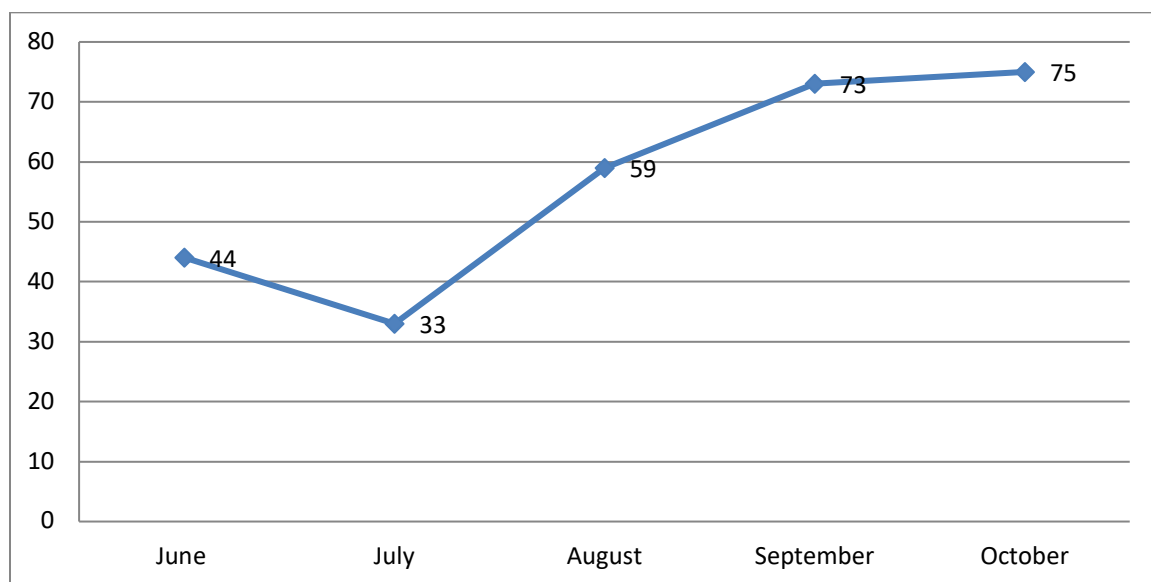


Figure 2. Total Number of Punctuality of Students Every Month

Based on Table 6 and Figure 2, the number of punctual students has increased by 31 (from 44 to 75). It is essential to emphasize that this increase in punctuality also signifies a decrease in tardiness, as tardiness and punctuality are inversely proportional. These positive changes can be attributed to the



interventions, namely the reward system and regular communication with parents or guardians.

However, it is worth noting that punctuality is a crucial factor that contributes to students' learning. Arriving on time to high school everyday benefits students' academic performance and cultivates future professional habits (Reynolds, 2018).

This research has provided valuable insights for effectively managing student tardiness. First, the use of extrinsic motivation, such as rewards, can be highly effective in motivating students to consistently demonstrate punctuality. However, it's important to note that this approach can be costly. From the perspective of this research, it is equally essential to commend students whenever they exhibit punctuality in the classroom. Teacher appreciation can shift students' focus from the reward itself to the satisfaction of receiving recognition from their teacher. Furthermore, the role of parents is crucial in this context. When parents are actively involved in monitoring their children's performance, students tend to take their responsibilities more seriously. This monitoring requires ongoing communication between teachers and parents. Conferences can serve as an effective platform to convey the seriousness with which parents and teachers address the issue.

Additionally, teachers must be diligent in monitoring students' attendance, ensuring consistency in checking attendance records. When students are occasionally tardy, it is important to implement positive discipline measures to help them feel valued, respected, and have a sense of belongingness. Listening and providing encouragement are cost-effective tools teachers can employ in this process.



## VI. ACTION PLAN

Dissemination and utilization are pivotal aspects of action research. Dissemination is the act of spreading something, especially information, widely, while utilization is the action of making practical and effective use of something. The researchers intend to initiate this process with the EsP teachers and subsequently extend it to all Junior High School Teachers at Mati National Comprehensive High School. In accordance with the established protocols, researchers should seek approval from the principal for the activity's design. Additionally, they should prepare the necessary rooms and materials in advance of the dissemination. The target date for the dissemination is set for March 2018. Table 9 outlines the activities involved in the dissemination and utilization of the reward system intervention.

Table 7. Action Plan on Dissemination and Utilization of the Reward System

| <b>Activity</b>   | <b>Persons Involved</b>                      | <b>Time Frame/Venue</b>                              | <b>Materials Needed</b> | <b>Budget (Php)</b> |
|---|--|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>I. Submission of Proposal/activity Design to the Principal</b> | Researchers                                  | ----   | Bond Paper              | -----               |
| <b>II. Dissemination of Results</b><br>1. MNCHS Department Heads  | Researchers<br>Principal<br>Department Heads | March, 2019<br>(3 <sup>rd</sup> week) /<br>MNCHS AVR | Projector               | 2,000.00            |
| 2. MNCHS Faculty by department                                    | Researchers<br>Department Heads              | March, 2019<br>(Fourth Week) /                       |                         | 13,000.00           |



| <b>Activity</b>   | <b>Persons Involved</b>                                   | <b>Time Frame/Venue</b>  | <b>Materials Needed</b>           | <b>Budget (Php)</b> |
|---|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
|   | Teachers<br>Master Teachers                               | Department Office        |                                   |                     |
| <b>III. Utilization</b><br><br>Reward System will be implemented by:<br>1. MNCHS ESP Teachers SY 2019-2020<br>2. MNCHS Junior HS Teachers | EsP<br>Master Teachers<br>Advisers<br>Students<br>Parents | June 2019                | Intervention Rewards System       | To be determined    |
| <b>IV. Evaluation of the implemented intervention</b><br><br>1. Creation of Technical Working Group (TWG) Evaluation and Reporting        | Master Teacher of the MNCHS and Selected Teachers as TWG  | By Semester SY 2019-2020 | Evaluation Tool<br><br>Bond Paper | 2,000.00            |



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