Determinants of Student Dropout Intention in Higher Education: Evidence from Nepal

Namdev Khanal

Article History:
Submitted: 25 November 2025
Reviewed: 10 December 2025
Accepted: 23 December 2025
Corresponding Author:
Namdev Khanal
Email:
namdevkhanal9857050008@gmail.com
ORCID:

Publisher
RPC, Siddhartha Campus,
Banganga, Kapilvastu, Nepal
Email:
research@sidharthacampus.edu.np.
URL: www.sidharthacampus.edu.np

Abstract

This paper investigates the main factors influencing the intention to drop out of school among the Nepalese postgraduate management students in the higher education system based on the placement support, awareness of career opportunities, institutional support, curriculum market-fit, and program length. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-explanatory design in which 660 postgraduate management students studying in five institutions of higher learning were targeted in the city of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City. A stratified sample of 249 students was chosen with the help of the formula developed by Yamane because a proportionate stratified sampling technique was used. The research question was measured using a structured questionnaire in a seven-point Likert scale and assessed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings suggest that institutional and career related factors have a very strong influence on the drop out intention of the students. The variables that were found to have the strongest impact on the decreasing dropout intentions were perceived support of place, then came the knowledge of career prospects and institutional support, the significance of employability pathways and enabling learning conditions. On the contrary, the longer of the program length, the more likely to drop out intention is observed, which is indicative of the presence of academic workload and opportunity costs. The impact of curriculum-market alignment was very marginal, but it was observed that students in centralized education system emphasize on immediate institutional and career guidance rather than curriculum relevance. The findings are based on the student integration theory, social cognitive career theory, and rational choice perspectives which indicate that dropout intention is not an individual decision, but rather a structural effect of the institutional responsiveness, student career signaling, and program design. Increasing academic and career integration processes can promote a sense of belonging, expectations of outcomes, and perceived education investment returns among students, which will increase retention.

***Keywords**:* Student dropout intention, placement support, career opportunities awareness, institutional support, curriculum-market alignment, program duration.

Introduction

The issue of student dropout has become the subject of scholarly and policy interest due to its persistent nature in the higher education system across the world. Although the enrollment rates are increasing, and more and more people have access to tertiary education, many institutions are still struggling with the issue of student persistence and completion of the program. In this respect, dropout intention, which can be defined as cognitive and psychological disposition to withdraw studies, has been largely identified as a potent and proximate predictor of actual student withdrawal, as well as it is often utilized as an early warning marker of student success studies (Lee and Choi, 2011; Findeisen et al., 2024). Modern studies indicate that the student departure cannot be considered only as a result of personal academic achievements, but it is a multifaceted interaction of structural, institutional, and psychosocial elements that influence the involvement, feeling of belonging, and dedication of students to learning (Tinto, 2017; Kahu and Nelson, 2018). In turn, the identification of the determinants of dropout intention is a key source of study of persistence in higher education, and the results have a significant implication on educational equity, institutional effectiveness, and building national human capital (Véliz Palomino & Ortega, 2023).

At the core of the intent to drop out are conditions which, according to research worldwide, have shifted as higher education systems have had to respond to various changes such as the labor-market demands, higher student expectations, and the competition for skills that enhance employability. The studies confirm that students are more and more concerned with the return on their degree and this is what makes them value their degree by using criteria such as employability, career prospects, and the degree to which the academic program is relevant to the real-world needs (Heublein, 2014; Thomas, 2002). In situations where students receive poor academic support, where their career pathways are not clear, or curricula are obsolete, they will definitely leave their studies (Hoffman & Rush, 2017). Data from both advanced and developing countries show that besides faculties' support, which includes activities such as academic advising, administrative responsiveness, and mentoring, plays a vital role in bolstering students' psychological feeling of belonging which, in turn, helps to reduce dropout intention (Mercer-Mapstone & Bovill, 2020; Kahu & Nelson, 2018). The discoveries emphasize that leaving school should not be viewed as the failure of the individual but rather as the result of a system that is affected by institutional conditions.

Across South Asian universities, students dropping out of studies is a dire issue, aggravating factors are resource limitation, low-quality of standard curriculum, and weaker connections between universities and the industry. Investigations show that the students usually get into a learning process of the outdated curriculum and they don't get enough practical work and lack good placement offices, thus, the students are losing their trust in the labor market success that can be achieved through their studies (Barragán Moreno & González Támara, 2024; Nurmalitasari et al., 2023). These problems can mostly be found in the field of management and business where students highly demand the relations with the industry, opportunities for internships, and being prepared for the professional world through training in the academic courses (Mahalingam, 2024). The connection between the perception of the possibilities of getting employed and the awareness of the career opportunities as the main sources of students' motivation to be involved or drop out of academic programs is strongly confirmed by research findings (Sultana & Malik, 2020). On top of that, long or inflexible program duration will help negatively impact the students' academic fatigue and financial challenges, thereby, leading to a high-level intention to drop out of school (Arulampalam et al., 2004).

Dropout in higher education in Nepal has become a major concern of government policy, especially, as the country is moving towards becoming more competitive and is willing to keep talented human capital. Even though enrollment rates are on the rise, higher education institutions in Nepal are still facing challenges in the provision of student support services as well as academic guidance, and alignment of the curriculum with the market is becoming more and more challenging (Ghimire, Mishra, & Bolar, 2024; Adhikari, 2025). The results of the research indicate that Nepalese students report career opportunities as the source of their concern besides dissatisfaction with institutional responsiveness, which both factors lead to the increase of dropout rates (Findeisen et al., 2024). In addition to that, a large number of Nepalese young people have turned to foreign education and abroad jobs as a result of considering that there are very limited opportunities for their career growth in Nepal. Hence, the dropout intention is put on the same level with migration aspiration (Tiwari, 2025). The current structures highlight the necessity for the provision of better institutional support, the securing of more reliable placement facilities, and development of the industry-tailored curriculum.

Among the factors determining dropout intention in Nepal and other similar areas, institutional support is the most influential one. Research shows that a supportive learning environment-where students have access to teachers, get their questions answered in time, get support from administration, and are supported by

student counseling-services-contributes significantly to student retention (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Mercer-Mapstone & Bovill, 2020). Besides that, placement support and awareness of career opportunities are the most vital factors to influence dropout intention especially in business and management education where students link academic investment with getting a job in the future (Sultana & Malik, 2020; Howell et al., 2025). Students' dropout may be significantly lowered if they perceive that there are definite tracks open to them in the form of internships, practical training, or industry participation through which they could gain work experience. On the contrary, the dismantling of weak placement systems is intensifying the feeling of uncertainty, which is one of the major psychological causes of the loss of students.

Explanation of dropout behavior through curriculum-market alignment has been accentuated more and more. The findings of the real-world studies reveal that to a very large extent the persistence of the students depends on their perception of the learning relevance, that is, whether or not the curriculum provides them with practical, labor-market skills (Sharma, 2025; Thomas & Quinlan, 2023). When there is a gap between what is taught in academic programs and what is demanded by contemporary industries, the students' trust and participation are lowered. Moreover, the duration of the curriculum greatly affects the students' decision of whether to continue or drop out: lengthy and/or non-flexible program structures are usually accompanied by increased financial burdens, work-study imbalance and low motivation (Arulampalam, Naylor, & Smith, 2004; Schmidt et al., 2010).

Even though the research on student dropout intention has been increasingly conducted internationally, the available literature, especially in the setting of developing higher education, was inclined to discuss its causes in a disjointed way. Most of the previous empirical studies paid attention to individual variables, including academic readiness, socio-economic status, or school services, and mostly they did not use more descriptive outcomes or one-Factor prediction (DesJardins & Toutkoushian, 2005; Véliz Palomino & Ortega, 2023). Recent systematic reviews also suggest the lack of integrative empirical frameworks that can simultaneously address the institutional, academic, and career-related aspects of dropout intention with the help of more sophisticated multivariate methods, such as structural equation modeling (Barragán Moreno & Gonzalez Tamara, 2024). Empirical evidence on the Nepalese context of higher education is also scarce, mostly of descriptive nature, examining trends in enrollment and institutional problems or issues of policy-level factors that may cause student persistence (Ghimire, Mishra, and Bolar, 2024; Timilsena, Khanal & Devkota, 2025). In addition, employability-related variables-including the placement support and career opportunity awareness-in research have been generally accomplished individually or beyond integrated retention models (Gurung, Chapagain

&Thapa, 2023). As a result, there is a definite empirical necessity of an overall model, which would simultaneously consider institutional support, placement mechanism, relevance of the curriculum, program structure and career awareness in order to better understand dropout intention of postgraduate students in Nepal.

The research addresses the critical gap that has been left unnoticed by the previous literature. While a lot has been said about student dropout in Western and developed higher education systems (Tinto, 2017; Heublein, 2014), there has been little work done to understand how institutional support, the placement ecosystem, curriculum, and program structures influence wastage of students in South Asian contexts, especially in Nepal. Nepal's higher education system may be described as one having centralized curricula, weak industry linkages, and being resource-constrained; however, these are the contextual realities that have seldom been factored into the researches (Timilsena et al., 2025). This indicates the importance of local research in knowing how these structural factors can lead to the dropout behavior of students in Nepalese universities.

Most of the previous works also have methodological limitations in that they heavily depend on traditional regression or logistic models (DesJardins & Toutkoushian, 2005), which cannot reflect the complex and multidimensional interactions among institutional, academic, and career-related determinants. The minority of the works chooses to use advanced techniques such as Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which at the same time assesses measurement reliability and structural relationships, thus providing stronger predictive validity (Hair et al., 2021). This gives rise to a methodological gap with regard to the use of robust SEM approaches in dropout research in developing higher education systems.

Moreover, most studies on dropouts have been carried out in the regions of Europe, North America, and East Asia (Thomas & Quinlan, 2023; Kahu & Nelson, 2018), leaving the education structures and student agency in these places quite different from those in Nepal. Nepalese higher education is still under the control of a hierarchical system, offers little choice to students, and is subjected to socio-economic factors that have a unique influence on the students' decision to stay or drop out. In spite of the cultural and structural differences, there is still a shortage of empirical studies which would accurately describe the context of Nepal thus pointing to the need for culturally grounded investigations of dropout determinants.

The major objective is to examine the determinants of student dropout intention among postgraduate management students in Nepal. The specific research objectives of the study are as follows:

RO1: To assess the current status of students' responses regarding Student Dropout Intention.

RO2: To examine the effect of Institutional Support, Placement Support, Career Opportunities Awareness, Curriculum-Market Alignment, and Program Duration on Student Dropout Intention in higher education institutions.

Literature Review

The conceptual framework for investigating the factors leading to the intention of students to drop out of higher education hinges on a range of theories that have been proven over time to explain the behavior of students, whether they persist or disengage from academic programs. Fundamentally, the model corresponds with the Integration Theory of Student by Tinto which claims that social and academic integration are the bases of student persistence (Tinto, 2017). Institutional Support in the form of advising, mentoring, faculty accessibility, and administrative responsiveness not only directly support academic but also social integration, thus, dropout intention is less likely to occur. Students who are left without support from institutions experience less belongingness and, thus, are more likely to drop out, which is why the link between Institutional Support and dropout intention finds support in research.

The determinants model is also supported by the Student Attrition Model of Bean and Metzner, which points to the importance of environmental variables. These include career opportunities, employment, and program factors, which influence dropout decisions mostly among non-traditional or postgraduate students (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Awareness of career opportunities and placement support are good examples of these environmental changes, as students' perceptions of employability and the future career market strongly influence their motivation to remain enrolled (Heublein, 2014).

The impact of Curriculum-Market Alignment is traceable in the theory of Human Capital, which sees education as an investment that is expected to bring economic and skill-based returns (Becker, 1993). When colleges and universities structure their curricula according to the needs of the industry, students see more worth in their education. On the other hand, old or improperly designed curricula will make the students feel less attracted by the programs and as a result, the motivation to complete them will be drastically reduced (Thomas & Quinlan, 2023).

Moreover, Program Duration effect on dropout intention is supported by Rational Choice Theory that believes people evaluate educational decisions by weighing the costs like time, effort, and money against the benefits like future income and career mobility (DesJardins & Toutkoushian, 2005). A longer or inflexible

program increases the loss of potential benefits particularly for those who are working or are postgraduate students and thus, dropout intention is more than just intensified. It is consistent with the confirmation that prolonged program duration is one of the major causes of attrition in the competitive academic environment (Arulampalam et al., 2004).

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) explains that academic and career persistence is a dynamic interaction of self efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and the situational supports is also part of the theoretical framework of this research (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). In this regard, career opportunities knowledge and placement support would be employed as the necessary environmental supports, which determine the confidence that students possess in their ability to achieve the sought career results. Exposure to industry, exposure to organized placement systems, as well as internship exposure enhances perceived employability and positivity expectations of outcomes that enhance compliance to academic programs.

Alternatively, when such career development supports are poor or absent, the student may develop low self-efficacy and higher uncertainty regarding the future opportunities of employment which SCCT has identified as antecedents of withdrawal behavior. The regular findings of the empirical research on the application of SCCT to higher education indicate that the lack of career-related supports impairs persistence because the motivation processes that help to sustain the long-term dedication to education are disrupted (Sultana & Malik, 2020; Ho et al., 2023). Consequently, the conceptualization of the place support and career opportunities awareness in this paper is hypothetically based determinants of dropout intention, which will act through the primary mechanisms of motivation, expectancy, and persistence in SCCT.

Moreover, the elements in the model are interrelated in the sense that Kahu and Nelson’s (2018) Educational Interface Model postulates that student engagement and persistence are the upshots of the interaction among structural influences (curriculum, institutional systems), psychosocial factors (belonging, motivation), and students’ broader life circumstances. Through the lens of this model, institutional support, curriculum alignment, and program duration are the prime structural aspects that, in turn, spark off students’ emotional engagement and academic resilience. The unfavorable presence of these structural factors leads to the weakening of students' engagement which, in turn, results in stronger dropout intention.

Empirical Review

H1: There is a positive and significant effect of Institutional support on Student Dropout Intention

Institute support has been one of the major factors that have been identified as a leading cause of student dropout in higher education. In this context, Kahu and Nelson (2018) stressed that student involvement and achievement depend greatly on the presence of structural facilitators like academic advising, a listening administration, and the availability of faculty members. In their Educational Interface Model, they show that students' emotional commitment and academic toughness are affected by institutional structures, which in turn lead to a decrease in dropout intention. Along the same line, Tinto (2017) supports the idea that academic and social integration result in a stronger resolve to complete a degree, thus pointing to the importance of institutional support as a factor for attrition reduction.

Furthermore, to this point, the data from real-world situations reveal the same. Thomas and Quinlan (2023) assert that the introduction of the culturally responsive curriculum and the creation of a supportive environment for learning are two key factors that engage students and make them less likely to drop out. A comprehensive review conducted by Véliz Palomino and Ortega (2023) tells us that dropout intention is inversely related to accessibility to institutional services, e.g., counseling, mentoring, and communication mechanisms in different sectors all over the world. In Nepal, Gurung, Chapagain, and Thapa (2023) discover that student satisfaction and retention are heavily influenced by the responsiveness of the institution and the guidance provided in academics. Findeisen et al., on the other hand, (2024) through their research, confirm that dropout intention is a reliable and valid predictor of actual attrition, thereby emphasizing the role of institutional support in retention strategies.

H2: There is a significant and negative effect of Placement Support on Student Dropout Intention

Along with placement support and career awareness, they have now been identified to have equally influential effects on the prediction of student persistence. Sultana and Malik (2020) conducted a study where they found that the factors of perceived employability and career self-efficacy are two of the main elements that influence students' motivation to continue their enrollment. Long-term studies, according to Ho et al. (2023), show that when students take part in career-related developmental learning programs, they feel more employable and hence more academically committed. Heublein (2014) also makes a point in a similar fashion that dropout rates lessen when educational institutions are geared towards the

employability of graduates since this raises the perceived worth of education significantly.

South Asian students are mainly seen through the eyes of Gurung et al. (2023) as who are very much concerned with the fact that the more they invest in their academicals the better will be their chances for getting a job. At the same time, a weak placement system can cause them to be more puzzled which is one of the major psychological causes of dropping out of school. Sharma (2025) voices the importance of curriculum reforms not only for aligning education with the global competencies but also for sustaining student engagement and lowering their dropout intention rates.

H3: Career Opportunities Awareness has negative and significant effect on Student Dropout Intention

Without career opportunities awareness, students' dropout intentions are higher. Awareness of career opportunities means students understanding of labor-market trends, job prospects, and the relevance of their academic programs. According to the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), knowing about career paths leads to higher outcome expectations and more persistence (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). To back up the theory with data, Xin et al. (2020) came up with the results that being clear about career success criteria is a major factor in making one's career satisfying and increasing one's commitment, hence, withdrawal tendencies are less likely to occur. Moreover, Bargmann et al. (2022) found out that students who are very sure about their career choices have less intention of dropping out during their first year of higher education. Accordingly, in South Asia, not knowing whether one will have a career in the future has been identified as a cause of disengagement and attrition (Trevor-Roberts et al., 2019). Additionally, Dahal et al. (2022) provide evidence from Nepal that career development learning serves as a mediator of employability outcomes, thus career awareness becomes crucial for retention. All the studies combined indicate that being clear about one's career path and feeling employable will keep students from wanting to drop out.

H4: Curriculum-Market Alignment has a negative and significant effect on Student Dropout Intention

It is said that the alignment between the curriculum and the market is the degree to which the academic content corresponds to industry requirements and the skills needed for the future professional. The theory of Human Capital states that students will continue their studies when they see education as the source of relevant and marketable skills (Becker, 1993). Research studies confirm this: Heublein (2014) finds that the major reason for student drop-out in European universities is the mismatch between the curriculum and the labor market. Furthermore, the research

conducted by Thomas and Quinlan (2023) revealed that the inclusion of culturally and professionally relevant content in the curriculum contributes to students' engagement and prolongs their school tenure. Meanwhile, in Nepal, Sharma outlines that curriculum reform which brings education in line with global competencies is not only vital for engagement but also for lowering dropout rates. The evidence presented emphasizes that curriculum relevance is one of the major causes of retention from a structural point of view.

H5: Program Duration has a positive and significant effect on Student Dropout Intention

The correlation between the time spent in the program and the intention to drop out of school is supported by the Rational Choice Theory that assumes that people make educational choices through a systematic evaluation of all the benefits they anticipate in comparison to their costs, including time, effort, and financial resources (Becker, 1964; Coleman, 1990). In this context, the perceived cost of continuing in the academic program is higher due to the length or rigidity of the academic programs, hence a decrease in net utility of the further enrollment and a quicker discontinuation.

This theoretical postulation has proven to be widely used in research in the field of higher education. According to DesJardins and Toutkoushian (2005), rationality is shown on the persistence choices of the student based on the analysis of opportunity cost and expected returns of education. It is supported by strong empirical evidence. Arulampalam, Naylor and Smith (2004) show that long time-to-degree increases susceptibility to dropout especially in competitive academic circumstances. Equally, Heublein (2014) concludes that the longer the study period, the higher the rate of attrition in German universities since the students reevaluate the cost-benefit analysis of obtaining degrees. Earlier systematic reviews also support the latter by indicating a positive correlation between program duration and dropout intention in a variety of higher education settings (Véliz Palomino & Ortega, 2023). Combined, these results support the Rational Choice view that the length of the program will raise the perceived cost hence increasing the student dropout intention.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design embraced in this study was quantitative research design which incorporated descriptive and explanatory elements. At the descriptive level, it investigated the perceptions of postgraduate students on five determinants which were Institutional Support, Placement Support, Career Opportunities Awareness, Curriculum-Market Alignment and Program Duration; the determinants that have

been persistently found by the higher education literature as core dimensions that determine the persistence and withdrawal decisions of students. Irrelevant academic factors alone do not dictate student dropout intention; instead, a set of institutional integration factors (e.g., institutional support), career-related and employability factors (e.g., placement support and career opportunities awareness), and structural program factors (e.g., relevance of the curriculum and program duration) has been shown to influence it (Prior theoretical and empirical studies, 2017; Kahu and Nelson, 2018; Bean and Metzner, 1985; Véliz Palomino and Ortega, 202 In line with this, these five constructs are theorized as central determinants since they are the most commonly used combination of institutional, academic, and career-related determinants in modern studies of dropout intention, especially in professionally-focused postgraduate programs.

In line with positivist research paradigm, the explanatory part of the research study tested a structural model whereby the five theoretically based exogenous constructs explain the endogenous construct, Student Dropout Intention. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze this framework. Lin et al. (2012) recommend that PLS-SEM be used in the study because of several reasons. First, the study is expected to explain and predict the dropout intention estimating the comparative power of various interrelated latent variables, which is one of the key strengths of PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2021; Hair and Alamer, 2022). Second, the suggested framework is theoretically motivated but exploratory within the setting of a developing country, where causal structures are not developed, and PLS-SEM is superior to covariance-based SEM (Sarstedt et al., 2017). Third, PLS-SEM is appropriate in the case of the study of behavioral and educational research with complex models, latent variables that are measured through multiple indicators, and moderate sample sizes which can be applied to present research. Combined, such a strategy enables powerful evaluation of both the quality of measurement and structural relationships, which will result in a holistic analysis of the factors affecting the intention to drop out among students.

Population and Sample

This study used a sample population of 660 postgraduate management students who attended five institutions of higher learning within the city of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, namely Lumbini Banijya Campus (N = 293), Butwal Multiple Campus (N = 126), Western Mega College (N = 119), Kshitiz International College (N = 86), and Siddhartha Gautam Buddha Campus (N = 36). The purposefully chosen institutions provide postgraduate management programs (e.g., MBA, MBS-F and MBS) and are seen as the reflection of the diversity of all the public and private

institutions of higher learning that provide their services within the scope of the study area. The concentration on institutions in one urban, academic context was able to control the regional policy, labor-market characteristics, and regulatory frameworks, contributing to the internal consistency of the study.

To calculate a large enough sample, the formula of Yamane (1973) was used and the confidence level is set at 95 percent and the margin of error is set at 5 percent, then the minimum sample size is calculated as 249 students. A proportionate stratified sampling method was used to ensure that the various institutions have proportional representation by the samples used. The institutions were considered as a separate stratum and the sample of respondents to be selected was decided according to the proportion of the stratum to the total population. Namely, a sample size of Lumbini Banijya Campus, Butwal Multiple Campus, Western Mega College, Kshitiz International College, and Siddhartha Gautam Buddha Campus was 44.4 percent, 19.1 percent, 18.0 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively. This design was adopted to avoid over representing bigger institutions and under representing smaller institutions that would distort parameter estimates during multivariate analysis.

A sample size of 249 valid responses was achieved, which is sufficient to satisfy the statistically calculated sample size criterion, as well as, suggested limits in the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The proportional stratified sampling thereby augmented the representativeness of the sampling as well as amplified the soundness and generalization of the study findings to the specified population.

Instrument Design and Measurement

Information was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 items, with each item rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Five independent variables-Institutional Support, Placement Support, Career Opportunities Awareness, Curriculum-Market Alignment, and Program Duration and one dependent variable i.e. Student Dropout Intention, were included in the instrument. The items of Institutional Support, Placement Support, Career Opportunities Awareness, and Curriculum–Market Alignment were based on the measures of higher education service quality and student retention standards, which have been used in several global studies. The Program Duration items were taken from the research on academic workload, time burden, and opportunity cost aspects of a longer study period (Arulampalam et al., 2004). The indicators that were adapted from the dropout and retention frameworks by Tinto (2017) and later used in recent higher education studies (Thomas, 2020) were the basis for the measurement of Student Dropout Intention. Content validity was achieved through the examination of

experts among senior academics, while a pilot test of 30 students verified the clarity, reliability, and appropriate response patterns.

Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected through self-administered questionnaires, which were distributed in both online and printed formats to accommodate the students' availability and accessibility. Before the distribution of the questionnaires, the respective institutions gave their consent, and the students were informed about the study's purpose and the voluntary nature of their participation. Respondents were guaranteed that their information would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes, which was one of the reasons for the reduction of social desirability bias. A pilot test was performed in order to adjust the instrument based on the feedback from the participants. Then the final questionnaire was distributed in all the selected institutions, and the data collection process lasted for four weeks.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done with Smart PLS 4.0 through a thorough multi-step process that is in line with PLS-SEM standards. First, descriptive statistics were derived to portray the main characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions of the five determinants. After that, the measurement model was scrutinized through different reliability and validity tests, which comprised Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Moreover, discriminant validity was verified with the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, while multicollinearity was gauged via the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Next, the structural model was analyzed to confirm the five hypothesized relationships. To produce the most accurate figures for path coefficients, t-values, and p-values, bootstrapping with 10,000 resamples was done. The model's prediction power was measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2) for Student Dropout Intention. This exhaustive analysis served to confirm that the results were dependable, statistically valid, and could be interpreted in terms of the factors leading to student dropout in higher education.

Table 1

Assessment of measurement scale items

Name	Outer-loading	VIF	Mean	Standard Deviation
CDA1	0.873	2.659	3.322	1.8
CDA2	0.919	2.543	3.378	1.804
CDA3	0.877	2.143	2.88	1.758
CDA4	0.797	1.595	3.622	2.014
PD1	0.807	2.953	5.749	1.582

PD2	0.663	3.88	3.196	1.867
PD3	0.704	2.506	4.456	1.945
PD4	0.737	1.725	3.83	1.971
PS1	0.776	2.391	2.837	1.724
PS2	0.889	2.354	2.855	1.594
PS3	0.807	2.737	3.29	1.792
PS4	0.768	1.536	3.214	1.784
CMA1	0.887	1.216	3.385	1.971
CMA2	0.867	2.107	3.753	1.941
CMA3	0.85	1.414	4.102	1.937
CMA4	0.756	2.308	4.399	1.936
IS1	0.854	1.628	3.601	1.936
IS2	0.817	2.65	3.196	1.867
IS3	0.9	2.131	3.687	1.865
IS4	0.76	1.569	4.811	2.095
SDI1	0.821	1.935	5.15	1.782
SDI2	0.873	2.374	5.477	1.522
SDI3	0.816	1.908	5.797	1.546
SDI4	0.775	1.527	5.088	1.646

Table 1 shows the evaluation of the measures of the constructs used in the study i.e., Curriculum-Market Alignment (CMA), Program Duration (PD), Placement Support (PS), Institutional Support (IS), and Student Dropout Intention (SDI). In addition to the PD construct, the outer loading of which is generally lower than the suggested minimum of 0.70, the majority of the outer loadings are above the suggested minimum of 0.663 (Hair et al., 2021). Even in situations where a constructs Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50, such loadings still may be reasonable, hence implying that the latent variable explains over half the variation in its indicators (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The study has led to an AVE of 0.52 of PD hence establishing adequate convergent validity and hence, the retention of the items with moderate loading values.

Furthermore, all VIF values do not seem to be near the 5.0 mark with most of them being significantly below it, which makes the non-existence of the multicollinearity apparent and, consequently, the stability of the estimates of coefficient is justified (Sarstedt et al., 2017). The descriptive statistics also support the substantial differences in the items as the means of the values range between 2.88 and 5.80, and the standard deviations are 1.52 to 2.10 hence there is sufficient dispersion and no bias in the responses. Combined, these results prove that the measurement items possess the correct psychometric qualities and the constructs are sufficiently modeled to proceed to the next stage of the structural analysis.

In addition to statistical adequacy, these findings denote that postgraduate learners have distinct, differentiated, and experience-based perceptions of institutional support, career facilitation, program structure and dropout intention. The sufficient reliability of the program duration indicators, despite minor fluctuations, supports the idea that students do not perceive time-related stressors in the same way, which proves the difference in the employment status, financial requirements, and career urgency. This discrepancy indicates program duration as a structural barrier, which instead of being a consistent variable is seen as subjective in nature, a factor that validates the critical role of program duration as a dropout intention predictor.

The lack of multicollinearity and existence of significant variance between the responses of items also suggests that students consider institutional, academic, and career-related conditions to be separate and not a unified generalized satisfaction judgment. All these conclusions contribute to the increased confidence that further structural relationships will be based on the real evaluation of their higher education setting of students, as opposed to methodological artifacts or bias in responses.

Quality Criteria Assessment

Table 2

Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CMA	0.862	0.872	0.906	0.709
COA	0.889	0.893	0.924	0.752
IS	0.853	0.861	0.901	0.696
PD	0.74	0.843	0.819	0.532
PS	0.826	0.835	0.885	0.659
SDI	0.839	0.84	0.893	0.676

Table 2 provides a summary of the six latent constructs' internal consistency and convergent validity. The lowest Cronbach's alpha value is 0.74 (PD), and the highest is 0.889 (COA), thus the reliabilities of the constructs are within the acceptable to high ranges. The composite reliability (rho_c) values also vary from 0.819 to 0.924, exceeding the 0.70 benchmark and confirming strong internal consistency (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The AVE scores, which change between 0.532 (PD) and 0.752 (COA), are higher than the recommended threshold of 0.50, thus indicating that more than 50% of the variance of the indicators is due to their respective latent constructs. Therefore, these results provide strong evidence of convergent validity and confirm that the constructs measuring institutional support, placement support, career opportunities awareness, curriculum alignment, program

duration, and dropout intention are not only conceptually coherent but also statistically sound.

These findings in addition to satisfying statistical requirements show that students answer questions in the survey in a patterned and significant response, which implies that the constructs are measured by specific and well-conceived elements of their higher education experience. The comparatively high level of reliability of career-related and institutional constructs indicates that the students have common perceptions on support systems and further opportunities, whereas the slightly lower, yet satisfactory, level of reliability of the program duration implies a more diverse personal experience with time and workload pressures. In general, high convergent validity supports the idea that every construct measures a different and appropriate dimension of student experience which forms a reliable foundation to investigate the effect of the various factors on dropout intention.

Discriminant Analysis

Table 3

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations

	CMA	COA	IS	PD	PS	SDI
CMA						
COA	0.662					
IS	0.892	0.647				
PD	0.882	0.799	0.878			
PS	0.412	0.696	0.411	0.601		
SDI	0.62	0.856	0.577	0.792	0.835	

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios that evaluate the discriminant validity of the latent constructs. The values of all HTMT are below the conservative 0.90 cutoff (Henseler et al., 2015) indicating that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. The strongest relationship is between Curriculum-Market Alignment and Institutional Support (0.892), followed by PD and CMA (0.882), however, both are still within the acceptable range. Most of the pairs of constructs have lower HTMT ratios, which indicate less conceptual overlap and therefore, more confidence in the measurement model. These findings demonstrate that the different latent variables are each different theoretical constructs and, therefore, there is a minimal risk of multicollinearity and the structural paths validity is supported for the next stage.

Model Fit

Table 4

Model Fit Indices

	Saturated model	Estimated model

SRMR	0.073	0.076
d_ULS	0.831	0.848
d_G	n/a	n/a
Chi-square	∞	∞
NFI	.921	.915

Table 4 displays the global model–fit indices for both the saturated and estimated models. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) for the saturated and estimated models are 0.073 and 0.076, correspondingly, and both are under the recommended limit of 0.08, which indicates a good approximate fit and very small residual differences between the observed and predicted correlations. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) for the saturated model is 0.921 and for the estimated model, it is 0.915, both of which are above the recommended threshold of 0.90, thus indicating a good comparative model fit relative to the null model (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The saturated and estimated model indices being very close to each other show that the structural specification is stable and parsimonious. In general, the model–fit statistics are in line with the sufficiency and theoretical strength of the proposed framework, thus confirming that the SEM model is appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5

Hypothesis Testing Using Bootstrapping

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Decision
H4	CMA -> SDI	-0.068	-0.067	0.044	1.548	.122	Rejected
H2	COA -> SDI	-0.306	-0.306	0.03	10.221		Accepted
H1	IS -> SDI	-0.16	-0.159	0.043	3.687		Accepted
H5	PD -> SDI	0.338	0.338	0.055	6.127		Accepted
H3	PS -> SDI	-0.43	-0.43	0.03	14.133		Accepted

R-square = 0.769 R-square adjusted = 0.767

Table 5 summarizes the bootstrapping results that tested the structural relationships among the latent variables. Four out of five hypotheses were strongly supported at a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating robust empirical evidence for most proposed associations. Among the predictors, Placement Support showed the strongest negative effect on dropout intention ($\beta = –0.430$, $t = 14.133$), suggesting that when students perceive clear pathways to employment, their likelihood of leaving the program decreases substantially. Career Opportunities Awareness ($\beta = –0.306$, $t = 10.221$) and Institutional Support ($\beta = –0.160$, $t = 3.687$) also demonstrated significant negative relationships,

reinforcing the idea that supportive institutional environments and clarity about future career prospects reduce dropout tendencies. Conversely, Program Duration exhibited a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.338$, $t = 6.127$), meaning that longer or more demanding programs increase the risk of attrition. Curriculum–Market Alignment, while negative, was statistically insignificant ($\beta = –0.068$, $t = 1.548$). This limited influence is understandable in the Nepalese higher education context, where students have little control over curriculum design and recognize that reforms are centrally managed and slow to adapt to market needs. Consequently, students prioritize immediate factors such as institutional support, placement services, and program workload over curriculum alignment when considering dropout. Overall, the model explained 76.9% of the variance in dropout intention ($R^2 = 0.769$), indicating strong predictive power and confirming the combined impact of the five determinants.

The findings reveal that the intention to dropout among postgraduate students is mainly influenced by the practical and experience-based aspects as opposed to the abstract academic factors. This high motivation ranking of the placement support and awareness of career opportunities indicates the strong motivation of the students by the clear indication of their future employment and career advancement. In cases where such signals are not strong or certain, students tend to doubt the worthiness of their studies.

The beneficial impact of the length of program also points to the fact that long or strict academic systems place the time, financial and psychological pressure that may make the students less committed to it, especially when they have to work or take care of their families. Conversely, the insignificant effect of curriculum market alignment means that students can perceive the content of curriculum as something that can be controlled by them much less in the short-term persistence decision. In general, the explanatory power of the model is high, which indicates that dropout intention is not a coincidence but the rational reaction to the institutional support systems, career expectations, and program structure, which highlights the significance of the employability-based and student-centered retention strategies.

Structural Equation Model

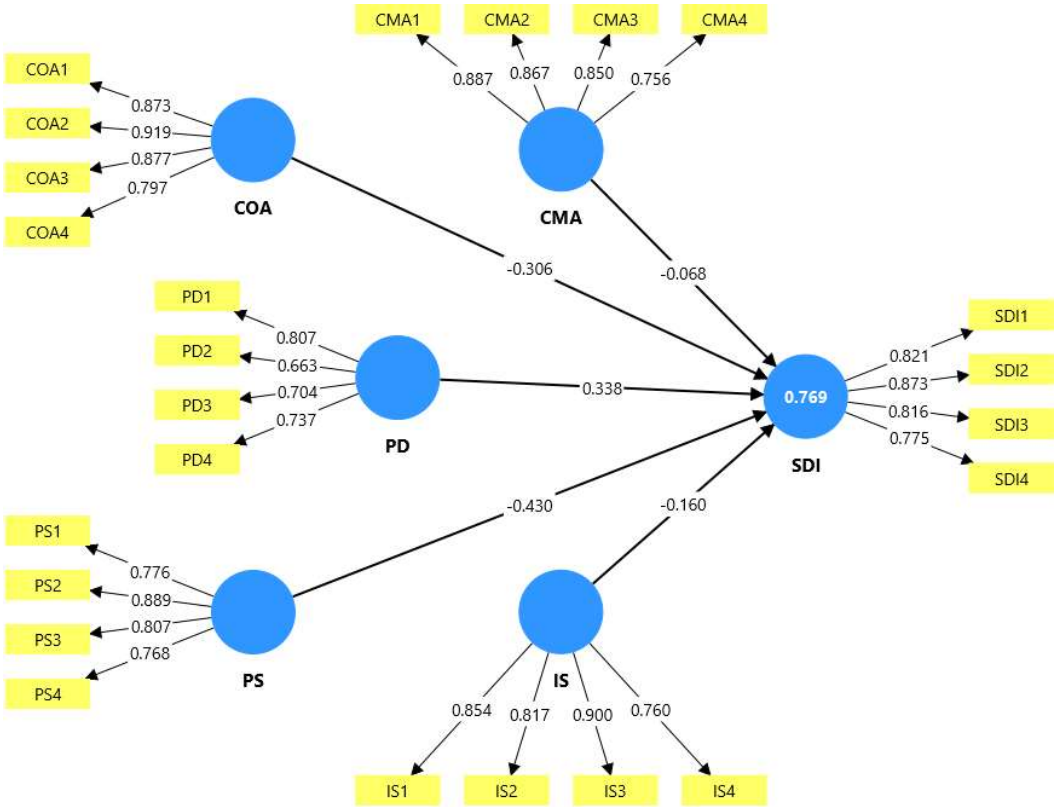
Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the validated structural model, showcasing the relative strength of the causal paths among the constructs. Placement Support emerged as the most influential negative predictor of dropout intention, followed by Career Opportunities Awareness and Institutional Support. In contrast, Program Duration was the only factor with a positive effect, underscoring concerns about the time and workload burden associated with postgraduate management programs. Although Curriculum-Market Alignment was theoretically expected to matter, its path was weak and statistically insignificant, suggesting that curriculum

relevance alone does not strongly shape dropout decisions unless complemented by institutional and career-related supports. Overall, the model reflects theoretical expectations, confirming that students' perceptions of institutional care, placement opportunities, program structure, and career clarity collectively influence their likelihood of persisting in higher education.

It is well indicated in the path relationship diagram that the major determinant of the choice that students have to pursue or exit their programs is what they expect to receive after graduating as well as how encouraged they feel about their studies. High placement support and adequate career advice seem to provide assurance to the students on their future, and they will not be willing to drop out. Conversely, the longer the program length, the more pressure is put on time, cost and workload thus making students more likely to drop out. The low status of curriculum alignment with the market implies that the students are not so much interested in the design of the curriculum per se but in the direct assistance and tangible results. On the whole, the model emphasizes the fact that support systems and career paths are more significant in student retention than academic material itself.

Figure 1

Path Relationship Diagram



Discussion

The results reported in this research study give solid empirical evidence in the form of four out of five of the proposed determinants of student dropout intention and, more importantly, indicate how the determinants can act in the particular socio-economic and institutional environment of higher learning in Nepal. The Placement Support was the strongest predictor of the dropout intention reduction among the factors analyzed, which underscored concerns relating to employability as the key feature of the postgraduate management students research. Although previous research in developed and developing settings highlights the importance of career development learning and employability pathways (Ho et al., 2023; Dahal et al., 2025), the intensity of this relationship in Nepal is attributed to remaining unemployment of the graduates and low rate of jobs within the country and high rates of migration intentions. Placement support does not simply represent an auxiliary service in such an environment, but serves as an important indicator of the economic worth and future usefulness of higher education. In the event where this signal is weak or unpredictable, the further enrolment can be viewed as a risky investment, thus, a higher risk of dropping out.

Similarly, the significant influence of Career Opportunity Awareness and Institutional Support is appropriate with the current student retention theories (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 2017; Lent et al., 1994), but because of the structural and informational constraints in Nepal, the effect is magnified. Nepalese students do not often have access to formal career advice, reliable information on the labor-market, and sensitive administrative systems than their counterparts in the more developed higher education systems. Consequently, the institutional support and career clarity are those compensatory responses leading to uncertainty reduction, feeling of belonging and confidence of the students in their capability to finish their degrees. This fact is corroborated by the specific country-based data, which indicates that the students are placing an increasing value on practical exposure, institutional responsiveness and industry ties as a way of mitigating unpredictable post-graduation outcomes (Adhikari, 2025, Timilsena et al., 2025).

The program duration on the other hand had a more significant positive relationship with dropout intention as a confirmation of the explanatory reason behind the Rational Choice Theory and the global results of negative reliance between time to degree and risk of dropping out (Arulampalam et al., 2004; Schmidt et al., 2010). The offered finding is, in particular, pertinent to Nepal, where a great number of post-graduate students are combining their studies with work, family, and intentions to travel to other countries. The inflexible and longer program structures increase the opportunity costs and slow the entry to labor markets, which lessens the persistence of the situation in which short-term earnings and mobility is typically prioritized over

long-term education advantages (Tiwari, 2025). According to this, the amount of time required to take the program is not only a burden as an academic press but also as a greater socio-economic constraint which defines the continuity of students.

Theoretical expectations were not significantly met; Curriculum-Market Alignment was not an important predictor of dropout intention. Even though the systematic review can find that curriculum relevance has the potential to boost student engagement (Véliz Palomino & Ortega, 2023), its low impact in Nepalese context could be explained by centralized curriculum management and low student agency. Compared to systems in which institutions and students actively engage in the development of curriculum, the Nepalese students tend to view curriculum design as a forced process that is slow in accommodating the market needs. Consequently, the issue of curriculum relevance takes a back seat to more short term and more practical concerns, which include institutional support, placement services, and program workload. This has also been found to be the case in other centralized or resource-constrained systems such that structural constraints dominate curricular factors in determining the dropout behavior (Howell et al., 2025; Barragana Moreno & Gonzalez Tamara, 2024).

Combined, the results of the studies contribute to the current body of research by contributing to showing that the dropout intention, although multidimensional in nature, the relative significance of its determinants varies greatly based on the context. Contrary to the situation in higher education system where curriculum relevance and academic factors dominate, this study reveals that in case of Nepal, employability signals, institutional responsiveness and structural constraints have more effect on the persistence decisions of students. Placing dropout intention in the socio-economic uncertainty of Nepal, as well as pressures to migrate, and centralized form of government, this paper is not only corroborating the earlier studies but also extending them by demonstrating why some determinants are more relevant in this situation than the rest. This means that the results add a refined contextualized view of student dropout intention in building out higher education systems.

Conclusion

This paper examined the factors that determine student dropout intentions amongst postgraduate management students in Nepal. The results demonstrate that Placement Support, Career Opportunities Awareness and Institutional Support are the factors that negatively influence dropout intention to a considerable extent, meaning that students who have more positive perceptions about institutional and career-related support are less inclined to quit their studies. Conversely, Program Duration was observed to positively impact significantly meaning that more demanding or

longer structures of programs, raise the chances of students dropping out. In the current study, Curriculum Market Alignment did not cause a statistically significant influence on dropout intention. In general, the findings suggest that postgraduate management students have a stronger dropout intention with regard to institutional support mechanisms, career-related aspects, and program structure than improvements of curriculum relevance. The model indicates a considerable percentage of variance of dropout intention, which validates the synergistic effect of these determinants in the case of the research.

Implications

Higher education institutions in Nepal should prioritize strengthening institutional support services- such as academic advising, counseling, and responsive administration because these directly reduce dropout intention and enhance student persistence. Although Curriculum–Market Alignment was statistically insignificant in this study, institutions should still modernize curricula and incorporate student feedback into reform processes, as limited student agency likely diminished its impact. Expanding career development opportunities is essential, given that placement support emerged as the strongest determinant; higher education providers should build robust industry partnerships, offer internships, and implement job-readiness programs to improve perceived employability. Program structures also require streamlining through timely assessments, reduced delays, and flexible pathways, as extended program duration significantly increases dropout risk. At the national level, higher-education authorities must invest in capacity building, curriculum flexibility, and comprehensive support systems to strengthen retention. Finally, future research should explore additional psychosocial factors, adopt longitudinal or mixed-method designs, examine regional and institutional variations, and apply advanced analytical techniques to capture the complex pathways influencing dropout intention in Nepal's higher education landscape.

References

Adhikari, B. R. (2025). Enhancing quality in Nepalese higher education: The role of community colleges. *Shweta Shardul, 21*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15709940

Arulampalam, W., Naylor, R. A., & Smith, J. (2004). A hazard model of the probability of medical school dropout in the United Kingdom. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society),167*(1), 157–178. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0964-1998.2003.00717.x

Bargmann, C., Thiele, L., & Kauffeld, S. (2022). Motivation matters: Predicting students' career decidedness and intention to drop out after the first year in

higher education. *Higher Education, 83*(5), 845–861. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00707-6

Barragán Moreno, S. P., & González Támara, L. (2024). Complexities of student dropout in higher education: A multidimensional analysis. *Frontiers in Education, 9.* https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1461650

Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S. (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research, 55*(4), 485–540. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543055004485

Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. University of Chicago Press.

Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226041223.001.0001

Coleman, J. S. (1990). *Foundations of social theory*. Harvard University Press.

Dahal, R. K., Ghimire, B., Sharma, D. R., Karki, D., & Joshi, S. P. (2025). Bridging the gap: How career development learning mediates higher education and employability outcomes in Nepal. *Problems and Perspectives in Management, 23*(1), 643–655. https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.23(1).2025.48

DesJardins, S. L., & Toutkoushian, R. K. (2005).Are students really rational? The development of rational thought and its application to student choice. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 20, 191–240. Springer.https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3279-X_4

Findeisen, S., Brodsky, A., Michaelis, C., Schimmelpenningh, B., & Seifried, J. (2024). Dropout intention: A valid predictor of actual dropout? *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training, 16*, Article 10.https://doi.org/10.1186/s40461-024-00165-1

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312

Ghimire, M., Mishra, A., & Bolar, J. (2024). Exploring dropouts as challenges in higher education in Nepal: A comprehensive review. *International Research Journal of MMC (IRJMMC), 5*(2), 21–28. https://doi.org/10.3126/irjmmc.v5i2.67727

Gurung, S. K., Chapagain, R., & Thapa, B. G. (2023). Perceptions of employability of undergraduate business program graduates: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of*

Business and Management, 7(1), 138–157. https://doi.org/10.3126/jbm.v7i01.52405

Hair, J. F., & Alamer, A. (2022). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in second language and education research: Guidelines using an applied example. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 100002. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2021.100002

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N., & Ray, S. (2021). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using R: A workbook*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7

Heublein, U. (2014). Student drop-out from German higher education institutions. *European Journal of Education, 49*(4), 497–513.https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12097

Ho, T. T. H., Le, V. H., Nguyen, D. T., Nguyen, C. T. P., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2023). Effects of career development learning on students' perceived employability: A longitudinal study. *Higher Education, 86*(2), 297–315. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00933-6

Hoffman, J. L., & Rush, E. (2017). Dropout prevention and trauma: Addressing a wide range of stressors that inhibit student success. *National Dropout Prevention Center.*Retrieved from: https://www.dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/dropout-prevention-and-trauma-2017-10.pdf

Howell, B., Hill, C., Myles, S., & Rojas, G. (2025). Nepal's transnational education landscape. *British Council Report.*https://doi.org/10.57884/GX8B-ZP33

Kahu, E. R., & Nelson, K. (2018). Student engagement in the educational interface: Understanding the mechanisms of student success. *Higher Education Research & Development, 37*(1), 58–71.https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1344197

Lee, Y., & Choi, J. (2011). A review of online course dropout research: Implications for practice and future research. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 59*(5), 593–618. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-010-9177-y

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*(1), 79–122. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027

Mahalingam, T. (2024). Bridging the gap between academia and industry: A case study of collaborative curriculum development. *International Journal of Business Performance Management, 25*(4), 589–603. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBPM.2024.10063237

Mercer-Mapstone, L., & Bovill, C. (2020). Equity and diversity in institutional approaches to student–staff partnership schemes in higher education. *Studies*

in Higher Education, 45(12), 2541–2557. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1620721

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Nurmalitasari, N., Awang Long, Z., & Mohd Noor, M. F. (2023). Factors influencing dropout students in higher education.*Education Research International.* https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/7704142

Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2017). Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In C. Homburg, M. Klarmann, & A. Vomberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Market Research* (pp. 1–40). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05542-8_15-1

Schmidt, H. G., Cohen-Schotanus, J., van der Molen, H. T., Splinter, T. A. W., Bulte, J., Holdrinet, R., & van Rossum, H. J. M. (2010). Learning more by being taught less: A "time-for-self-study" theory explaining curricular effects on graduation rate and study duration. *Higher Education, 60*(3), 287–300.https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9300-3

Sharma, H. M. (2025). Curriculum reform for the future: Aligning Nepalese education with global competencies. *Scholar's Digest: Journal of Educational Research & Training, 1*(1), 29–38.https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15709940

Sultana, R., & Malik, O. F. (2020). Protean career attitude, perceived internal employability and perceived external employability: Does self-efficacy make a difference? *Middle East Journal of Management, 7*(4), 343–364. https://doi.org/10.1504/MEJM.2020.108076

Thomas, D. S. P., & Quinlan, K. M. (2023). Reimagining curricula: Effects of cultural (in)sensitivity of curricula on racially minoritised students' engagement. *Studies in Higher Education, 48*(2), 283–298.https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2134332

Thomas, L. (2002). Student retention in higher education: The role of institutional habitus. *Journalof Education Policy, 17*(4), 423–442.https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930210140257

Timilsena, N. P., Khanal, G. P., & Devkota, K. M. (2025). Higher education in Nepal: Policy and prospects. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research, 8*(1), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.56805/ajhssr

Tinto, V. (2017). Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 19*(3), 254–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115621917

Tiwari, P. R. (2025). Migration aspirations among students: Evidence from Nepalese universities. *CESLAM Research Report.*https://www.ceslam.org/topic/migration-aspirations-among-students-evidence-from-nepalese-universities/

Trevor-Roberts, E., Parker, P., & Sandberg, J. (2019). How uncertainty affects career behaviour: A narrative approach. *Journal of Sociology, 44*(1), 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0312896218775801

Véliz Palomino, J. C., & Ortega, A. M. (2023). Dropout intentions in higher education: Systematic literature review. *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science, 16*(2), 149–158. https://doi.org/10.7160/eriesj.2023.160206

Xin, L., Zhou, W., Li, M., & Tang, F. (2020). Career success criteria clarity as a predictor of employment outcomes. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 540. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00540