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Factors Influencing Students' Dropout in Bachelor's Level

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Abstract

Various social, economic, and academic factors significantly contribute to students' dropout rates at the bachelor's level, affecting their educational attainment and posing challenges to higher education systems. This collaborative mini-research aimed to investigate the status of students' dropout rate in bachelor's level at Solukhumbu Multiple Campus and to explore the influencing factors for students' dropout. The researchers employed a mixed-method approach with a survey design, utilizing a pre-formulated questionnaire containing both open and closed-ended questions. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. The sample consisted of 56 dropout students from Solukhumbu Multiple Campus, selected using census sampling from three faculties (B.Ed., BBS, and B.A.) across admission year 2075 and exam years 2076-2079. This study identifies pronounced gender-based disparities in factors influencing student dropout rates. Female respondents expressed significantly higher dissatisfaction with the examination system, citing marriage and child rearing as major impediments to academic progress. They were more likely to attribute low examination performance and inadequate family support to their dropout decisions, emphasizing the critical roles of timely exam scheduling and parental awareness. In contrast, males were less concerned with these issues, instead highlighting employment opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures as pivotal factors in their decision to discontinue studies. These findings highlight the importance of implementing gender-sensitive strategies to improve student retention.

Key words: dropout, socioeconomic factors, academic performance, higher education

Introduction

Higher education institutions worldwide grapple with the persistent challenge of student dropout rates. University attrition is a prominent and concerning phenomenon, with statistics illustrating its global prevalence. According to data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), one-fifth of students embarking on tertiary education do not successfully complete their programs. In Spain, as outlined in a report by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEFP, 2019), the dropout rate is notably higher, with approximately 30% of students discontinuing their university studies, primarily within the first year. The latest figures from Eurostat (2020) reveal that Malta has the highest university dropout rate, standing at 18.4%, closely followed by Spain at 18.3%. Romania ranks third in this concerning statistic, with an 18.1% dropout rate (Oswaldo et al., 2023).

The net student enrollment rate in Nepal is 14%, whereas it is 30% among developing countries. The net enrollment rate has decreased by 1% compared to the previous year. In view of gradual decrease in net enrollment over 3 years. It is challenging to achieve the goal of upgrading Nepal to a status of a developing country by 2022. The overall passing rate in higher education this year has improved and reached 32% as compared to below 27% in the previous year. And yet, it is challenging to achieve the 100% passing rate. The passing rate in general education stands at 25%, whereas it is 37% in the technical areas, and at the master's level, it is 62%. Therefore, it is challenging to improve the quality of higher education with drastic reformation, especially when almost 38% of investment is being wasted (UGC Annual Report 2018/019).

The number of students leaving the country in search of quality education and subsequent employment is increasing due to the lack of quality education and the opportunities to study technical subjects. The data from 2017/2018 shows that 60000 students left the country for higher education abroad. This figure will reach 90000 if those students who have gone to India for higher education are added. This has led to an increased flight of a huge amount of capital to foreign countries. Unless quality education and assurance of employment are not available within the country, the trend of students leaving the country to pursue higher education abroad is less likely to abate (UGC Annual Report 2018/019).

Student dropout in higher education is a prominent topic in many countries, such as Spain, the United States, Germany, and Indonesia. Dropout is a persistent issue in higher education at present. Some of the findings adopted here denote that five primary factors contributing to dropouts are: student adaptation, personality, socio-economic status, teacher-student relationships, and education quality, with underlying factors like demotivation and low self-esteem warranting attention for effective mitigation. Dropouts negatively impact individuals, universities, and socioeconomic status. Student dropout involves physical and psychological loss at the individual level. Students experience depression due to inadequacy and self-doubt, which are associated with dropouts. Besides, they will be aware of wasting time, money, effort, and personal resources (Nurmalitasari et al., 2023). In this research, students dropped out in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 where the researchers used 2018 B.S. as a base year or admitted year.

Dropping out of higher education is a global phenomenon, and it affects virtually all universities (UNESCO, 2004, as cited in Bernardo et.al, 2016). That is why higher education institutions have researched the kinds of dropouts, their causes, and consequences ever since the early 20th century and in particular since the 1970s. Duran Aponte and Pujol (2012) argue that university drop-outs can be classified under one of three heads: voluntary (voluntary or forced drop-out); temporary (whether initial, early, or late); scope (internal, institutional, or from the education system). However, research currently under way on the phenomenon tends to focus on initial or early voluntary drop-out (that is, during the first year of university). That is because this is when most drop-outs tend to occur (Castano et al., 2004, as cited in Subedi, 2022). Also, for practical reasons, most studies focus on internal drop-outs (or change of degree) and institutional drop-outs (where students leave the university concerned but do not necessarily stop studying, whether at a university or other institution). There are various types of opinions on factors influencing dropout rates in higher education in Nepal that create a debate on whether campus education should be in an open learning model or not. Some people argue that campus education should be skill based or technical. So, this collaborative mini research tries to explore the influencing factors for students' dropout rate at the bachelor's level in Solukhumbu Multiple Campus.

Student dropout in higher education is a critical issue globally and in Nepal, including at Solukhumbu Multiple Campus. Despite government investments and support initiatives like scholarships and counseling, high dropout rates persist. Factors include a preference for vocational education, financial challenges, and prioritizing language studies for opportunities abroad. This study investigates dropout rates in the faculties of education, management, and humanities, with the specific objectives of examining the status of dropout rates at the bachelor's level and exploring the key factors influencing students' decisions to leave their studies. The research aims to propose strategies to improve retention and strengthen Nepal's education system.

Literature Review

Understanding the multifaceted factors influencing student dropout at the bachelor's level, including financial challenges, social integration, academic difficulties, and personal factors, is essential for developing targeted interventions that enhance retention and student success in higher education. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a compelling framework for understanding factors influencing student dropout in higher education. Maslow's theory posits that human needs are organized in a hierarchical structure, beginning with basic physiological needs and advancing through safety, social belonging, esteem, and ultimately self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). This theoretical model can help explain why students may withdraw from their academic programs.

The interplay of foundational physiological needs, safety concerns, and social belongingness significantly influences student retention, as unmet basic needs and a lack of supportive relationships can greatly increase the likelihood of dropout among students. At the foundational level, physiological needs such as food, shelter, and health are critical. Students who face financial challenges, inadequate housing, or health issues may struggle to meet these basic needs, which can severely impact their ability to concentrate on their studies and increase the likelihood of dropout. Moving up the hierarchy, safety needs encompass physical

and financial security. Students who perceive threats to their safety or experience financial instability may be more inclined to leave their educational programs. Issues such as crime on campus, personal safety concerns, or financial instability can undermine students' sense of security and contribute to higher dropout rates. Social belongingness needs involve the desire for meaningful relationships and a sense of community. Students who struggle to form friendships or feel isolated may experience emotional distress that can lead to dropout. A lack of supportive social networks and a sense of connection on campus can diminish students' motivation to continue their studies.

Esteem needs, which include self-esteem and the desire for respect, are also significant. Students who do not receive positive feedback or fail to achieve academic success may suffer from low self-esteem, which can undermine their motivation and increase dropout rates. Finally, self-actualization represents the fulfillment of one's potential. Students who do not perceive a clear connection between their academic pursuits and their long-term goals may become disillusioned and consider dropping out. Addressing these needs through targeted support measures, such as financial aid, academic counseling, and community-building initiatives, can help institutions reduce dropout rates and enhance student retention (eNotes Editorial, 2017).

Recent research highlights a multifaceted array of determinants impacting student persistence. For instance, financial challenges, including tuition fees and living expenses, have been consistently identified as significant predictors of dropout, as students struggling with economic burdens may face difficulties in maintaining enrollment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2020). Additionally, social integration and emotional support play critical roles; students who lack a strong sense of belonging or supportive peer networks are more likely to withdraw from their programs (Tinto, 1993). Academic difficulties and insufficient institutional support also contribute to higher dropout rates, with students who encounter persistent academic challenges without adequate resources or guidance being at greater risk (Chen & Soldner, 2013). Moreover, personal factors such as mental health issues and unclear career goals further exacerbate dropout rates, as they can diminish students' motivation and engagement with their studies (Conley et al., 2014). Addressing these issues through targeted interventions, such as enhanced financial aid, academic support services, and fostering a supportive campus environment, is essential for improving student retention and success in higher education.

Recent empirical studies have shed light on the factors influencing dropout rates among bachelor's students. Aoun et al. (2023) investigated the impact of academic and social integration, finding that students who experienced high levels of academic support and social connectedness were significantly less likely to drop out. This longitudinal study tracked students over three years, employing a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. In a related study, Patel and Chen (2024) examined the role of financial stress and mental health, revealing that students facing financial strain were more prone to withdrawal, while mental health issues like anxiety and depression further increased dropout risk. Their large-scale survey across multiple universities highlighted the importance of addressing both financial and psychological barriers to enhance student retention rates.

Research Methodology Top of Form Bottom of Form

Researchers used a mixed research method and a survey as a research design to obtain the information from the respondents. The population of this study was all the dropout students from three faculties (B.Ed., BBS and B.A) of Solukhumbu Multiple Campus, counting the base year of admission 2075 and exam years 2076, 2077, 2078, and 2079. Among them, 56 dropout students were selected as a sample population by using the census sampling procedure. Similarly, a pre-formulated questionnaire in which both open ended and closed ended questions were included as research tools. Both primary and secondary sources were used for sources of data, and the collected data were analyzed statistically and descriptively with common themes.

Result and Discussion

Both qualitative and quantitative data collected through open ended and closed ended questionnaire were analyzed by statistical tools like percentages and descriptive analysis of data presented in the table.

I left my study because of dissatisfaction toward the examination system :

Dissatisfaction with the examination system highlights the impact of assessment methods on student motivation and retention. It underscores the need for educational reform to create more supportive and effective evaluation processes.

Table 1

I left my study because of dissatisfaction toward the examination system

Components	Female	Male
Disagree	20	12.73
Strongly Agree	21.82	10.91
Strongly Disagree	12.73	5.45
Agree	12.73	3.64

Table 1 presents data on the reasons for leaving a study due to dissatisfaction with the examination system, broken down by gender. Females exhibited higher percentages in both the "Strongly Agree" (21.82%) and "Strongly Disagree" (12.73%) categories compared to males (10.91% and 5.45% respectively). Conversely, males had a slightly higher percentage in the "Disagree" category (12.73%) compared to females (20%). These findings suggest that females are more polarized in their views toward the examination system, with a notable portion strongly agreeing or strongly disagreeing with its role in their decision to leave the study. In contrast, males seem to have a more evenly distributed perception across the categories. Further analysis could explore the specific aspects of the examination system that contribute to dissatisfaction, as well as potential gender-related differences in coping strategies or expectations regarding academic evaluation.

Maslow's theory suggests that individuals strive for self-actualization, which includes realizing one's potential and pursuing meaningful goals. Dissatisfaction with the examination

system may reflect a discrepancy between personal values and the educational structure, hindering the fulfillment of higher-order needs such as self-actualization. This dissatisfaction could lead to disengagement from academic pursuits as individuals seek environments that better align with their values and aspirations.

I was a regular student on this campus. However, I left my study due to low achievement in the examination :

Academic challenges emphasize the struggles students face with performance and support systems. It reflects the broader issue of how inadequate academic resources can lead to student disengagement and dropout.

Table 2

I was a regular student on this campus. However, I left my studies due to low achievement in the examination

Components	Female	Male
Disagree	27.27	12.73
Agree	18.18	12.73
Strongly Disagree	10.91	5.45
Strongly Agree	10.91	1.82

Table 2 displays data related to reasons for leaving a study due to low achievement in examinations, segmented by gender. The data reveals that a higher proportion of females disagreed (27.27%) compared to males (12.73%) regarding the notion that low achievement in examinations led to their departure from the study. Additionally, a higher percentage of females agreed (18.18%) or strongly agreed (10.91%) with this reason compared to males (12.73% and 1.82% respectively). Conversely, a larger percentage of males strongly disagreed (5.45%) compared to females (10.91%). These findings suggest that while both genders acknowledge the role of low achievement in examinations as a reason for leaving the study, females are more likely to agree or strongly agree with this sentiment, while males are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree. Further exploration into the specific factors contributing to low achievement and its impact on study retention for each gender may provide valuable insights for improving academic support systems.

Maslow's theory emphasizes the importance of esteem needs, including the desire for achievement and recognition. Low achievement in examinations may impact one's self-esteem and sense of competence, contributing to feelings of inadequacy or failure. In response, individuals may discontinue their studies to seek environments where they can regain a sense of competence and achievement, aligning with their esteem needs.

I got married while I was studying. So, I could not continue my study :

Personal life changes underscore how significant life events, such as marriage, can disrupt educational pursuits. It highlights the need for institutions to consider and support students' varying personal circumstances to promote retention.

Table 3

I got married while I was studying. So, I could not continue my study

Components	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	52.73	7.27
Disagree	5.45	18.18
Strongly Disagree	3.64	7.27
Agree	5.45	0

The provided data illustrates significant differences in the agreement levels between females and males regarding the statement "I got married while I was studying, so I could not continue my study." Notably, a substantial majority of females (52.73%) strongly agree with the statement, in stark contrast to only 7.27% of males who express the same sentiment. Conversely, a higher proportion of males (18.18%) disagree with the statement compared to females (5.45%). Interestingly, while a small percentage of both females (3.64%) and males (7.27%) strongly disagree, there is an absence of agreement among males. These findings suggest a notable gender disparity in perceptions regarding the impact of marriage on academic pursuits, with a higher prevalence of agreement among females and a higher prevalence of disagreement among males. Further investigation into the underlying factors influencing these contrasting viewpoints could provide valuable insights into the intersection of marriage and educational aspirations among different genders.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, individuals strive for self-actualization, which includes fulfilling their potential through education and personal development. Marriage during a period of study may introduce new responsibilities and challenges, potentially hindering one's ability to fulfill higher-level needs such as academic pursuits. This conflict between marriage and educational aspirations highlights the dynamic interplay between personal relationships and the pursuit of self-actualization as outlined in Maslow's theory

I had a small child. So, I could not complete my study :

Family responsibilities emphasize how childcare obligations can hinder students' ability to focus on their education. It illustrates the importance of flexible academic programs and support services to accommodate parents pursuing their studies.

Table 4

I had a small child. So, I could not complete my study

Components	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	50.91	1.82
Disagree	7.27	20
Strongly Disagree	5.45	10.91
Agree	3.64	0

The data provided reveals notable differences in agreement levels between females and males regarding the statement "I had a small child, so I could not complete my study." The majority of females (50.91%) strongly agree with the statement, while only a marginal percentage of males (1.82%) share the same sentiment. Conversely, a higher proportion of males (20%) disagree with the statement compared to females (7.27%). Additionally, a notable percentage of females (5.45%) strongly disagree with the statement, contrasting with 10.91% of males who express the same sentiment. Interestingly, no males indicated agreement with the statement, while a small percentage of females (3.64%) did. These findings suggest a gendered perspective on the challenges posed by parenthood in completing one's studies, with females more likely to perceive it as a hindrance compared to males. Further exploration into the reasons behind these differing perceptions could offer valuable insights into the intersection of family responsibilities and educational pursuits among different genders.

Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs suggests that individuals prioritize fulfilling basic physiological and safety needs before pursuing higher-level needs such as belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Having a small child introduces new responsibilities related to caregiving and ensuring the child's well-being, which can become primary concerns, thus potentially hindering the pursuit of higher education. This situation reflects the prioritization of basic needs over higher-level needs, as individuals focus on meeting the immediate needs of their child before being able to dedicate time and resources to their own educational aspirations.

When I was studying, I joined a job. So I could not manage time for further study :

Work-life balance highlights the challenges students face when juggling employment and academic commitments. It underscores the need for flexible study options and time management support to help students succeed in both areas.

Table 5

When I was studying, I joined a job. So I could not manage time for further study

Components	Female	Male
Disagree	30.36	10.71
Agree	19.64	10.71
Strongly Agree	10.71	12.5
Strongly Disagree	5.36	0

Table 5 presents data regarding the impact of joining a job on the ability to manage time for further study, categorized by gender. The data indicates that a higher percentage of females agreed (19.64%) compared to males (10.71%) with the statement that joining a job affected their ability to manage time for further study. Additionally, a higher proportion of females strongly agreed (10.71%) compared to males (12.5%). Conversely, a larger percentage of males disagreed (10.71%) compared to females (30.36%) with this statement. Notably, only females reported a percentage of strongly disagreeing (5.36%), while no males

strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that joining a job during studies may have a greater impact on time management for females compared to males, as evidenced by their higher agreement and strong agreement percentages. Further examination of the specific challenges and support mechanisms for students balancing work and studies, particularly among female students, could inform strategies to better assist them in managing their time effectively and continuing their education.

Maslow's theory highlights the importance of safety and security needs, including financial stability, in human motivation. Joining a job while studying may have been a response to fulfill these needs, ensuring a sense of security and stability. However, balancing work and study commitments can be challenging, leading to time management difficulties and potentially impacting academic progress. In this context, the decision to prioritize employment over further study reflects an attempt to address immediate safety and security concerns, in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Due to the geographical distance from home to campus, I could not manage time for further study :

Geographical barriers emphasize how distance and travel constraints can impact students' ability to engage in their studies. It highlights the necessity for institutions to consider location factors and provide accessible solutions to enhance student retention.

Table 6

Due to the geographical distance from home to campus, I could not manage time for further study

Components	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	43.64	20
Agree	10.91	7.27
Disagree	9.09	5.45
Strongly Disagree	3.64	0

Table 6 provides data on the impact of geographical distance from home to campus on the ability to manage time for further study, categorized by gender. The data reveals that a significantly higher percentage of females strongly agree (43.64%) compared to males (20%) that geographical distance from home to campus affected their ability to manage time for further study. Additionally, a higher proportion of females agree (10.91%) compared to males (7.27%) with this statement. Conversely, a larger percentage of males disagree (5.45%) compared to females (9.09%), with no males strongly disagreeing. These findings suggest that geographical distance from home to campus may have a more pronounced impact on time management for females compared to males, as evidenced by their higher agreement and strong agreement percentages. Further examination into the specific challenges posed by geographical distance and potential support mechanisms, particularly for female students, could inform strategies to address this barrier and facilitate continued education.

Maslow's theory emphasizes the significance of physiological and safety needs, including the need for shelter and security. Geographical distance from home to campus may create logistical challenges that impact one's ability to meet these needs. Managing time for further study becomes difficult when commuting long distances, as it can lead to fatigue, stress, and concerns about safety and well-being. Consequently, individuals may prioritize addressing these geographical barriers to ensure their basic needs are met before considering further educational pursuits, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

I left campus and started to learn a foreign language to go abroad :

Shifting academic priorities reflects how students may change their focus from traditional studies to language acquisition for opportunities abroad. It underscores the importance of understanding students' aspirations and providing pathways that align with their goals.

Table 7

I left campus and started to learn a foreign language to go abroad

Components	Female	Male
Disagree	41.82	18.18
Strongly Disagree	12.73	5.45
Strongly Agree	7.27	5.45
Agree	5.45	3.64

Table 7 provides data regarding the decision to leave campus and start learning a foreign language to go abroad, segmented by gender. The data indicates that a higher percentage of females disagreed (41.82%) compared to males (18.18%) with the statement that they left campus for this reason. Additionally, a higher proportion of females strongly disagreed (12.73%) compared to males (5.45%). Conversely, a slightly higher percentage of males strongly agreed (5.45%) compared to females (7.27%) with this statement. There were also minor differences in the agreement percentages, with slightly higher percentages for females in both the agree and strongly agree categories compared to males. These findings suggest that while both genders may consider leaving campus to learn a foreign language for the purpose of going abroad, there are notable differences in the extent to which they agree or disagree with this decision. Further exploration into the motivations and opportunities related to foreign language learning and international experiences for both genders could provide valuable insights into educational aspirations and career goals.

Maslow's theory emphasizes self-actualization, the realization of one's potential and pursuit of personal growth. Learning a foreign language to go abroad aligns with this concept, as it represents a quest for new experiences and cultural enrichment. By leaving campus and dedicating time to language learning, individuals prioritize their personal goals and aspirations, seeking fulfillment through international opportunities. This decision reflects a pursuit of self-actualization, where individuals prioritize their personal growth and development over traditional educational pursuits, consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Lack of timely conduct of examinations and publication of results, I was unable to continue my study :

Administrative inefficiencies highlight how delays in examinations and result publication can disrupt students' educational journeys. It underscores the need for institutions to streamline processes to enhance student retention and academic progress.

Table 8

Lack of timely conduct of examinations and publication of results, I was unable to continue my study

Components	Female	Male
Disagree	29.09	18.18
Strongly Agree	18.18	9.09
Strongly Disagree	18.18	5.45
Agree	1.82	0

Table 8 presents data on the impact of the lack of timely conduct of examinations and publication of results on the ability to continue studies, categorized by gender. The data indicates that a higher percentage of females strongly agree (18.18%) compared to males (9.09%) with the statement that they were unable to continue their study due to this reason. Additionally, a higher proportion of females strongly disagree (18.18%) compared to males (5.45%). Conversely, a higher percentage of males disagree (18.18%) compared to females (29.09%) with this statement. There was also a small percentage of females (1.82%) who agreed with this statement, while no males did. These findings suggest that while both genders may face challenges related to the timely conduction of examinations and publication of results, females are more likely to strongly agree with the notion that it led them to discontinue their studies. Further examination of the examination and result publication processes, as well as the communication of these timelines to students, could help address barriers to study continuation and academic success, particularly for female students.

Maslow's theory emphasizes the importance of safety and security needs, including predictability and stability, in human motivation. Lack of timely conduction of examinations and publication of results can disrupt individuals' sense of security and create uncertainty about their academic progress. In such circumstances, the inability to continue study may stem from a desire to address the immediate need for clarity and stability in academic procedures. Individuals may prioritize finding educational environments with more reliable processes to fulfill their safety and security needs, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The lack of practical content in the curriculum demotivated to study further :

Curriculum relevance emphasizes the importance of practical content in education to engage and motivate students. It highlights the need for curricula that align with real-world applications to enhance student interest and retention.

Table 9

The lack of practical content in the curriculum demotivated to study further

Components	Female	Male
Disagree	29.09	7.27
Agree	18.18	12.73
Strongly Agree	14.55	12.73
Strongly Disagree	5.45	0

Table 9 presents data on the impact of the lack of practical contents in the curriculum on motivation to study further, categorized by gender. The data shows that a higher percentage of females disagree (29.09%) compared to males (7.27%) with the statement that the lack of practical contents in the curriculum demotivated them to study further. Additionally, a higher proportion of females agree (18.18%) compared to males (12.73%) with this statement. Similarly, a higher percentage of females strongly agree (14.55%) compared to males (12.73%). Conversely, a larger percentage of males strongly disagree (0%) compared to females (5.45%). These findings suggest that while both genders may have differing perspectives on the inclusion of practical contents in the curriculum, females are more likely to disagree with the notion that it demotivated them to study further. Further examination of the preferences and learning needs of students regarding curriculum content, particularly from the perspective of female students, could inform curriculum development efforts aimed at enhancing student engagement and motivation.

Maslow's theory emphasizes the importance of self-actualization, which involves realizing one's potential and pursuing personal growth and fulfillment. Lack of practical content in the curriculum can hinder individuals' ability to engage with their studies and develop real-world skills, impacting their sense of competence and hindering their motivation to continue. In such cases, leaving study may reflect a desire to seek alternative educational paths or environments that better align with individuals' aspirations for personal growth and practical skill development, in line with the pursuit of self-actualization as described in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The poor economic status of my family compelled me to leave campus :

Economic hardship underscores how financial constraints can significantly impact students' ability to continue their education. It highlights the necessity for institutions to provide financial support and resources to help alleviate economic barriers to retention.

Table 10

The poor economic status of my family compelled me to leave campus.

Components	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	40	16.36
Disagree	10.91	9.09
Agree	12.73	5.45
Strongly Disagree	3.64	1.82

Table 10 presents data regarding the impact of the poor economic status of students' families on their decisions to leave the campus. Among female respondents, 40% strongly agreed and 10.91% disagreed with the statement, while 12.73% agreed and 3.64% strongly disagreed. For male respondents, 16.36% strongly agreed, 9.09% disagreed, 5.45% agreed, and 1.82% strongly disagreed.

These results indicate that a significantly higher percentage of female students strongly agreed with the notion that the poor economic status of their families compelled them to leave the campus compared to male students. Conversely, a smaller percentage of female students disagreed with the statement compared to male students. Overall, the data highlights the significant impact of economic status on student decisions to leave the campus, with notable differences in perception between female and male respondents. The poor economic status of the family directly impact individuals' ability to fulfill their basic physiological and safety needs within Maslow's hierarchy. Without financial stability, individuals may struggle to afford tuition fees and basic necessities, hindering their progress toward higher-level needs such as belongingness and esteem. This economic barrier can lead to feelings of insecurity and stress, ultimately compelling individuals to leave campus in search of stability and security for themselves and their families.

After married, my family did not support me to continue my study :

Familial support emphasizes how lack of encouragement from family can hinder students' educational pursuits. It highlights the need for supportive environments that empower individuals to continue their studies despite personal and familial challenges.

Table 11

After married, my family did not support me to continue my study

Components	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	30.91	3.64
Disagree	14.55	18.18
Agree	16.36	0
Strongly Disagree	5.45	10.91

Table 11 presents data regarding the impact of lack of family support after marriage on students' decisions to continue their studies. Among female respondents, 30.91% strongly agreed, 14.55% disagreed, 16.36% agreed, and 5.45% strongly disagreed with the statement. For male respondents, 3.64% strongly agreed, 18.18% disagreed, 10.91% strongly disagreed, and none agreed.

These findings reveal a compelling gender disparity, with a markedly higher percentage of female students strongly affirming that lack of family support following marriage significantly hindered their ability to pursue their studies. Conversely, a smaller percentage of female students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement compared to male students. Overall, the data highlights the impact of lack of family support after marriage on female students' decisions to continue their studies, with notable differences in perception

between female and male respondents. The lack of support from family after marriage hinders individuals' ability to fulfill their educational aspirations, impacting their sense of belonging and esteem within Maslow's hierarchy. Without familial encouragement, individuals may struggle to prioritize their academic goals, hindering their progress towards higher-level needs such as self-actualization. This lack of support reflects the challenge of balancing familial responsibilities with personal growth, highlighting the interplay between social relationships and individual aspirations in Maslow's theory.

Lack of parental awareness towards education, I could not continue my study :

Parental awareness underscores the critical role that family understanding and support play in a student's educational journey. It highlights the need for initiatives that educate families about the importance of academic engagement to promote student retention.

Table 12

Lack of parental awareness towards education, I could not continue my study

Components	Female	Male
Strongly Agree	38.18	12.73
Agree	20	10.91
Disagree	5.45	9.09
Strongly Disagree	3.64	0

Table 12 presents data regarding the impact of lack of parental awareness towards education on students' ability to continue their studies. Among female respondents, 38.18% strongly agreed and 20% agreed with the statement, while 5.45% disagreed and 3.64% strongly disagreed. For male respondents, 12.73% strongly agreed, 10.91% agreed, 9.09% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed.

These results suggest that a significantly higher percentage of female students agreed with the notion that lack of parental awareness towards education hindered their ability to continue their studies compared to male students. Conversely, a smaller percentage of female students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement compared to male students. Overall, the data highlights the impact of lack of parental awareness towards education on female students' decisions to continue their studies, with notable differences in perception between female and male respondents. The lack of parental awareness towards education affects individuals' sense of belonging and esteem within Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Without parental guidance and support, individuals may struggle to prioritize their educational goals, hindering their progress towards higher-level needs such as self-actualization. This lack of awareness highlights the significance of familial influence in fostering personal growth and academic success, as outlined in Maslow's theory.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study contributes to higher education by illuminating the nuanced gender disparities in student dropout rates and the factors influencing these decisions. By highlighting how female students exhibit greater dissatisfaction with the examination system, face more

significant challenges related to family responsibilities, and perceive marriage and childcare as barriers to academic success, the research underscores the need for targeted interventions. The findings draw on gender theory, which posits that societal norms and expectations significantly shape individual experiences and choices. The data suggest that traditional gender roles impact educational trajectories, with females disproportionately affected by familial and societal pressures. The implications of this study are far-reaching, suggesting that educational institutions must adopt gender-sensitive approaches to support students. By addressing the specific needs of female students—such as enhancing academic support, providing flexible learning options, and fostering parental awareness—institutions can create an environment that promotes retention and success. These insights emphasize the importance of holistic educational policies that recognize and respond to the diverse challenges faced by students in higher education.

To address the factors contributing to student dropout and discontinuation of studies, a comprehensive set of recommendations is essential at the policy, practice, and research levels. At the policy level, institutions should develop and implement strategies that specifically target the socio-economic barriers students face, ensuring timely conduct of examinations and prompt publication of results. Practically, establishing support programs tailored for students navigating personal challenges, such as marriage and parenthood, can significantly aid in their academic persistence. Additionally, implementing student-focused services and robust follow-up mechanisms within campus administration will help meet students' expectations and provide necessary support throughout their academic journeys. At the research level, further investigations are warranted to understand the impacts of factors like teacher motivation, classroom participation, and social dynamics on student retention. Additionally, evaluating the effectiveness of various teaching methods, curriculum designs, and support programs will enhance student engagement and motivation, ultimately fostering a more supportive educational environment.

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