



**FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNERS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT
SCHOOL IN MANOLO FORTICH, BUKIDNON**

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ABSTRACT

School dropout is a major problem as it has negative impacts that result in high social costs. Hence, this study is conducted to determine the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, this study sought to: 1) describe the respondents' characteristics in terms of sex, grade level, number of siblings, parents occupation, highest educational attainment and family income; 2) find the level of the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school, and 3) determine the significant relationship between the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school. The respondents were the preidentified one hundred seventy-eight (178) learners from Manolo Fortich District III, Bukidnon. This study made use of the correlation method of research. The instrument was patterned and modified from Parreño (2023). Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and standard deviation were used to describe the variables in the study and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was employed in determining the significant relationship between the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school and their characteristics.

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The findings reveal that the level of factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school is high. There is no significant relationship between the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school and their characteristics. It is recommended that future studies should be conducted by researchers in other places and essential factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school.

Keywords: *Learners at risk of dropping out of school*

INTRODUCTION

The factors that put learners at risk of dropping out school are critical to understand why learners exit educational programs early. Dropout rates were influenced by a variety of factors, and understanding them can help educators, policymakers, and stakeholders devise effective interventions to address the problem. As an educator, the researcher observes the importance of learners' lives after they complete the educational program. On the other hand, the underlying variables that affect learners at risk of dropping out school have a significant impact on the learners' future life.

For five years in DepEd, the researcher observed in his previous work assignment that it is very difficult for learners to prioritize education in communities with high poverty rates or insufficient economic resources. Economic challenges may drive learners to drop out of school in

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order to support their family's daily subsistence. Moreover, learners lack role models who have pursued and excelled in their studies since higher education completion is uncommon in the locality. In the absence of strong role models in the community, learners may lose sight of the importance of education, leading to greater dropout rates. Peer pressure in the community also plays an important role in rising dropout rates. Learners may be more prone to drop out if they are surrounded by peers who have dropped out to engage in dangerous behaviors. Learners' academic progress is also hampered by some communities with insufficient access to quality educational resources, such as libraries, tutoring facilities, or educational programs. In some instances, frustration and apathy in learning are exacerbated by a lack of resources and assistance in the community.

Another reason for the rising dropout rates was that learners may suffer major academic difficulties, such as absenteeism, failing grades, being unable to cope up with studies, or feeling overwhelmed by the material such as self-learning modules. Absenteeism leads to missing opportunities in academic progress. Most of the time, absenteeism can lead to loss of interest in education and learners can be at risk of dropping out of school. Failing grades can damage a learner's confidence in their academic talents and reduce their willingness to attempt again. When learners constantly struggle academically and believe that their efforts are not in good standing, they become discouraged and lose interest in continuing their education. Some learners may have special learning issues or disabilities that make it difficult for them to comprehend and retain

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information in the same manner as their classmates, and these difficulties have contributed to an increase in the number of learners at risk of dropping out of school. Learners suffer academically on a frequent basis; they may grow weary and decide to leave school.

Furthermore, parents' support contributes to a meaningful impact on a learner's education. Parents who are emotionally aloof or concerned with their own concerns may be unable to offer their children the required emotional support. Learners may feel unsupported, lonely, and uninspired as a result of this.

In addition, bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that involves repeated harassment, intimidation, or mistreatment of a person by individuals or groups. When learners experience persistent bullying, it can have severe psychological, emotional, and academic consequences, ultimately leading them to disengage from their education. Also, tribal practices like early marriages or pre-arranged marriages by the parents and may be contracted at a young age. Cultural and traditional beliefs and practices play a role in early marriage. Some communities had deep-rooted traditions that prioritized early marriage, considering it a way to preserve cultural values or maintain social status. It was also noted that limited access to quality education can increase the likelihood of learners' early marriage. Inadequate educational facilities, lack of resources, and distant schools may discourage learners from pursuing their education, making them more vulnerable to early marriage and resulting in teenage pregnancy.

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With these observations, this study was conducted to determine the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school, particularly in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, where the researcher is assigned.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study made use of the descriptive-correlational method of research. It is a research design that aims to explore and describe the relationship between variables without manipulating or intervening in the natural setting. It involved collecting data to examine the associations or correlations between variables as they naturally occur. This design helped researchers understand the extent and nature of the relationship between variables, but it does not establish causation. Relationship between variables was typically analyzed using statistical measures such as correlation coefficients. The most commonly used correlation coefficient is the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), which ranges from -1 to +1. A positive correlation (ranging from 0 to +1) indicates that as one variable increases, the other variable tends to increase as well.

A negative correlation (ranging from 0 to -1) indicates that as one variable increases, the other variable tends to decrease. It offers a way to assess the likelihood that learners could drop out if they had particular traits like those mentioned (poverty, distance and accessibility, lack of resources, lack of support and guidance, bullying and safety concerns, early marriage and teenage pregnancy). The learner's findings gave the likelihood that a learner may drop out given specific

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criteria. Between the ages of 8 and 18, pupils in LARDO schools were taken into account. For this study, two stages were carried out to determine a representative sample. An initial pre-identification of LARDO is done in the first stage. according to the inclusion and exclusion standards.

Research Setting

This study was conducted in the nine (9) elementary schools in Manolo Fortich District III of the Division of Bukidnon. Based on the pre-identification. Manolo Fortich is a municipality located in the province of Bukidnon, Philippines. It is primarily an agricultural area known for its vast plantations and farms. The socio-economic status of the town can be described as predominantly rural, with agriculture being the main source of income for many residents. The economy of Manolo Fortich relies heavily on the production of crops such as sugarcane, pineapple, corn, rice, and various fruits and vegetables. The municipality is also known for its coffee production, which contributes to the local economy.

Additionally, livestock farming and poultry raising are common agricultural activities in the area. In terms of infrastructure and services, Manolo Fortich has basic amenities such as schools, health centers, and local markets. However, it may have limited access to certain urban facilities and services compared to more developed urban areas. It is important to note that specific data on the socio-economic status of Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, including indicators such as income

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levels, poverty rates, and employment rates, may vary over time and can be more accurately obtained through official government sources or local statistical agencies.

As they filled out, the advisers noted LARDOs with the DORP. Examination required by DepEd Order No. 74 s. 2010. Given that the identification is probabilistic, it included all of the advisers' LARDOs that had been detected as an exhaustive listing at this time. That was done because the precursors to dropping out are so obscure and may not be that simple to locate. It was also crucial and should take into account the possibility of the complexity of the processes involved and the number of learners in each class.

Access to schools is available to many individuals, including learners, teachers, administrators, and occasionally parents. Due to this diversity, the study can be conducted on a variety of demographic groups, age ranges, socioeconomic conditions, and educational contexts in a small yet concentrated area. Schools offer a rare chance to look into educational procedures, instructional strategies, the success of curricula, and learners learning results. Evidence-based practices can be influenced by research done in schools, which can also contribute to educational theory and policy development. It may also have practical effects on tackling educational inequality and enhancing educational interventions.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The respondents of the study were the one hundred seventy-eight (178) learners of Manolo Fortich III District Division of Bukidnon, School Year 2023-2024. These were Grades 4, 5

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and 6 learners who were pre-identified as learners at risk of dropping out school at the beginning of the school year in terms of their attendance, academic behaviors, health and nutrition and economic status. The researcher employed a universal sampling method where all the respondents in the population were involved. The distribution of the respondents by school and by grade level as shown in Table A.

Table A
Distribution of Respondents

District / School	Respondents			Total
	Grade IV	Grade V	Grade VI	
Bagalangit ES	2	1	0	3
Camp-I ES	7	8	7	22
Dahilayan IS	9	5	4	18
Gauron ES	6	4	3	13
Kalugmanan ES	8	11	5	24
Lindaban ES	7	6	9	22
Mampayag ES	7	8	7	22
Plantation Central ES	9	8	5	22
Sankan ES	13	12	7	32
Total	68	63	47	178

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Research Instrument

The instrument used in gathering the necessary information was a questionnaire made of two parts.

Part I dealt with the respondent's characteristics such as sex, grade level, number of siblings, parents' occupation, parents' highest educational attainment and family monthly income.

Part II elicited the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school, such as poverty, distance and accessibility, lack of resources, lack of support and guidance, bullying and safety concerns and early marriage and teenage pregnancy. This was patterned and modified from Perreño's (2023).

These factors mentioned above have ten (10) indicators, each with the following options: 4 - Strongly Agree, 3 – Agree, 2 – Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was pretested to thirty (30) respondents in Manolo Fortich District I last September 4, 2023. These respondents had the same characteristics as those of the actual respondents, but they did not participate in the actual study. This was done to ensure that the data gathered were valid and reliable.

The pretest was successful because the respondents understood the questionnaire, and there was no negative feedback or queries that questioned the mechanics and structure of the

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instrument. The parents were also positive on the matter of their child's participation in the pretest.

Cronbach's Alpha showed that the instrument is reliable based on the computation of frequentist reliability statistics. This was done to ensure the data gathered were valid and reliable. After the pretest, all suggestions were used to improve the final questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedure

To follow the ethical procedure of conducting the research and gathering of data, a recommendation letter from the Dean of the Graduate School of PHINMA Cagayan de Oro College was brought to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bukidnon for approval. Once permission to conduct the study was approved, it was handed down to the school principal of the concerned schools in the District of Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon to ensure that the respondents answered the survey questionnaire. After a brief orientation parents' consent was be given to the respondents in each school who participated and answered the survey questionnaire.

The parents' consent and questionnaire were personally distributed and administered by the researcher. The respondents were given sufficient time to answer the survey questionnaire to arrive at the accurate information needed. The survey questionnaire was retrieved and tallied by the same for statistical analysis.

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Others, please specify

- **Parents' Highest Educational Attainment**

College Graduate

College Level

High School Graduate

High School Level

Elementary graduate

Elementary Level

- **Family Monthly Income**

P 50, 000.00 and above

P 40, 000.00 - P 49, 999.00

P 30, 000.00 - P 39, 999.00

P 20, 000.00 - P 29, 999.00

P 10, 000.00 - P 19, 999.00

P 9, 999.00 and below

Part II: Factors affecting Learners at Risk of Dropping Out of School

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.70 - 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
3	2.80 - 3.69	Agree	High

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2	1.90 - 2.79	Disagree	Low
1	1.00 - 1.89	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Statistical Treatment

After collecting and recording the data gathered in the study, the researcher used the following statistical tools:

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the variables in the study.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was employed to determine the significant relationship between the factors affecting the learners at risk of dropping out school and each of the respondents characteristics.

Ethical Considerations

This study ensures the following ethical considerations: (1) Before participating in the study, all participants were made aware of its goals, methods, risks, and rewards. They were asked to give their voluntary consent. They have the option to leave the study at any moment and to ask questions; (2) guarantees the security and confidentiality of all participant data. This implies that all data ought to be kept on password-protected media files or in a locked location. Additionally, the researcher avoids disclosing participant information to outside parties involved in the study; (3) takes steps to reduce the possibility of participant injury. Thus, refrains from

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employing any technique that might result in discomfort, either physical or psychological; (4) guarantees that the study is carried out in a just and impartial manner; (5) when giving feedback to learners, the researcher exercises caution to avoid making disparaging remarks. Instead, the feedback should be constructive and inspire learners to improve their work. This requires holding one-on-one conferences with the learners, during which the researcher keeps in mind that it is preferable to be kind rather than correct when pushing learners to reach their goals; (6) establishes a secure and encouraged atmosphere where learners feel at ease disclosing their ideas and emotions; (7) and ensures that formative assessments are appropriate for the age and ability of the learners when developing and implementing them. Additionally, the researcher ought to refrain from administering formative exams in a way that can cause learners stress or anxiety.

RESULTS

Table 13

Result of the Test on Relationship between Factors Affecting Learners at Risk of Dropping Out School and Respondents Characteristics

Factors Affecting LARDO	Respondents Characteristics								Overall Interpretation
	Sex	Grade Level	Number of Siblings	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation	Father's Highest Educational Attainment	Mother's Highest Educational Attainment	Family Monthly Income	
Poverty	r 0.050 p 0.825	r 0.069 p 0.360	r -0.013 p 0.867	(1-4) r 0.033 p 0.660	(2-4) r 0.033 p 0.664	r -0.017 p 0.824	r 0.029 p 0.700	r -0.019 p 0.805	Negligible, NS

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Distance and accessibility	r - 0.026 p 0.909	r 0.032 p 0.675	r -0.034 p 0.653	(1-4) r -0.102 p 0.175	(2-4) r -0.027 p 0.718	r -0.174** p 0.020	r -0.053 p 0.485	r - 0.190** p 0.011	Negligible, NS
Lack of resources	r - 0.412 p 0.057	r - 0.025 p 0.736	r -0.002 p 0.977	(1-4) r 0.115 p 0.128	(1-3) r 0.052 p 0.489	r 0.269** p 0.001	r 0.188** p 0.012	r 0.196** p 0.009	Negligible, NS
Lack of support and guidance	r 0.246 p 0.270	r - 0.112 p 0.138	r 0.117 p 0.120	(1-4) r 0.105 p 0.163	(2-3) r 0.055 p 0.463	r 0.231** p 0.002	r 0.192** p 0.010	r 0.228** p 0.002	Negligible, NS
Bullying and safety concerns	r - 0.003 p 0.989	r - 0.037 p 0.624	r 0.111 p 0.141	(1-3) r -0.092 p 0.220	(3-4) r -0.065 p 0.388	r -0.130 p 0.084	r -0.036 p 0.637	r -0.085 p 0.260	Negligible, NS
Early Marriage and teenage pregnancy	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN	NaN
Overall	r 0.245 p 0.272	r - 0.040 p 0.594	r 0.092 p 0.223	r 0.026 p 0.733	r 0.017 p 0.818	r 0.086 p 0.251	r 0.150** p 0.046	r - 0.064 p 0.394	Negligible, NS

Legend: **significant at $p < 0.01$ alpha level; * significant at $p < 0.05$ alpha level S – significant; NS – not significant NaN – Variance is equal to zero

Table 13 provides data on the relationship between factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school and their characteristics, including Sex, Grade Level, Parents' Occupation, Parents' Highest Educational Attainment, and Family Monthly Income. The table includes the overall r-values for each characteristic, which indicate the strength and direction of the

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relationship. The overall r-value is -0.064 ($p=0.394$), interpreted as Negligible and Not Significant.

There is no significant relationship between the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school and each of the following sex, grade level, number of siblings, parents' occupation, parents' highest educational attainment, and family income.

Moreover, this means that there is no meaningful relationship between the factors (poverty, distance and accessibility, lack of resources, lack of support and guidance, bullying and safety concerns, and early marriage and teenage pregnancy) affecting the learners at risk of dropping out and their characteristics as to sex, parents' occupation, parents' highest educational attainment, and monthly family income. In other words, the data suggests that the variables being examined do not have a strong or consistent association with the characteristics of the at-risk learners. The lack of a significant relationship means that changes or differences in the factors affecting these learners do not correspond to predictable patterns or variations in their demographic or socioeconomic characteristics.

As perceived, while demographic and socioeconomic characteristics play a role, they are just one piece of the puzzle. Other factors, such as individual motivation, personal circumstances, school environment, peer influence, and community support, can also significantly impact educational risk. This analysis may not have captured these additional variables, which could have a more substantial influence on dropout rates.

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Significantly, the link between factors like poverty, academic failure, and dropping out is well-established. However, leading theories challenge the idea of these risks being uniform in their impact. They emphasize the importance of considering how local contexts can shape how these factors play out for different young people (Dupéré et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the only significant relationship ($p=0.046$) is only between the mother's highest educational attainment and the overall factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school. This means that the educational attainment of the mother specifically has a statistically significant association with the identified risk factors. This denotes that the level of education attained by the mother plays a role in influencing the factors that contribute to the risk of dropping out among these learners. It implies that higher levels of maternal education may have a mitigating effect on some of the identified risk factors, potentially reducing the likelihood of learners being at risk of dropping out.

As observed, mothers with high educational attainment can navigate the education system more effectively, advocate for their children's needs, and assist with schoolwork, helping them stay on track. Children's educational outcomes are closely linked to their parents' level of education. Mothers' education levels shape not just their parenting but also their social networks, which can provide valuable resources and support for their children's education. It's no secret that how parents do in school affects how their children do. Years of research prove it.

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Children whose parents went to college tend to learn faster and get better grades, and even go to better schools (Sutherland, 2019).

Significantly, the data shows a significant and positive relationship between lack of resources as a factor affecting learners dropping out of school and their father's highest educational attainment with a rho value of 0.269 ($p=0.001$). This means that there is a meaningful relationship between the said variables. This indicates that as the father's educational attainment ascends, the lack of resources gets higher.

As noticed, higher educational attainment among fathers may be associated with traditional gender roles and expectations, which can create barriers for fathers to be more involved in their children's education. Fathers who adhere to traditional gender roles may prioritize their work and career goals over their children's education, leading to a lack of resources and support for their children. Additionally, fathers with traditional gender role attitudes may be less involved in child-rearing activities, including spending less time with their children and providing less warmth and support. These factors can negatively impact the quality and quantity of father involvement, leading to a lack of resources and support for their children's education, which can increase the likelihood of dropping out of school (Wang & Cheung, 2023).

Meanwhile, the highest negative r-value among other variables presented in Table 13 is -0.190 ($p=0.011$), which is found to be significant between the learners' family monthly income and the distance and accessibility of school as one of the factors affecting learners at risk of

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dropping out school. This suggests an interesting relationship between socioeconomic factors and the likelihood of learners being at risk of dropping out of school. The negative correlation implies that learners from families with lower monthly incomes may face greater challenges in accessing schools, which can increase the likelihood of dropping out. This suggests that economic factors, such as the availability of transportation or financial resources, may play a significant role in learners' ability to attend school regularly.

As observed, learners whose families are of lower socioeconomic status may face challenges in accessing schools that are located far from their homes or in areas with limited transportation options. The increased distance and lack of accessibility can create barriers for these learners, making it more difficult for them to consistently attend school. The cost of transportation, the time required for travel, and the physical effort involved in commuting may contribute to their increased risk of dropping out.

Furthermore, research has consistently shown that lower family income is associated with a lack of resources that are essential for supporting children's education, thereby increasing the likelihood of learners dropping out of school. Families with lower monthly incomes often face challenges in providing a conducive learning environment for their children, including limited access to educational tools, poor housing, and unhealthy diets. Additionally, financial scarcity and limited resources can lead to stress and psychological effects, which may contribute to the decision to drop out of school (National Dropout Prevention Center, 2022).

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Nevertheless, policymakers should consider implementing interventions that address transportation and accessibility issues for learners at risk of dropping out. This could involve providing transportation services or establishing schools in areas that are more accessible to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (Mercurio, 2021). By reducing the barriers associated with distance and accessibility, policymakers can enhance educational opportunities and potentially mitigate the risk of learners dropping out of school.

However, early marriage and teenage pregnancy as factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school garnered NaN (Variance is equal to zero). This indicates that the variables "Early Marriage" and "Teenage Pregnancy" did not exhibit any significant correlation with the risk of dropping out of school in the dataset analyzed. The variance being equal to zero suggests that there was no variability or spread in the data for these variables in relation to the risk of dropout. The lack of correlation between early marriage and teenage pregnancy with the risk of dropping out of school suggests that, in the context of the dataset analyzed, these factors may not have a direct impact on learners' likelihood of leaving school prematurely. It implies that other factors may be more influential in determining dropout rates.

In summary, this study examined the link between various factors affecting dropout risk and characteristics like sex, income, and parental education. While no substantial overall correlation was found, interesting, specific connections emerged. It was found that the mother's education, held a statistically significant association with risk factors. This suggests higher

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maternal education potentially mitigates dropout risk, likely due to better navigation of the education system and support at home. Conversely, a positive correlation between fathers' education and lack of resources surfaced. This might be linked to fathers adhering to traditional gender roles, prioritizing work over child support and contributing to resource insufficiency. Another significant link was between family income and accessibility challenges. Lower-income families might struggle with transportation or distance to schools, increasing dropout risk. Early marriage and teenage pregnancy, however, showed no correlation with dropout in this dataset. This suggests further research is needed to understand their influence in different contexts. Overall, while socioeconomic factors play a role, individual circumstances and other influences should be considered for a holistic understanding of dropout risk. Addressing accessibility issues and encouraging father involvement alongside maternal support could be valuable interventions for at-risk learners.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Conclusions drawn from the findings and proposed recommendations are also presented.

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Summary

This study endeavored to determine the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Specifically, this study attempted to: describe the characteristics of the respondents, find the level of factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of school, and determine the significant relationship between the factors affecting learners dropping out school and their characteristics. The respondents of the study are the one hundred seventy-eight (178) Grade 4, 5 and 6 in the aforesaid division. A researcher-made instrument was utilized for data collection. This study made use of the descriptive correlation method research. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the variables in the study.

Furthermore, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used to determine the significant relationship between the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school and each of the learners' characteristics.

Findings

The analysis showed the following findings.

1. Most of the respondents are male, Grade 4 parents are high school level, private employees and with P 9,999.00 and below monthly income.
2. The level of the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school is low.

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3. There is no significant relationship between the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out school and their characteristics.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are hereby drawn from the study.

Schools might not be able to offer a comprehensive curriculum or give learners access to a wide range of teaching resources, equipment, and technologies without sufficient support. This restriction may limit learners' access to a wide range of topics, educational opportunities, and chances for research and discovery. A lack of resources, including technology, instructional materials, and textbooks, can make it more difficult for learners to learn and succeed academically. In the absence of necessary resources, learners might find it challenging to understand concepts, finish assignments, and get ready for tests, which would affect their academic performance and achievement levels. A scarcity of supplies can make learners less motivated and involved in their education. In the absence of captivating and participatory resources, practical exercises, and stimulating educational settings, learners may succumb to boredom or disinterest in their academic pursuits. Lack of basic school amenities like classrooms, libraries, labs, and teaching spaces can make it more difficult for learners to receive a high-quality education. Inadequate facilities could make it difficult for schools to meet the needs of a wide range of learners, provide practical instruction, and create stimulating and productive learning environments.

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Recommendations

The recommendations are hereby offered:

1. Parents should be encouraging to support their children's educational aspirations and discouraging early marriage practices.
2. School administrators and teachers should advocate the strengthening of laws and policies that protect children's rights and discourage early marriage. Collaborate with parents, guardians, authorities and other non-government organizations to ensure that legal protections for children are in place and implemented effectively to safeguard children from forced marriages and early pregnancies.
3. School Heads should sustain guidance, counseling and support services within schools to provide guidance and assistance to learners who may be at risk of early marriage or teenage pregnancy.

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