



**FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNERS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT:
BASES FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

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Author

ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the demographic profile and factors affecting learners at-risk of dropping out as bases for intervention program in Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School during the school year 2019 – 2020. The participants of the study were ten (10) junior high school learners who were at risk of dropping out. A qualitative research design using phenomenological analysis was used in this study. After conducting in-depth interview, among the learners, it was subjected into interpretation and analysis. After collecting all the responses, the researcher extracted themes from the responses. These were skipping of classes or truancy, playing computer games at the computer cafe, illness, child work, lack of financial support, peer relations, absenteeism, loitering, staying at the computer shop and billiard house and lack of parental support and supervision. These identified factors were the bases for intervention program known as Project CHAMP (Comprehensive and Holistic Approach in Monitoring and Parental Support) for LARDOS (Learners at Risk of Dropping Out).

Keywords: *Factors, Affecting Learners, At Risk, Dropout, Intervention Program*

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INTRODUCTION

The percentage of students that leaves school in a single year without finishing a particular level of education is known as the dropout rate. Dropout rates are used to calculate the proportion of students who do not complete their education. High school completion rates are a way to gauge the proportion of students who have earned a diploma or its equivalent (Stark, 2015).

As to the data provided by the Philippines Statistics Authority, the dropout rate refers to the percentage of students who discontinue their education for various reasons.

Most of these studies highlighted the student as the problem's primary cause along with issues relating to their families, peers, communities, and schooling. Teenage pregnancy was blamed for many occurrences of female adolescent dropouts (Cavanaugh, 2007).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is to enable access to inclusive, open to all, high-quality education for all people and to support opportunities for lifelong learning. A quality education is key in reaching other SDGs and Philippines is one in attaining this considering that its education system is geared towards providing access to quality basic education to all especially the marginalized learners including the balik-aral and learners at risk of dropping out.

The most common reasons for dropping out are lack of interest, unsupportable parents, financial constraints, social and economic pressures, and peer pressure.

Based on the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey 2014 of National Statistics Office were lack of personal interest, employment or job search, expensive education, academic disengagement,

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no secondary schools in the barangay, child labor and lack of transportation are among the reasons why learners choose not to enroll in high school.

In line with this, the researcher is prompted by the idea to conduct research for the Grade 8 learners who are at risk of dropping out of Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School for the school year 2019 - 2020. The challenges involve among the learners who are at risk of dropping out by providing an intervention program and to overcome the learners at risk of dropping out.

Implement systemic interventions, foster collaborative partnerships, increase parental and family participation, and create a stimulating learning environment to cater the at-risk of dropping learners. It may also mitigate the possible increase in the number of future learners who may experience the same problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presented and described the research method, research design, subjects of the study, research instrument, validity of the research instrument, data gathering procedure and thematic content analysis. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out using Project CHAMP as its intervention program.

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Research Method

In the study the researcher used descriptive method using in-depth interview.

As its approach, the researcher wanted to study and identify the factors affecting students at risk of dropping out. Phenomenology is usually done through in-depth interviewing. Then the researcher attempted to identify the factors that affect student at risk of dropping out. This research method used the scope of inquiry by using different methods of diverse component (Creswell, 2013).

Research Design

The study used qualitative research design using the phenomenological approach. Qualitative research according to Mc Millan and Schumacher (2011), is an approach that is also called investigative approach because researchers typically collect data by face to face and interact with people in place research. Qualitative research by Strauss & Corbib (2009) cited in Donald, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010), is also intended as a type of research where findings are not obtained through statistical procedure on other forms and matter. The objective of the qualitative research was to find out the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out.

Participants of the Study

The participants were ten (10) Grade 8 learners who were at risk of dropping out of Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School. The participants determined through the use of purposive sampling technique in which the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when

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choosing members of participants. The researcher identified the participants with the help of the subject-teachers and guidance counselor. The learners who had at least three failing grades in their subjects, especially in Science and Math subjects, had the record of tardiness and absenteeism in their classes and other data were the basis why they were selected as one of the participants of the study.

Sampling Design

The subject of the study were ten (10) Grade 8 learners who were at risk of dropping out. The participants were selected using the purposive sampling design. In purposive sampling design, participants were chosen with a particular purpose in mind and the sample is not representative (Tustin et al., 2005). Participants are chosen because they were in better place to assist the researcher to understand the problem under investigation.

Research Instruments

To determine the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out the researcher used a questionnaire.

The questionnaire is consisted of two primary sections.: the demographic profile and questions on factors that affect the learners to be at-risk of dropping out. The profile contained demographic characteristics of the participants such as age, gender, religion, member of indigenous peoples, number of siblings, birth order, parent's job, household income month,

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distance from school and parents' marital status. The guided questions explored the factors affecting learners at-risk of dropping out.

The research instrument had translation from English to Kinaray-a dialect.

Video and voice recorder were used for data gathering and documentation depending upon the permission of the participants.

A thematic analysis was used to summarize the result of the study.

Validity of the Research Instrument

To establish the validity of the instrument, the researcher submitted the draft copy of the questionnaire to the panel of experts for face and content validation of each item for appropriateness and correctness of the specific inference. The expert's suggestions, recommendations and corrections were considered in the refinement of the instrument. The panel of validators was composed of experts in the field of research, test and measurement and evaluation.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher made the research tool which was subjected for validity test to ensure that the quality of data gathered from participants was accurate. The questionnaire was validated by a panel composed of three experts.

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A letter of permission to conduct the study was signed by the Director of Graduate School (PHINMA UI), the thesis adviser and the researcher. Upon the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School and adviser to conduct the study.

The researcher went to the concerned authorities such as the superintendent of the Division of Iloilo, the principal of Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School and the parents or guardians of the participants to personally hand-in the letter of permission.

After obtaining the permission, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and visited their houses especially those who were not in school. Face-to-face in-depth interview was done with the use of video and voice recorder. The information gathered and the collected data were subjected to thematic analysis.

Data Analyses

The information gathered was analyzed using thematic approach.

Thematic Analysis was used to identify the themes of the case of learner who were at risk of dropping out learners.

The researcher conducted phenomenological studies search for the essential structure of a single phenomenon.

The researcher extracted what she considered relevant statements from each participant's description of the phenomenon and clustered these themes into a narrative description of the phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to determine the demographic profile and identify the factors affecting learners at risk of dropping out of Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School of school year 2019 - 2020.

The research method utilized in the study was descriptive using in-depth interview.

The study used phenomenology under qualitative research design.

The participants of the study were ten Grade 8 learners of Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School during the school year 2022 – 2023 who are at risk of dropping out are taken conveniently by the researcher.

Researcher-made interview guide was utilized to gather and collect data from the participants. This tool was subjected for a validity test and approved by the validators to use using eight-point criteria for content validation.

Permits from the individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/community/place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

Using in-depth interview, voice and video recorders were provided to completely capture the interviewee's words or responses. The researcher consolidated all the collected data after series of interview.

The information gathered was analyzed using thematic approach.

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The following are the findings of the study: demographic profile of the learners was described and factors that make learners at-risk of dropping out are truancy or skipping of classes, illness, working child, lack of financial support, support, peer relations, absenteeism, loitering, staying at computer and billiard house, and lack of parental support and supervision.

The intervention program is a Project CHAMP, or Comprehensive and Holistic Approach in Monitoring and Parental Support for Learners at Risk of Dropping Out, aims to address factors affecting LARDOs.

The program will address the needs of learners at risk of dropping out such as reducing absenteeism and truancy learners' development, adopt-a-learner program for child workers and financial constraints LARDOs, parental involvement and support and providing effective intervention activities. These activities will help the school to lessen the dropout rate with the help of teachers, guidance counselors, parents, school head, LGUs and stakeholders.

Insights

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

The study of investigation of factors affecting learners at risk of dropping point to the different contributing factors such as absenteeism, truancy, loitering, illness, lack financial support, computer games, and lack of parental support and supervision within the framework of

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innovating intervention program could help to lessen the learners at risk of dropping out by providing policy and dropout preventive initiative.

The parents' involvement in school has an important role in order to mitigate problems that cause the learners at risk of dropping out. Thus, parents can serve as educational allies of teachers helping students to minimize their absenteeism and truancy in school.

Guidance counselling for continuous emotional and social support to learners at risk of dropping should be given the right attention with the help of teacher-advisers. The implementation of an intervention program is crucial in order to effectively reduce the dropout rate.

The Project CHAMP is an intervention program that would not only focus on reducing the learners at risk of dropping but also aims in helping the learners to improve their academic performance in school.

Though the theoretical basis for the assumed interaction between the demographic profile and factors affecting the learners at risk of dropping out is very thin, DepEd has a legislative obligation to protect, establish, maintain and promote the right of all children to primary education to the highest caliber. It is constitutionally required to provide a K-12 fundamental education that is learner-focused, accessible, adaptable, appropriate. The institution must cater the needs of learners at risk of dropping out to finish high school by providing holistic and comprehensive intervention program.

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CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

The Department of Education should prioritize programs that would address the dropout crisis aiming to decrease the proportion of the main reasons for dropping out.

The local government unit shall have strict implementation of ordinance for the perimeter of computer shop, billiard house and other recreational place from the school. It should also make thorough municipal ordinance on no minors allowed or learners during class hours from 8:00 – 11:30 in the morning and 1:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon.

The school principal shall implement a system in decreasing dropout rate through school improvement plan to minimize the drop out of school and formulate innovations or initiative programs which could assist the learners at risk of dropping out so as they can actively continue their studies despite of their personal circumstances.

Schools with a lot of dropouts will get more basic tools from the school district. There aren't enough seats in most schools with high dropout rates. This means that classes are overcrowded, which makes it harder to learn and teach and, in the end, causes students to drop out.

The guidance office should continue using the Profiling and Initial Risk Assessment Tool for learner at risk of dropping out.

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The intervention program and activities will be done to contribute in the success of Project CHAMP for LARDOs in such a way that it reduced the dropout rate in Cabatuan National Comprehensive High School.

The Science department head shall work with the class advisers and subject teachers in science to monitor and evaluate the attendance of learners and conduct home visitation for learners who are at – risk of dropping out.

Science teachers shall give simple activities or modified activities so that the learners who have difficulty in science can be able to cope and perform academically but without sacrificing the skills and competencies aligned to it.

Parents should be capacitated to work with teachers to supervise, support and assist the needs of their children.

Program and projects will be continuously implemented to address the identified problems of learners at risk of dropping out.

A similar study is also encouraged to be conducted in the future and consider other variables which were not used nor mentioned in the study.

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