

## High school dropouts: understanding student dropouts of Sta. Cruz National High School

Abandono do ensino médio: entendendo a evasão dos alunos de Sta. Cruz National High School

Abandonos en la secundaria: comprensión de los abandonos de los estudiantes de Sta. Cruz National High School

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### ABSTRACT

Many school administrators in the Department of Education faced a big problem in the form of student dropouts. The aim of the study was to look at the demographic data and reasons for student dropouts in the school year 2018–2019, as well as establish an intervention program to help students avoid dropping out. The mixed method design was used in this action study. The research study used a purposive sampling method, with students who dropped out during the 2018-2019 school year as participants. In addition, random sampling was used to select focus-group discussions (FGD) in order to obtain in-depth information on the subject of this research. For this study, simple statistics such as ranking and percentage were used as statistical tools. The majority of dropouts cited personal reasons for leaving school, especially a lack of interest due to poverty, while others were affected by peers. The results were used to improve the guidance program at the school in order to keep students from dropping out. Teachers, particularly those with advisory classes, were given training on how poverty can lead to students dropping out.

**Keywords:** High School, dropouts, mixed method design, Philippines

### RESUMEN

Muchos administradores escolares del Departamento de Educación enfrentaron un gran problema en forma de deserción de estudiantes. El objetivo del estudio fue analizar los datos demográficos y las razones de la deserción de los estudiantes en el año escolar 2018-2019, así como establecer un programa de intervención para ayudar a los estudiantes a evitar la deserción. En este estudio de acción se utilizó el diseño de método mixto. El estudio de investigación utilizó un método de muestreo intencional, con estudiantes que abandonaron durante el año escolar 2018-2019 como participantes. Además, se utilizó un muestreo aleatorio para seleccionar discusiones de grupos focales (FGD) con el fin de obtener información en profundidad sobre el tema de esta investigación. Para este estudio, se utilizaron estadísticas simples como la clasificación y el porcentaje como herramientas estadísticas. La mayoría de los que abandonaron la escuela citaron razones personales para dejar la escuela, especialmente la falta de interés debido a la pobreza, mientras que otros se vieron afectados por sus compañeros. Los resultados se utilizaron para mejorar el programa de orientación en la escuela con el fin de evitar que los estudiantes abandonen la escuela. Los maestros, en particular los que tienen clases de asesoramiento, recibieron capacitación sobre cómo la pobreza puede llevar a la deserción de los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:** escuela secundaria, deserción, diseño de métodos mixtos, Filipinas

### RESUMO

Muitos administradores escolares no Departamento de Educação enfrentaram um grande problema na forma de evasão de alunos. O objetivo do estudo foi analisar os dados demográficos e as razões para a evasão de alunos no ano letivo de 2018–2019, bem como estabelecer um programa de intervenção para ajudar os alunos a evitar o abandono. O desenho do método misto foi usado neste estudo de ação. A pesquisa utilizou um método de amostragem proposital, com alunos que abandonaram o estudo durante o ano letivo de 2018–2019 como participantes. Além disso, a amostragem aleatória foi utilizada para selecionar discussões de grupos focais (FGD), a fim de obter informações aprofundadas sobre o tema desta pesquisa. Para este estudo, estatísticas simples como classificação e porcentagem foram usadas como ferramentas estatísticas. A maioria dos desistentes citou motivos pessoais para abandonar a escola, especialmente a falta de interesse devido à pobreza, enquanto outros foram afetados por colegas. Os resultados foram usados para aprimorar o programa de orientação na escola, a fim de evitar o abandono escolar. Os professores, especialmente aqueles com aulas de aconselhamento, receberam treinamento sobre como a pobreza pode levar ao abandono escolar.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino médio, evasão, projeto de método misto, Filipinas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The rising number of student dropouts is one of the major challenges faced by many school administrators in the Department of Education. Despite the fact that school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers have tried a variety of approaches and methods to address the issue, the problem persists each school year.

Sta. Cruz National High School was not exempted from this kind of problem. Based from the school planning records, 39 (1.42%) out of 2,728 students had dropped out on the school year 2015–2016. Similarly, for school year 2016 – 2017, a total of 84 (3.13%) students had dropped out from 2,682 enrolled students. While on the school year 2017 – 2018, 53 (1.69%) out of 3,120 students had dropped out. In addition, from a total of 3,224 students enrolled, 138 (4.28%) students dropped out as of December 2018 of this school year 2018 – 2019 which is alarmingly too high as per record.

With these experiences, including the rising number of student dropouts each year, the proponents suggested conducting an action research study to examine the demographic data and explanations for student dropouts during the school year 2018–2019. Furthermore, as a result of this research, the school will be able to develop an intervention program to help students avoid dropping out.

### Statement of the Problem

The goal of this action research study was to discover why students dropped out of school. It provides explicit answers to the following questions:

1. What is the students' demographic profile in terms of:
  - 1.1 gender;
  - 1.2 age;
  - 1.3 grade level;
  - 1.4 family income;
  - 1.5 community type;
  - 1.6 number of siblings;
  - 1.7 birth order?
2. What is the students' reasons from dropping out from school?
  - 2.1 personal;
  - 2.2 school related;
  - 2.3 family related;

- 2.4 peer related;
- 2.5 health related;
- 2.6 other reasons?

## 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The foundation of this action research was anchored on the Cognitive Theories of Motivation. Interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006), attribution theory (Weiner, 2005), expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002), and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) were among these cognitive theories of motivation. These theories claim that behavior is a by-product of cognitive processes. Individuals view data and make choices based on more than just their basic needs and desires. In order to become inspired, learners must first understand, respect, and know what they are doing (Hoose, 2020).

## 3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This chapter presented the design, respondents and sampling, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

### 3.1 Research Design

This action research employed a mixed method approach, which involves gathering, interpreting, and combining qualitative and quantitative data in a single study (Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V. L., 2011). The study used purposive sampling to recruit students who had dropped out during the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, random sampling was used to choose focus-group discussions (FGDs) in order to obtain in-depth information on the topic under investigation (Patton, 1990).

### 3.2 Respondents and Sampling

The primary research participants were students who had dropped out of Sta. Cruz National High School during the 2018–2019 school year. The sample size was determined by the use of purposeful sampling.

### 3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers obtained permission from the School Division to perform this action research before collecting the data. Following the permission, the researchers obtained data from all grade level teachers who had dropouts throughout the 2018–2019 school year. After then, the researchers interviewed all dropout students at Sta. Cruz National High School in a house-to-house survey.

A focus-group discussion, on the other hand, was held with a group of students who would be interviewed in depth by the researchers.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Simple statistics, such as percentage and ranking, were used to treat the acquired data.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of a study named "High School Dropouts: Understanding Student Dropouts at Sta. Cruz National High School" are presented.

## 4.1. Profile of the Students

### 1.1 Age

The respondents in this study ranged in age from 11 to 20 years old, according to the data in table 1. The number of dropouts-respondents at Sta. Cruz National High School was highest among students aged 14 years old (26 percent). Furthermore, pupils aged 13 years old (22 percent), 15 years old (21 percent), and 12 years old (13 percent) were rated second, third, and fourth, respectively, in terms of high percentages of dropout respondents.

*Table 1. Profile of students according to Age*

| Age          | <i>f</i>   | %           |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 11           | 2          | 1%          |
| 12           | 18         | 13%         |
| 13           | 31         | 22%         |
| 14           | 36         | 26%         |
| 15           | 29         | 21%         |
| 16           | 10         | 7%          |
| 17           | 5          | 4%          |
| 18           | 5          | 4%          |
| 20           | 2          | 1%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>138</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### 1.2 Gender

From the table 2 presented the profile of students according to gender, majority of student dropouts were males (70%). On the other hand, thirty (30) percent were female students.

*Table 2. Profile of students according to Gender*

| Gender       | <i>f</i>   | %           |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Male         | 96         | 70%         |
| Female       | 42         | 30%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>138</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### 1.3 Grade Level

Based from the results of the survey, most of the respondent-dropouts were from Grade 7 with 45 percent. Followed by Grade 8 (23%), Grade 9 (12%), Grade 10 (9%), and Grade 11 (9%) respectively. It was noticeable that no respondent-dropouts from Grade 12 (0%).

*Table 3. Profile of students according to Grade Level*

| Grade Level | <i>f</i> | %   |
|-------------|----------|-----|
| Grade 7     | 64       | 46% |
| Grade 8     | 32       | 23% |
| Grade 9     | 17       | 12% |
| Grade 10    | 12       | 9%  |
| Grade 11    | 13       | 9%  |

|                 |     |      |
|-----------------|-----|------|
| <b>Grade 12</b> | 0   | 0%   |
| <b>Total</b>    | 138 | 100% |

### 1.4 Family Income

Based from the table 4 showed from the family income of the respondent-dropouts, majority of the student dropouts were from poor families with 57%. Followed by families with low income with 38% and middle families with 4%. It was also noticeable that no dropouts were from families with high income (0%).

*Table 4. Profile of students according to Family Income*

| <b>Socio-Economic Status</b> | <i>f</i> | <b>%</b> |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>High</b>                  | 0        | 0%       |
| <b>Middle</b>                | 6        | 4%       |
| <b>Low</b>                   | 53       | 38%      |
| <b>Poor</b>                  | 79       | 57%      |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 138      | 100%     |

### 1.5 Community Type

From the table 5 below, all of the respondent-dropouts were living in the rural area particularly in the province with 100 percent.

*Table 5. Profile of students according to Community Type*

| <b>Community Type</b> | <i>f</i> | <b>%</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Urban</b>          | 0        | 0%       |
| <b>Sub-Urban</b>      | 0        | 0%       |
| <b>Rural</b>          | 138      | 100%     |
| <b>Total</b>          | 138      | 100%     |

### 1.6 Number of Siblings

Presented in the table 6, most of the respondent-dropouts were having three (3) siblings (21%). Followed by respondent-dropouts with two (2) siblings (15%), four (4) and five (5) siblings (9%) respectively. It was also noticeable that majority of the respondent-dropouts were not able to respond to this part of the questionnaire.

*Table 6. Profile of students according to Siblings*

| <b>Number of Siblings</b> | <i>f</i> | <b>%</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>1</b>                  | 9        | 7%       |
| <b>2</b>                  | 21       | 15%      |
| <b>3</b>                  | 29       | 21%      |
| <b>4</b>                  | 12       | 9%       |
| <b>5</b>                  | 13       | 9%       |
| <b>6</b>                  | 3        | 2%       |
| <b>7</b>                  | 1        | 1%       |
| <b>8</b>                  | 2        | 1%       |
| <b>9</b>                  | 1        | 1%       |
| <b>No Response</b>        | 47       | 34%      |
| <b>Total</b>              | 138      | 100%     |

### 1.7 Birth Order

The table 7 showed the profile of the respondent-dropouts according to their birth order. Majority of the respondent-dropouts were first born child with 28 percent. Followed by respondent-dropouts who were second born child with 23 percent, and third born child with 10 percent respectively. Many of the respondent-dropouts were not able to response in this part of the item.

*Table 7. Profile of students according to Birth Order*

| Birth Order           | <i>f</i>   | %           |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Child | 39         | 28%         |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Child | 32         | 23%         |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Child | 14         | 10%         |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Child | 6          | 4%          |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Child | 3          | 2%          |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Child | 1          | 1%          |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Child | 2          | 1%          |
| No Response           | 41         | 30%         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>138</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### 4.2 Students' Reasons from Dropping out from School

According to the survey's findings, the majority of dropouts cited personal reasons as the reason for leaving school (70 percent ). While family (17%), peer (7%), health (4%), and school (4%) were among the reasons given by dropouts (2 percent ). A focus-group discussion (FGD) led by the Guidance Counselor backed up this conclusion. A meeting was held with ten (10) selected dropout students, and they were asked about their reasons for dropping out. It was also discovered that the majority of them dropped out for personal reasons, mainly a loss of interest due to poverty. “*Dili nako ganahan mo eskwela kay wala man gihapon me kaonon sa balay, motabang na lang ko sa akong papa motrabaho para makakaon akong mga igsoon,*” said one of the FGD participants. (I don't want to attend to school any longer because we don't have enough food, and I'd rather help my father find job so that my younger siblings can eat.)

*Table 8. Reasons from Dropping out in School*

| Reasons from Dropping Out | <i>f</i>   | %           |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Personal Related          | 96         | 70%         |
| School Related            | 3          | 2%          |
| Family Related            | 23         | 17%         |
| Peer Related              | 10         | 7%          |
| Health Related            | 6          | 4%          |
| Others                    | 0          | 0%          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>138</b> | <b>100%</b> |

In addition, table 9 showed the specific personal related reasons for dropping out. Majority of the respondents-dropouts decided to dropout in school because of lack of interest with 93%. This was followed by early marriage (1%) and early pregnancy (1%). One respondent-dropout did not answer this part of the survey.

*Table 9. Personal Related Reasons*

| <b>Personal Related Reasons</b> | <i>f</i> | %    |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|
| <b>Lack of Interest</b>         | 93       | 98%  |
| <b>Early Marriage</b>           | 1        | 1%   |
| <b>Early Pregnancy</b>          | 1        | 1%   |
| <b>No Response</b>              | 1        | 1%   |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 96       | 100% |

Table 10 on the other hand, depicted the factors that were relevant to the family. The majority of the 23 respondent-dropouts who said their reasons for dropping out were family-related cited poverty (39%) as one of the most important reasons for dropping out.

*Table 10. Family Related Reasons*

| <b>Family Related Reasons</b>   | <i>f</i> | %    |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|
| <b>Taking Care of Siblings</b>  | 1        | 4%   |
| <b>Family Feud</b>              | 6        | 26%  |
| <b>Poverty</b>                  | 9        | 39%  |
| <b>Separated Parents</b>        | 5        | 22%  |
| <b>Transferred of Residence</b> | 2        | 9%   |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 23       | 100% |

While table 11 presented the Peer related reasons of those who dropout from school. The 10 respondent-dropouts students, 50 percent of them were influence by their peers to dropout, 20 percent were peer pressure, 20 percent were engaged in playing games and 10 percent decided to drop out because of fear to gangsters.

*Table 11. Peer Related Reasons*

| <b>Peer Related Reasons</b> | <i>f</i> | %    |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|
| <b>Peer Influence</b>       | 5        | 50%  |
| <b>Peer Pressure</b>        | 2        | 20%  |
| <b>Playing Games</b>        | 2        | 20%  |
| <b>Fear to Gangsters</b>    | 1        | 10%  |
| <b>Total</b>                | 10       | 100% |

## 5 CONCLUSION

Based from the findings, the majority of the reasons given by students who dropped out of Sta. Cruz National High School from Grade 7 to Grade 12, school year 2018–2019, were personal in nature, mainly a lack of interest. It was also discovered that the majority of these pupils are poor. This was also crucial as to why pupils do not want to go to school since they would rather help their parents generate money in order to cover their daily costs, particularly food.

## PLAN OF ACTION



The researchers have decided to improve the school's guidance program in order to discourage students from dropping out. Teachers were given orientation, especially those with advisory classes, on how poverty can lead to students dropping out. In order to encourage students not to dropout, constant supervision and collaboration between parents and teachers were prioritized.

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