

# Factors Affecting Student Retention and Attrition

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**Abstract-** Any student's goal when they start college is to see themselves complete the first step in their dream, which is graduation. However, reaching one's goal is not a straightforward mission. Almost all students are eager to continue their studies in order to obtain their degrees due to variety of motivating reasons that they have, but some struggled to follow through with their determination because of different factors that affects them. Thus, an increasing attrition rate and decreasing retention rate is a very alarming matter that needs to be discussed that is why this study dealt with the different factors that affect student retention as well as attrition. It will discuss the extent of every factor that affects students' decision either to continue or just to stop their studies.

This concern led the researcher to search the factors that made students stay in the school and the reasons why some of them decide not to pursue studying. In view of the problem of decreasing retention rate and increasing attrition rate in school, the researcher decided to conduct the study entitled FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT RETENTION AND ATTRITION.

**Index Terms-** Attrition, Cognitive Factors, Curriculum, Higher Educational Institution, Institutional commitment, Persistence rate, Physical Facilities

## I. INTRODUCTION

Graduating in College is an aspiration for over a million students every year. Above all, parents believe that it is the sole inheritance that they can give to their children. It also a motivator and a driving force among the youth to enroll and finish tertiary level with the hope of fulfilling and achieving their dream, but it does not mean, though that being in school will result to a hundred percent success. In education, lots of hindrances and hardships are experienced that may push a student to visit the program. A number of the scholars fail to attain the height of success in the academe. The way to the finish line may be too hard and challenging. However, college graduates can enjoy the beauty and the benefits like employment prospects, higher income, better health and life expectancy in comparison to the others who only have the high school diploma or less.

According to Aljahani (2016), student retention is one of the major concerns of education. Retaining students in tertiary level is totally a longstanding issue that received a lot of attention in recent times. The changes in higher education have led to a focus on the quality, impact and outcomes of higher education systems. Retention rate

contributes a lot, for it is one of the factors to be considered when planning budgets for all the institutions and is also the prime factor in the rating of institutions most especially in a Higher Education. Though a lot of recommendations were given to improve retention, little has been effective in providing remedy to failing retention rates (Ledesma, 2015).

Moreover, Laredo (2017) insisted that if institutions are unable to optimize new methods to improve the retention rate, the universities and colleges will fall short of their intended purpose of providing students with a quality education.

For instance, in Quezon City University, most of the students were granted scholarship program under the Scholarship for Youth and Development Program (SYDP) wherein they are eligible for a 100% scholarship with stipend. Despite the support being provided, the university's record shows that still a lot of students fail to pursue their studies. Based on the university record, in AY 2015-2016 attrition rate is increasing as shown by 9.30%, 9.57%, in AY 2016-2017, 11% in AY 2017-2018 and 16.07% in AY 2018-2019 The data shows that despite the institution is offering of free education, there are factors that affect students' decision to continue the program. Student retention has always been a challenge based on the 4-year data of the university.

Moreover, student retention is vital for the success of QCPians for a number of reasons. First, LGU's fund often look at the student retention rates as an indicator of financial support. Second, QCU students cannot benefit from the wonderful opportunities it offers if they are not able to stay in the program until graduation.

In addition, the researcher as one of the faculty members of the research locale observed that approximately 5 out of 45 students per class decide not to continue their studies.

Few students do not graduate due to academic issues, and others opt to actively withdraw from their programs of study prior to graduation due to a variety of reasons. The problems of retention and attrition should be more explored in order to best understand the institutional methods and desires of the student.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the factors that affect the retention and attrition rate of students in a sampled higher educational institution during the Academic Year 2020-2021. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of?
  - 1.1 age;

- 1.2 sex;
  - 1.3 program; and
  - 1.4 year level?
2. What are the factors that influence student retention and to what extent?
  3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the extent of influence of the factors of student retention?
  4. What are the reasons for student's attrition?
  5. Based from the findings, what strategies may be formulated to strengthen the school's retention program?

### III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the descriptive research design, mixed method approach to describe the situation accurately and systematically. The research design is appropriate for this study because the researcher can determine the different factors that affect the student retention and attrition (Siedlecki, 2020). Descriptive research, according to Matira (2016), describes the phenomenon being researched. It responds to the what issue. It addresses only one variable at a time and is usually the first form of study conducted in a new age of inquiry. Moreover, it is a common means of attaining information through the use of questionnaire, and other tools that will help the researcher to come up with appropriate and accurate findings.

A mixed-methods approach to complex research issues has a number of advantages because it integrates philosophical frameworks of both post-positivism and interpretivism (Fetters, 2016), interweaving qualitative and quantitative data in such a way that research issues are meaningfully explained. It also provides a logical foundation, methodological flexibility, and a thorough knowledge of minor cases (Maxwell, 2016). In other words, using mixed-methods research allows researchers to answer study questions with adequate depth and breadth, as well as generalize the findings and implications of the studied topics to the entire population.

As a result, the aforementioned research design was used in this study because it deals with determining the various factors that affect student retention and attrition. The research design paves the way for the use of instruments that are well-suited to the flow of the study in order to collect necessary data and present the idea of the research work

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study, which includes the findings from the gathered data; the conclusions drawn from these findings; and the recommendation.

These identified reasons were gathered from the interview of fifteen students who decided to withdraw their studies.

1. Financial Problem. It is the main factor of student attrition above any other reasons. This financial difficulty is due to the loss of their jobs (either the student or the parent/guardian), which brings social burden to a huge debt. Quezon City University is

funded by the Local Government unit thus all the students who are QC residents does not pay for any tuition and miscellaneous fees unlike the students who are non-QC residents. School fees are free but the expenses incurred by the students in the course of his study is the problem.

2. Program Enrolled in is Not their Number One Choice For any college student, there are two trends: either the degree did not meet the student's demands, or the major was not the student's first choice. When asked about their degree, freshmen and sophomore students frequently answer "I am unsure" to teachers as they introduce themselves at the start of the year. As a result, some students decided not to continue their studies as they were uninterested in the program

3. Teenage/Unwanted Pregnancy. School dropouts coupled with pregnancy have been a matter of general interest in today's world. This also affects the future of the student by halting or ending schooling, reducing the possibility of education beyond high school, and raising the likelihood of bad marriage, unemployment, or low-paid jobs. So instead, pregnancy is forcing women to drop out of school

4. Failing Grades Students feel stress and demotivated for they are no longer getting good grades on their chosen program. They got a feeling of hopelessness. They find that although they like the major, the major is not ideal to them. They're struggling to pay for an additional year of class

### V. CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions drawn based on the foregoing summary of findings:

1. Most of the respondents are already in their legal age and considered matured enough since they are in the higher level. Also, there are more female respondents than the male. They are Information Technology students and mostly in the third-year level.

2. Faculty affects student retention to a Very High Extent while Curriculum, Student Service and Program affect student retention to a High Extent. Therefore, these factors were of great effect to

the stay of the students in the school. Faculty interaction with the students plays a very important role in student retention

3. There is a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their assessment on the extent of influence of the factors on student retention

4. Reasons for student attrition are financial problem, course as not their first choice, teenage/unwanted pregnancy and failing grades.

5. Recommended strategies to strengthen the School's Retention Program are Intervention Program, Counselling

## V. RECOMMENDATION

The recommendations presented in this part of the study were drawn based on the findings and conclusions of the study;

### For the STUDENTS

1. To engage themselves in different career orientation that will broaden their knowledge on how to choose the right program for them.

2. To look for a part-time job such as Fast-Food crew so they can earn extra amount to sustain some of their needs in school.

### For the PARENTS

1. To engage themselves in a small business that can give an extra income to the family.

2. To participate in seminars and trainings related to the livelihood program.

### For the SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. To offer more scholarships/financial assistance programs to students to lessen their burden in terms of other school expenses.

2. To review and adopt the curriculum according to the demand and need.

3. To conduct regular guidance counselling for all the students and conduct seminars with regard to teen-age pregnancy, intense career orientation and values formation.

4. To provide favorable environment for students and make it a conducive place to learn.

6. To improve more the physical facilities and student services.

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