Identification of At-Risk Students and Higher Education Institutions' Strategies for Rising Their Potential: A Conceptual Approach

Professor Hesham Magd, Ph.D.,
Associate Dean for Quality Assurance and Accreditation and Faculty of Business & Economics Head, Modern College of Business & Science, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
Email: hesham.magd@mcbs.edu.om

Ravi Thirumalaisamy
Ph.D., Faculty of Business & Economics,
Modern College of Business & Science, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
Email: ravi@mcbs.edu.om

Benson Ruzive
Faculty of Business & Economics,
Modern College of Business & Science, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
Email: benson.ruzive@mcbs.edu.om

Abstract
Purpose: The study aims to identify at-risk students by following an appropriate yardstick for measuring academic performance and suggesting measures to develop their potential by creating a conducive academic teaching and learning environment for students and faculty members at higher educational institutions.
Methodology/ Design: The study based on literature evidence identifies factors causing students' poor performance. It suggests a model that examines the factors for poor performance status of students and outcomes and incorporates strategies to the academic advising system for assisting academically underprepared students in reaching their potential.
Findings: The study's findings and recommendations underline the need for a sustainable framework to identify at-risk students and address their issues. The study results recommend adopting early alert systems, implementing successful academic support strategies, establishing successful educational support strategies like orientation sessions at different levels of students, creating learning communities, and providing peer monitoring programs. HEIs should develop a network that establishes a constant, constructive relationship between students, their programs, and an effective system to reach students' academic and personal goals.
Value/ Originality: The value of the study added to the existing literature is to have identified endogenous and exogenous causes of at-risk students and recommended the framework that helps the academic fraternity raise the potential of at-risk students.
Limitations: Based on the literature evidence, the study identifies at-risk students and suggests measures to be adopted to promote them academically. The environment where the HEIs are located, and the students' family background affect the implications of strategies adopted for raising their potential. The recommended strategies may not have the same impact on all environments.

Introduction

Institutions of higher education, researchers, society, and policymakers are concerned about the success of students who enroll at these institutions to obtain formal qualifications. There has been increasing attention to identifying at-risk students, specifically those who take open courses. The probability of a student dropping out now has been attributed to the student's engagement in successive previous time sessions. The increased application of available online courses such as MOOC, Khan Academy, and Coursera has made it possible for a high-quality education to be accessible. Still, the irony of this development is that the dropout rate has been remarkably higher than expected. It is essential to have an early intervention program at institutions of higher learning to improve the performance of students, which will subsequently increase the retention rate.

Educational riskiness is when students are likely to experience adverse educational outcomes such as low academic achievements, poor grade retention, low attendance, and increased dropout rates due to several individual or social factors. The Glossary of Education Reform (2013) defines at-risk as a term that is often used to describe students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school. The same report went on to highlight that circumstances that endanger the learning of students include being homeless, confinement, getting pregnant at teenage stages, serious health issues, domestic violence, transiency, or other conditions it may refer to learning disabilities, low test scores, disciplinary problems, grade retentions or other learning-related factors that could adversely affect the educational performance of the students.

Public and private higher education institutions face the same challenges regarding student dropout and non-completion of courses that the students had initially enrolled for, even though their structures are different regarding funding and partnerships. As much as it is essential to provide access to education, it is equally necessary to ensure that those students who have begun a course can complete it. Reasons for the non-completion of courses must be identified and resolved to increase the completion and graduation rates. It is crucial to deal with the challenge of dropouts so that the number of students failing to complete the studies they enrolled for minimizes.

Teaching and learning have become online across the globe due to COVID 19 pandemic. Classes are conducted online; assessments are online. Grateful to the pandemic situation for education has become global. However, it poses a lot of challenges. The sudden shift from face-to-face teaching to the online or hybrid mode created havoc among the instructors and students. COVID 19 pandemic, followed by lockdowns and closure of educational institutions, caused educational inequalities, creating a gap between teaching and students' learning. Students were not able to adapt to this pandemic period's academic needs. Digital facility requirements and skills challenge the institutions and teachers to provide their best for the students. The situation also warrants structural changes in the curriculum, assessment methods, programs offered, etc., to encourage students to be inclined towards their studies online. Though higher educational institutions are gradually trying to get rid of the evil effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, students still suffer on a large scale, as the gap between students' learning and online teaching is still much wider. This causes poor academic performance of students, which is the primary factor for students becoming at-risk and eventually leading to academic dropout/ failure. This is a significant reason for undertaking this study which aims to address the questions as to how to measure students' unwillingness in their academic pursuit, what are the symptoms of gradual development of their disinterest in studies, how to identify

whether or not a student has reached the stage where they cannot recover from the status called "at-risk student." So, the study was carried out to address these issues by examining significant factors pushing students to academic riskiness and suggesting a framework to deal with this pertinent global issue at various stages faced by higher educational institutions.

Literature Review

The study examines the literature on factors causing students' academic failure or dropouts. As early as 1932, Flemming found out that personality and emotions are correlated with academic performance. Danridge et al., (2000) identify that poorly educated parents fail to appreciate the importance of education and, in turn, offer inadequate support to their wards to excel in their studies. Valencia (2011) attributes parents' health status. These parents are temperamental or become selfish and cater to their health at the expense of the other family members, especially their children. Spicker (2014) identifies home-based factors causing students' poor academic performance, such as non-availability of books or even toys at appropriate ages, lack of quiet space for studying, and lack of conveyance to schools/colleges, which make the environment non-educational for students. Lillis and Scott (2007) claim that it is imperative to address the issue of student retention at institutions of higher education. The British Council Analysis in Going Global (2012) pointed out that higher education institutions can achieve growth through the performance of academic activities, offering a diverse range of programs, collaborating globally, offering consultancy services and training activities, and valuing student registration.

Cervini (2015) postulates that college administration systems focus on increasing student strength, ignoring students on the verge of discontinuing or eventually discontinuing their studies before completing the programs they intended to pursue. At this juncture, higher education institutions must intervene before students fall into the dropout category. Cambridge Dictionary defines dropout as a tendency among students to leave the higher education system before completing initially intended courses or study duration. UNESCO (1991) claims that transforming a society into a knowledge-based society marks the aim of an effective higher education ecosystem. Public and private higher education institutions face the same challenges regarding student dropout and non-completion of courses that the students had initially enrolled for, even though their structures are different regarding funding and partnerships (Rowtho, 2017). As much as it is essential to provide access to education, it is equally necessary to ensure that those students who have begun a course can complete it (Rowtho, 2017). Reasons for the non-completion of courses must be identified and resolved to increase the completion and graduation rates. From an educational perspective, it is crucial to deal with the challenge of dropouts so that the number of students failing to complete the studies they enrolled for minimizes. Predictors of academic performance, including the famous Grade Point Average (GPA), have been examined. Some of the predictors highlighted as contributors to the occasional course dropout are disengagement, personality, personality traits, self-esteem, self-efficacy beliefs, emotional persistence, motivational and study skills, and extracurricular activities (Ramanan et al., 2020). Tinto (2012) highlights clubs, social events, and job fairs as some of the activities at campuses of higher education that improve the dropout rate. Thumiki (2019) carried out a study in Oman covering the academic year from 2012 to 2017 and revealed that 1966 students dropped out of college.

California Dropout Research Project Report Number 15 (2008) points out that dropout occurs when students free themselves from a college education and dismiss themselves from the higher education system. Chen and Des Jardins (2010) classify dropouts into three categories, namely 'stop-out' (these are students who stop but join the college at a later period), 'institutional dropout' (these are students who leave an institution but join another institution), and 'system dropout' (these are students who discontinue their education). It is essential to

know why students would leave one institution to join another; it could be suggested that the latter offers better support to at-risk students and can transform their situation before it turns into a dropout. However, institutional dropouts may not affect the national statistics related to higher education (Herzog, 2005). Still, there must be a robust system to identify and trace institutional dropouts. For instance, when they leave the first institution, will they pursue the same qualifications when they join a new institution? If so, a robust system such as using their national identity cards to avoid double-counting would be vital in the counting process.

Several research studies attempt to identify at-risk students to assist them in improving academically. This has been done through the institutional system at higher education, such as early alerts designed to identify, warn, and alert higher education institutions of at-risk students, giving way for remedial action. For instance, Zaiane and Luo (2001) found out that web-based platforms were used to identify at-risk students, and Bravo, Sosnovsky & Ortigosa (2009) established that a decision tree was used to classify students based on their performance.

The Table below shows several research efforts and the methods used to identify at-risk students.

Table 1: At-Risk Students Early Alert Methods

Proponents	Method used	To establish
Zaiane & Luo (2001)	Web-based platforms	Understand learners' behavior
Yu, Own & Lin (2001)	Fuzzy association rules	Time spent online and posted material
Minaei-Bidgoli & Punch (2003)	Web-based system	Student classification to predict final grades
Laurie & Timothy (2005)	Data mining	Assessing discussion forums
Morris, Wu & Finnegan (2005)	Discriminant analysis	To predict successful completion of online courses.
Bravo, Sosnovsky & Ortigosa (2009)	Decision tree classifier	Performance in e-learning

Early Alert System as an Identification Tool for At-Risk Students

Marcal (2019) declares that academic advisors and administrators are fed by an early alert system that is a proactive and formal way to provide a warning regarding the behavior and performance of at-risk students. Hanover Research, 2014 and NCEAL, 2010 state that the system should be designed to identify at-risk students early and render them support on time to reinforce their present educational accomplishments and boost retention and graduation rates. There have been widespread attempts by higher education institutions and policymakers to adopt an early alert system caused by several factors such as information technology, reduced budgets of public institutions, changing demographics of college students, and the rising demand for higher education (Marcal, 2019). The success of a college student is associated with individual and institutional factors that include student mobility, student engagement, demographic characteristics, social and academic expenses, family background, and school factors such as student composition, resources, processes, and practices, etc., according to Zhang et al. (2014). At-risk students are characterized by irregular school/college attendance, high dropout rates, poor grade maintenance, or prolonged and weakened academic performances (Mabhoyi & Seroto, 2019).

Early Intervention and its Impact on At-Risk Students

Advising and counseling services must be offered to academically at-risk students at higher education institutions. Efforts at the right time that must be targeted for assisting students in improving their academic performance are referred to as early intervention (Zhang et al., 2014). An early intervention process is a philosophical approach that takes a proactive stance by an institution of higher education toward at-risk students to address students' problems and bring better results (Zhang et al., 2014). Early intervention has a positive impact on the performance of students academically (Campell & Ramey, 1995).

Glennen et al. (1996) prove that advising at-risk students has been a critical factor in the decision-making process for students to remain at an institution of higher education. Early intervention programs coupled with recommending services offered by an institution help identify these students early and improve the retention rate. Zhang et al. (2014) point out that early intervention provides a precious opportunity for faculty by understanding why students remain behind and taking appropriate measures like changing instruction manner or classroom policy that can be implemented to improve the learning environment.

Early intervention is effective for reducing students' retention by improving academic performance. Early intervention actions vary from simple educational programs to systematic social assimilation approaches, and the performance measures are also many, the most used ones being college dropouts and assessment results. Sandra et al. (1998) prove that student-teacher partnerships effectively reduce students' dropouts. Extracurricular activities significantly lessen the dropout rate at institutions of higher education (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). A positive result was established from early intervention programs for nursing students through a mentoring program (Colalillo, 2007).

Expectancy Value Theory

The expectancy-value theory was proposed by Eccles et al. (1983). It postulates that achievement-related choices are motivated by people's expectations for success and subjective value in particular domains. Self-efficacy, goal difficulty, and perceived control being elements of the expectancy theory, are assumed to contribute to the choice and outcome of the behavior of at-risk students. Self-efficacy believes that an individual possesses the required skills and abilities to accomplish a set or given task. Constructs of self-efficacy include experience, emotional and psychological arousal regarding the job, and social persuasion to perform the task. What students have gone through previously impacts the choice of their behavior to let go of the grip they have on learning, especially if they faced such social experiences as ridicule and shame.

Positive Behavior Change through Supportive Intervention Measures

Institutions of learning are more likely to adopt intervention measures that suit their preferred methods of administration which may include validation by the society, teachers, and students (Martin, 2016). Hoyle, Marshall, and Yell (2011) point out that the University of Oregon developed a model called Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), which Horner and Sugai (2015) pioneered. The model is premised on the concept that behavior can be taught, and institutions can adapt to promote this model. There is sufficient research to suggest that PBIS is an evidence-based approach to preventing and addressing behavioral issues at institutions of learning (Lewis, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Response to Intervention (RTI) is a model that guarantees that at-risk students are recognized quickly, and the minimum intrusive approaches are employed to encourage positive behavior (Lane, Kalberg & Menzies, 2009). March and Horner (2002) advanced a model proposed by Taylor-Greene (1997) called the Behavior Education Plan (BEP), in which a learner is supposed to check-in at the start of the day and check out at the end of the day using a card. The model monitors learners' behavior

through the teacher's participation, who gives comments showing whether the learners have fully or partially not met their expectations.

Aims and Objectives

There has been widespread awareness of students' poor academic performance leading to their academic failure or dropouts. However, a customized framework to timely intervene in their academic progress is felt necessary, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. So the present study has been undertaken to identify at-risk students and provide a framework to bring them back into academic progress. Thus, the following objectives are framed in reaching the goals.

1. To identify the at-risk students in the early stages of their learning process
2. To find out what causes students to fall into the at-risk category
3. To establish strategies to assist at-risk students in rising from their dilemma

Research Methodology

Students reveal unique symptoms of their disinterest at different career stages in their academic pursuits. The study attempts to identify the reasons for the students to be lagging in achieving their academic goals by examining the literature and suggests a customized framework, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic, for timely intervention by examining the factors for poor performance status of students and outcomes and incorporating strategies into the academic advising system for assisting academically underprepared students in reaching their potential.

The study adopts a systematic literature review embracing three pivotal activities to achieve its objectives. These activities are identified through a thorough critical review of the appropriate research and synthesizing of the research findings into comprehensive statements. Cuthbertson, Robb & Blair (2020) followed this interpretivism research methodology in their approach to test their research objectives. A configurative review was also adopted because the study is primarily a systematic research methodology. The study analyses the data obtained from the configurative review to respond to the review questions, evidenced by Bozkurt, Akgün-Özbek & Zawacki-Richter, 2017; Gough, Oliver, & Thomas, 2012).

The researchers carried out a thematic analysis to develop themes or areas of interest by determining the saturation point, the point where literature is repeating what has already been observed. This analysis assisted in ascertaining a framework for answering the research questions under consideration. Cuthbertson et al. (2020) supported this approach in their methodology to examine their research questions. Furthermore, content analysis was adopted to produce systematic and quality literature review studies. This content analysis assisted in ascertaining and summarizing developments in the existing literature.

Study Results

The study identifies that there are three stages of students' life influenced by six phases as described by the model. This model begins before a student joins a higher education institution, continues throughout his/her time in that institution, and eventually ends with his/her departure with an academic degree.

Stage 1: Pre-entry Stage: During this stage, pre-entry attributes and students' goals and commitments are correlated. The students' inclination towards their learning in a college or University is predominantly influenced by their attributes, including family background, personal skills and abilities, and the standard of their schooling.

Stage 2: Institutional Experience Stage: Students' experience during this stage plays a significant role in determining if they will stay motivated or dejected in college. The College or University examines the students' attitude towards their approaches to learning, academic goals, and academic success or failure in terms of their grade points to estimate the likelihood

of students' retention. This examination assists the higher education institution to formulate and implement a plan to positively influence those who are likely to discontinue their education. Effective academic advising implemented at this stage ensures better students' academic success.

Stage 3: Departure Stage: The effectiveness of plans and policies implemented during the last stage in minimizing the likelihood of students' dropouts is tested. The outcomes of the first two stages are examined based on the students' success or failure rate at this stage.

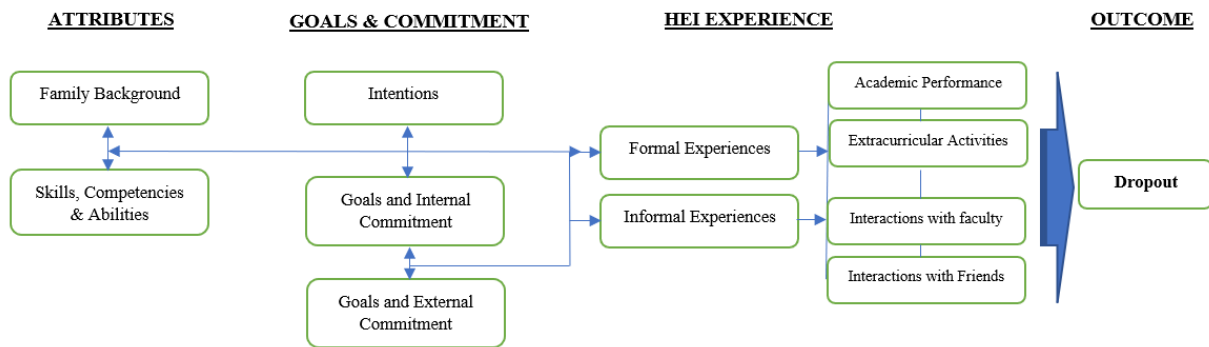The following figure depicts the attributes causing at-risk students.

Figure 1: Attributes and Factors to At-Risk Students

Analysis of Factors Causing At-Risk Students

Literature evidence provides the following conceptual bases for understanding the causes of the poor performance of students. Guzman and Pohlmeier (2014) argue that students' overall development and well-being are generally noted in the exhibition of high-risk behaviors. Horton (2015) suggests several trails that lead to an 'at-risk' level in the learning process. These are Lack of self-discipline, Procrastination, Irresponsible, Critical personal factors, Financial and time constraints, lack of motivation, lack of direction and clear goals, and a fixed mindset.

Lack of self-discipline: Baumeister (2002) identifies lack of self-discipline as one of the reasons why students end up in the 'at-risk' category. Human beings need to have some form of self-control, self-discipline, or self-regulation. When this behavior is lacking within the human mind, a person is filled with a focus to gratify immediate goals instead of future goals or increased rewards such as completing a college degree (Strayhorn, 2002). Research has shown that a lack of self-control of one's behavior for students who lack robust control over their academic behavior has a likelihood of lack of persistence, attainment, poor grades, lack of success (Mansfield, Pinto, Parente & Wortman, 2004; Tangney, Baumeister & Boone, 2004).

Procrastination: Procrastination has been defined as the process of delaying decision-making (Horton, 2015). Academic success requires a lot of discipline, perseverance, and circumventing distractors. Sokolowska (2009) notes that academic procrastination is multifaceted as it can be observed from the cognitive, affective, or motivational dimensions. Silver and Sabini (1991) suggest a positive perspective of procrastination in which completing a task is delayed while engaging in other more enjoyable activities rather than altogether avoiding the task.

Irresponsible: The term irresponsible might look too hard to pronounce, but it is the result of the reality of a student who fails to do their tasks on time in the learning process. Partly to blame for this behavior are a few parents who continuously take the rope of life skills from

their child's hands for critical school decisions, developing a 'dependency syndrome.' It is dangerous for parents to fail to let students become independent and responsible as they will simply be preparing their children for future failure. Joyce (2014) points out that learners who have had their parents watching over them unnecessarily will be away from college.

Critical personal factors: The student's personal life situation may encroach into college life which can be cancerous because before the student realizes it, s/he would have lost valuable resources like time. Emotions may erupt during this time and damage some good relationships if this stressful period is not adequately managed. At times depression and even emotional maladjustment impede good performance. Horton (2015) states that several young people enter higher education with dysfunctional family backgrounds that arouse stress and anxiety. Doyle (2017) reported that unexplained medical problems, emotional distress, issues with intimacy, and parent-child relationships can occur and recur during the victim's life course. Gilchrist (2014) indicates that most violent cases on and off-campus such as vandalism, sexual assaults, and rape, and fighting, are associated with alcohol and drug abuse, which usually would have been witnessed at home accepted as usual. Apple, Morgan, and Hintze (2013) conclude that the ability of a student to manage his/her academic, social, and professional development determines their success.

Financial and time constraints: The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (2011) discovered that students were primarily concerned about having sufficient money to spend at college and time to do what college work demands. The study observed that time was an essential resource, very scarce, and students were struggling to cope with the workload to have all tasks accomplished.

Lack of motivation: Six reasons why students are not motivated, according to Wright (2012) are: (a) lack of essential skills and acumen required to execute tasks, such as cognitive skills; (b) the effort required to complete a task might seem too great even though the student possesses the skills set; (c) lack of engagement in classroom instruction and learning activities; (d) lack of vision of payoff for doing an assignment and this may include praise, rewards, and other short-term payoffs; (e) lack of confidence in executing a given task and efficacy; and (f) lack of positive relationship with the teacher. Students who do not like the teacher are likely to do worse in the course taught by that teacher.

Lack of direction and clear goals: The most frequently noted reason students drop out of college has been noted as a lack of goal clarity even if the student was intelligent (Noel, 1985). Research suggests that the most decisive factor associated with degree completion is the commitment to career goals. Most students who enroll at higher education institutions leave without completing their degrees mainly because they lack the commitment to the goal path or there is none at the beginning of adulthood. Most students who reach the 'at-risk' stage and eventually exist in college would have dealt with their workload reactively rather than planning how to execute the tasks. By the time one realizes their mistake, it will be too late, especially considering the lost time.

Fixed mindset: Students accept their current situation as a permanent one that cannot be changed and therefore do not fight out to change the status. They view intelligence as a fixed quantity that they either possess or do not possess, and they tend to worry more about proving it rather than improving their status quo. These students do not like challenges, and if they feel threatened by the workload, they easily withdraw. Walton and Cohen (2014) point out that

students with academic tenacity possess the ability to rise above immediate concerns and respond to academic setbacks with resilience.

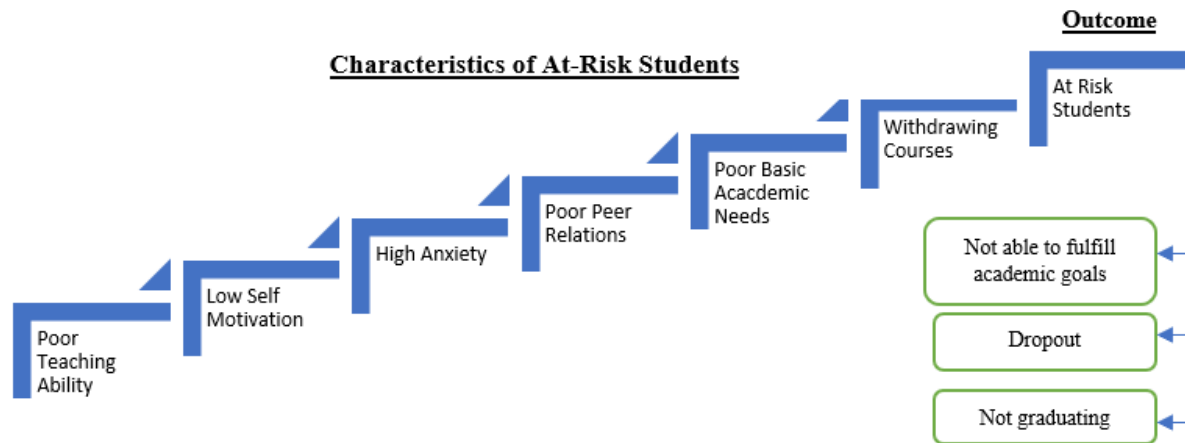Figure 2 explains the factors that cause students' poor performance and outcomes.

Figure 2: Characteristics of At-Risk Students and their Outcomes

Poor learning ability, low self-motivation or esteem, high anxiety, poor peer relations, poor basic needs-Mathematical, English, and reading proficiencies lead to withdrawing from courses. This tendency ultimately leads to academic failure, as illustrated by the symptoms of not fulfilling academic goals, dropping out, and being in danger of not graduating. The essential step in the at-risk students' recovery management system adopted by the higher educational institutions is their retention and graduation. So, an effective advising strategy that should identify the general characteristics of at-risk students and provide remedial measures in which advisors can enhance their effectiveness by educating the population to realize their responsibilities and guide them to reach their potential should be framed and implemented. Given this, the authors strongly suggest that the HEIs design an advising system that incorporates what students want to know from advising, what impact the advising system will make on our programs, and how faculty, students, and the system can be connected to attain a common goal. The paper suggests the following strategies to be part of an advising system to achieve its purpose:

Strategies to Assist At-Risk Students
*Prescriptive advising***:** This strategy establishes a doctor-patient relationship between the student and the academic advisor. As a doctor, the advisor diagnoses the problems by examining students' poor performance status symptoms and prescribes a course of action to address the problem. For example, if a student fails in a course, the advisor analyses the reason for his failure and suggests a solution to pass the course in the next attempt. This advising strategy specifically addresses the issue faced by the students.

Developmental advising: Developmental advising is the most widely recognized advising strategy. According to Terry O'Banion (1972), the advisor explores the life goal of students, their vocational goals, program selection, and choosing and scheduling courses for their timely graduation in this strategy.

Self-authorship: Baxter Maggolda (2009) defines self-authorship as "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations.". This strategy involves students learning from their experience, creating their plans, and strategizing to carry out their goals by their self-motivation. Students are empowered to decide for themselves. The advisors should establish constructive internal basics to establish self-esteem among the students and make them independent. An effective self-authorship strategy benefits students to identify available support systems, self-evaluate, prioritize their goals, organize themselves in provocative situations, and recognize their knowledge.

Intrusive advising: Intrusive advising suggests that the advisors are proactive and action-oriented to reach out to students who otherwise might not seek advising. The strategy that establishes a periodical connection of students with the advisor to minimize the possibility of dropouts to maximize the students' retention is more suitable for first-generation students, students with low self-esteem, students far away from home, students at an early stage of their academic career, even though they are not under poor performance academic status. An early alert system will make intrusive advising more effective.

Strength-based advising: Strength-based advising is helpful to identify and develop students' natural strengths. This approach works on the students' inherent skills and competencies in their academic success.

Appreciative advising: It is a complementary strategy to strength-based advising wherein advisors assist students to discover their passion and build upon their passion for designing their academic and personal goals. Thus, academic advising with these strategies assists the rising potential students develop and reach their academic and personal goals.

Study Contributions

The study contributes to the global academic fraternity in treating at-risk students. The academic debate on at-risk students has identified causes of students entering the at-risk zone, which will be used to propose treatment. For instance, Trauth and Harris (2019) posit that instructors and support staff realize the basic needs such as health and safety of students and meeting those needs first is of paramount importance before the actual learning can occur. Treatment can only be beneficial only when it assists at-risk students. Kilgus, Taylor, and Embre (2018) point out that it is essential to identify at-risk students and what causes them to enter that zone to deliver dropout preventative measures effectively. For example, the cause might be simply the learning environment which might not be conducive, and therefore by addressing that cause, positive results may be yielded. The study suggests that failing to address challenges faced by at-risk students at an early stage may have long-term effects that may cascade into a host of problems like dropping out of the learning institution, long-term economic hardships, health and safety issues, and societal related costs as unemployment, antisocial behaviors.

The study also suggests peer mentoring as an effective retention tool. If structured appropriately, it creates the right academic and social support systems that improve the student retention rate (Colvin, 2015; Cornelius, Wood, & Lai, 2016). Mentors have a better and faster understanding as well as the appreciation of the predicament of their fellow mentees than the instructor and support system would. Peer tutors also need extensive training to create an enabling environment that facilitates the learning process.

This study has identified endogenous and exogenous causes of at-risk students, which helps the academic fraternity give the desirable diagnosis. The work of Horton (2015) helped shape

the Table below by providing a list of factors that cause students to fall into the at-risk category. A summary of causes of at-risk is given in the following Table and the possible solutions.

Table 2: Causes of students' at-risk status and possible solutions

	Cause of falling into at-risk	Solution
	Perseverance • Lacks discipline • Procrastinate • Irresponsible • Afraid of failure • No sense of self-efficacy	It is suggested that students be told from the beginning that the learning process requires discipline in all areas. '*Procrastination is the thief of time,'* as the saying goes, is accurate, and it will be too late before one knows it. Students should be reminded that learning is beneficial to their future lives, shaping the future in the present.
	Academic Mindset • Financial constraints • Unmotivated • Aimless • 1st generation college student • Fixed mindset	The mindset is a crucial bowl that helps self-actualization and attainment of goals. Students must have some targets in life to enjoy the learning process.
	Learning strategies • Teacher pleasers • Unchallenged • Memorizes instead of thinking • Doesn't transfer knowledge • Highly judgmental of self • Minimal metacognitive awareness	Learning is not about pleasing others and the teacher, but understanding, conceptualizing and perceiving how the concepts apply in real-life situations. Metacognitive awareness is critical in the learning process.
	Social skills • Non-team player • Insecure public speaker • Lacks a support system • Lacks mentors/role models	Encourage and have debate clubs and class individual and group participation sessions. Support is necessary even from parents or guardians. Parents must let go of some responsibilities they formerly undertook for their children when they resume college, such as transporting them to and from college and seeing that they have done assignments.

Conclusions and Reflections

The study concludes with the recommendations for underprepared students to succeed in their academic and personal lives. Several methods are available to identify at-risk students. However, the selection depends on many factors that need to be examined—for instance, using information technology through institutional records that show each student's progress at any given time is an effective method, according to the study findings. Time spent by students visiting an institution's teaching and learning material made available by learning management systems (LMS) can provide helpful information. Data mining from other institutions such as the Ministry of Higher Education can assist researchers and policymakers in coming up with informed decisions regarding the assistance that can be rendered to at-risk students. Strategies to deal with the fate of at-risk students include the following but are not limited to; the adoption

of early alert systems, implementation of successful academic support strategies like an effective intrusive advising system, or the combination of a few strategies as mentioned in the paper; establishment of successful academic support strategies like orientation sessions at different levels of students like freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior levels; creating learning communities; proving peer monitors programs. HEIs should develop a network that establishes a constant, constructive relationship between students, their programs, and an effective system to reach students' academic and personal goals.

Limitations and Future Study

The study is based on the literature on identifying at-risk students and adopting measures to promote them academically. The location of the HEIs, parents' educational level and the students' family background affect the implications of strategies to be adopted for raising students' potential. The recommended strategies may not have the same impact on students studying at different levels like freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior. However, future studies can explore the analysis of primary data collected from all stakeholders to identify the at-risk students and draft a sustainable model for developing their potential for success.

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