

Factors Affecting The Non-Completion Of Degrees Under The College Of College Of Business Administration And Accountancy (Cbaa), College Of Education (Coed) , College Of Liberal Arts And Communication(Clac), College Of Science And Computer Studies (Cscs)

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Abstract – This study explores the factors contributing to the non-completion of degree programs among students from four colleges at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas (DLSUD): the College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA), College of Education (COEd), College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC), and College of Science and Computer Studies (CSCS). Utilizing a structured survey and purposive sampling, data were collected on students' background, academic history, and reasons for discontinuing their studies. Findings indicate that most non-completers were male, aged 21–22, residing in Cavite, and employed in freelance or BPO sectors. Many had completed 24 or more academic units prior to leaving, with financial constraints and family-related issues cited as the primary causes. The highest dropout rates occurred during the pandemic period. Respondents shared mixed views on their university experience, acknowledging both strengths and areas for improvement. These insights highlight the importance of implementing targeted support systems, flexible financial aid options, and proactive follow-up strategies to reduce student attrition and encourage degree completion.

Keywords: Student attrition, Degree non-completion, Higher education, Financial barriers, Academic persistence

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of education is to support the holistic development of individuals. Despite rigorous admission processes that prioritize talent and academic potential, many students still fail to complete their degrees. This raises concerns about the underlying causes of academic attrition. Prior research, such as that by Hako and Shikongo (2019), highlights both

educational and psychological barriers—ranging from poor time management and inadequate living conditions to low motivation and lack of social support.

Student attrition not only affects individuals and their families but also represents a loss of institutional investment and societal human capital. Institutions invest heavily in student services, facilities, and faculty, expecting long-term returns. However, many students drop out, particularly during demanding phases like thesis writing, often without clearly stated reasons.

At De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, no comprehensive study has yet examined the reasons for non-completion across key colleges, including CBAA, COEd, CLAC, and CSCS. This research seeks to fill that gap by identifying the personal, academic, and institutional factors contributing to degree non-completion. The findings aim to guide strategies that enhance student retention and support successful academic outcomes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the factors behind student non-completion of degree programs has been a central concern in educational research, with studies highlighting a complex interplay of academic, psychological, institutional, and socio-economic influences. Almenaie (2018) found that academic performance, program type, and admission criteria significantly affect completion rates, with female students showing greater persistence. Bermudo (2017) and Loriens (2016) emphasized the role of institutional support and flexibility, especially in distance education, while Premacio et al. (2020) and Reech (2019) advocated for stronger virtual support and early intervention strategies. Gelso (2001) introduced the psychological dimension, stressing the importance of emotional engagement and faculty-student relationships. Hako et al. (2019) further identified poor study habits, mental health challenges, and unsupportive environments as key barriers. Collectively, these studies underscore the need for holistic, student-centered approaches that address both internal and external factors to improve retention and degree completion.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

- 1. Research Design:** The survey research method was used to identify background characteristics, academic information, and the reasons for not completing the degree of the respondents. Surveys are an excellent vehicle for measuring a wide variety of unobservable data according to Check & Schutt, (2012).
- 2. Participants/Data Sources:** Undergraduate students from the following Colleges namely, College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA), College of Education (COEd) College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC), College of Science and Computer Studies (CSCS). These students may include those currently enrolled but experiencing delays in completion and those who have discontinued their studies.

3. **Tools and Instruments:** This study used a standardized, structured questionnaire patterned on SEARCA Tracer Study and was revised to incorporate possible Factors Affecting the Non- Completion of Degrees.
4. **Procedures** Survey questionnaire was administered as the main instrument for obtaining feedback from the students via online MS form to gather the data information about factors affecting the non- completion of the different degree programs under the College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA), College of Education (COEd) , College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC), and College Science and Computer Studies (CSCS).
5. **Analysis Techniques:** Purposive sampling is primarily used in this` study to identify specific characteristics, trends, or insights within a targeted subset of population. Participation in the study was voluntary and they were ensured that anonymity was maintained throughout the study. Confidentiality is ensured, and only aggregated data are reported. The data gathered are on kept secured.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The background characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Age and Sex of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 and below	2	9.52
21 to 22	14	66.67
23 and above	5	23.81
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	8	38.1 %
Male	13	61.9 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 1 The data shows that the majority of respondents are 21 to 22 years old (66.67%) and male (61.9%). This age group typically represents students in the final years of their undergraduate studies. The gender distribution, however, contrasts with findings from Almenaie (2018), who reported that female students tend to outperform males academically and are more likely to complete their degrees. This discrepancy may suggest that male students in this context face unique challenges that hinder degree completion, such as work obligations or lower academic engagement.

Moreover, Hako and Shikongo (2019) emphasized psychological factors like motivation and self-efficacy, which may vary by gender and influence persistence in higher education. The predominance of males in the non-completing group could indicate a need for gender-sensitive support programs.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Home Address

Home Address	Frequency	Percentage
Bacoor City	8	38.1 %
Dasmariñas City	9	42.9 %
Manila	1	4.8 %
Nasugbu, Batangas	1	4.8 %
TreceMartires City	2	9.5 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

Most respondents reside in Dasmariñas City (42.9%) and Bacoor City (38.1%), both urban areas in Cavite. Urban residency often correlates with better access to educational resources, yet the high non-completion rate among these students suggests that proximity to the university does not necessarily translate to academic success.

Premacio et al. (2020) noted that environmental stressors, including urban distractions and family responsibilities, can negatively impact student performance. This supports the idea that students from urban areas may face competing demands that interfere with their studies.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Place of Employment

Place of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Batangas City	1	4.76
Dasmariñas City	3	14.29
Pasay City, Manila	1	4.76
Not Applicable	7	33.33
Freelance	8	38.10
Work from Home Self-Employed	1	4.76
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

A significant portion of respondents are engaged in freelance work (33.33%) or work-from-home arrangements (38.10%). This reflects a shift in employment trends, especially postpandemic, where flexible work has become more common. However, balancing work and academic responsibilities can be challenging.

Reech (2019) found that employment pressures were among the top reasons for graduate student attrition. The data here aligns with that finding, suggesting that students who work while studying may struggle with time management and academic commitment, leading to non-completion.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Nature of Business

Nature of Business	Frequency	Percentage
BPO	9	42.86
Inhouse Company	1	4.76
Manufacturing Industry	3	14.29
Service Industry	1	4.76
Na	7	33.33
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

The majority of respondents are employed in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector (42.86%), known for demanding schedules and high stress levels. The BPO industry often requires night shifts and extended hours, which can conflict with academic schedules and reduce study time.

Loriens (2016) highlighted that work-related stress and lack of time are significant contributors to student dropout rates. The prevalence of BPO employment among noncompleters underscores the need for universities to offer flexible learning options or support systems for working students.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Honors Award When at DLSU-D

Honors and Awards Received when at DLSU-D	Frequency	Percentage
None	21	100.0 %

All 21 respondents reported not receiving any honors or awards during their time at DLSU-D. This finding may reflect a lack of academic recognition, which can influence students' motivation and self-esteem.

According to Hako and Shikongo (2019), academic performance and recognition are critical psychological factors that affect students' persistence. The absence of awards may suggest that these students struggled academically or were not sufficiently engaged or supported to excel. Rice et al. (2014) also emphasized the importance of academic advising and mentoring, which can help students set goals and feel valued, potentially reducing dropout rates.

The academic information of the respondents

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by College and Degree Program

College	Degree Program	Frequency	Percentage
College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA)	BOM	6	54.5 %
	BSA	2	18.2 %

	Marketing	3	27.3 %
<u>Total for CBAA</u>		<u>11</u>	<u>100</u>
College of Education (COEd)	BSE	<u>1</u>	<u>100.0 %</u>
College of Liberal Arts and Communications	Psych	<u>1</u>	<u>100.0 %</u>
College of Science and Computer Studies	APM	2	25.0 %
	BCS	1	12.5 %
	BIT	5	62.5 %
<u>Total for CSCS</u>		<u>8</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Overall Total</u>		<u>21</u>	<u>100</u>

The majority of respondents came from the College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA) (52.4%), followed by the College of Science and Computer Studies (CSCS) (38.1%). Only one respondent each came from the College of Education (COEd) and College of Liberal Arts and Communication (CLAC).

This distribution suggests that students in business and technology-related programs may be more prone to non-completion. Bermudo (2017) noted that program-specific challenges, such as curriculum difficulty and lack of alignment with student interests, can contribute to attrition. Additionally, Premacio et al. (2020) found that students in technical fields often face academic overload, which may explain the higher non-completion rates in CSCS.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by School Year they Started at DLSU-D

School Year Started	Frequency	Percentage
2017-2018	2	9.52
2018-2019	3	14.29
2019-2020	10	47.62
2020-2021	4	19.05
2021-2022	1	4.76
2022-2023	1	4.76
<u>Total</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>100</u>

Nearly half of the respondents (47.62%) began their studies in SY 2019–2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic. This timing is significant, as the pandemic disrupted traditional learning environments and introduced new challenges such as remote learning, financial instability, and mental health issues.

Loreins (2016) and Reech (2019) both highlighted that external disruptions, including global crises, can severely impact student retention. The pandemic likely exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, making it harder for students to stay on track academically and financially.

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by the number of units taken from DLSU-D

How many units had you taken from DLSU-D	Frequency	Percentage
12 units	2	9.5 %
18 units	2	9.5 %
24 units or more	17	81.0 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

A large majority (81%) of respondents had taken 24 units or more, indicating that they were well into their academic programs before discontinuing. This suggests that noncompletion is not limited to early attrition but can occur even after significant academic investment.

Gelso (2001) emphasized that late-stage attrition often stems from complex factors such as burnout, lack of support, and shifting priorities. These students may have encountered barriers in completing capstone requirements like thesis writing, which is consistent with the study's observation that many struggled with research subjects.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by School Year they Stopped at DLSU-D

School Year Last Attended	Frequency	Percentage
2019-2020	1	4.76
2020-2021	8	33.33
2021-2022	10	42.86
2022-2023	2	19.05
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

The data shows that 42.86% of respondents stopped enrolling in SY 2021–2022, followed by 33.33% in SY 2020–2021. These years coincide with the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, which had a profound impact on higher education globally.

According to Premacio et al. (2020), the pandemic introduced unprecedented challenges such as remote learning difficulties, lack of access to resources, and increased mental health issues. These factors likely contributed to the spike in non-completion during this period. Reech (2019) also emphasized that external disruptions like health crises can exacerbate existing academic and financial pressures, leading to higher attrition rates. This trend suggests that institutions must develop resilient support systems to help students navigate crises and maintain academic continuity.

Table 10. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by School Year they Started at DLSU-D

Reasons for not completing the degree	Frequency	Percentage
DLSU-D Environment	1	4.8 %
Family (Financial Problem)	11	52.4 %
Transfer of School	8	38.1 %
Work	1	4.8 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

The most cited reason for non-completion was family or financial problems (52.4%), followed by transfer of school (38.1%), with work and DLSU-D environment each accounting for 4.8%. Financial constraints are a well-documented barrier to degree completion. Bermudo (2017) and Hako and Shikongo (2019) both identified economic hardship as a primary factor in student dropout. The pandemic likely intensified these issues, as many families faced job losses and reduced income.

The second most common reason, school transfer, may reflect dissatisfaction with the academic environment or a search for more affordable or flexible options. This aligns with Rice et al. (2014), who found that student-advisor relationships and institutional support play a crucial role in retention. Poor advising or lack of responsiveness from faculty and administration can push students to seek alternatives.

The mention of work as a reason, though less frequent, ties back to earlier findings in Table 3 and 4, where many students were employed in demanding roles. Balancing work and study is a persistent challenge, especially without institutional accommodations.

Lastly, the DLSU-D environment was cited by one respondent, and qualitative comments suggest issues with academic culture, faculty behavior, and administrative responsiveness. These concerns echo findings by Gelso (2001), who emphasized the importance of a supportive and respectful academic climate in promoting student persistence.

Overall Comments of the Respondents during their stay at DLSU-D

Respondents shared varied experiences during their time at DLSU-D, reflecting both appreciation and criticism. Positive feedback highlighted the university's welcoming atmosphere, modern facilities, and commitment to holistic development. Some students described it as a "good place to study," praising its student-friendly environment and support for returning students. However, others voiced concerns about mandatory activities, high tuition fees during the pandemic, and issues with academic pressure and faculty conduct. One international student criticized the academic environment as overly stressful and likened the university to a high school, citing a lack of respect for students' time and autonomy. Despite

these challenges, they appreciated the peer community and ultimately left for greater academic freedom. The quality of academic advising also emerged as a crucial factor influencing student motivation and persistence. As highlighted by Rice et al. (2014), supportive advising relationships play a significant role in enhancing student engagement and satisfaction, suggesting that improvements in this area could positively impact degree completion.

V. CONCLUSION

Student feedback on their experiences at DLSU-D revealed a mix of positive and negative sentiments. Many appreciated the university's welcoming environment, modern facilities, and support for returning students, describing it as a "good place to study." However, others raised concerns about mandatory activities, high tuition fees during the pandemic, and stressful academic conditions. An international student criticized the pressure surrounding assessments and faculty behavior, noting a lack of respect for students' time and autonomy. Despite these issues, they valued the peer community and left for greater academic freedom. A recurring theme was the importance of academic advising, with research by Rice et al. (2014) emphasizing that strong, supportive advisor relationships significantly enhance student engagement and success. These insights suggest that improving advisory support and institutional responsiveness could positively influence student retention and degree completion.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The conceptualization of the study was initiated by Dr. Cristina C. Salibay, and supported by Dr. Edna T. Mercado and Dr. Felinore Angelica H. Valera. The three authors brainstormed as regards the methodology to be conducted. Both Mercado and Valera gathered the data from the respondents through online survey. Both of them shared in the writing of the draft of the study after the data analysis was done by Mercado. Salibay supervised the whole study including the final editing of the paper.

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