

Imperative Impact of Close Monitoring on Learners At-Risk of Dropping Out

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Abstract — The issue of students at risk of dropping out, known as Student-at-risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) by the Philippines' Department of Education, poses a significant challenge to educational systems worldwide. This study explores the impact of close monitoring on SARDOs in several elementary schools in the district of Baleno, Masbate province. Close monitoring involves personalized support and continuous engagement to identify and address the needs of at-risk students. Utilizing quantitative data, the research examines the effectiveness of various monitoring strategies and their outcomes on student retention and success. The study employs a survey questionnaire to gather data from at-risk students and teachers involved in the monitoring

program. The results reveal that close monitoring is perceived as highly beneficial by students, with an average weighted mean of 4.60 indicating a "strongly agree" rating. Students believe that close monitoring helps identify areas where they need assistance, ensures timely completion of assignments, and fosters a sense of connection with teachers and the school community. Furthermore, the study highlights that students perceive the support and interventions received through close monitoring very positively, with an average weighted mean of 4.52. Teachers, however, face challenges such as resistance from students, coordination with parents, maintaining motivation, limited resources, and balancing monitoring responsibilities with regular teaching duties. Despite these challenges, teachers prioritize strategies like involving parents, providing feedback and positive reinforcement, regular one-on-one meetings, additional tutoring, and offering mental health resources. Overall, the findings suggest that implementing or maintaining close monitoring practices can significantly enhance students' academic performance and engagement, thus reducing dropout rates among at-risk learners. Addressing the challenges faced by teachers can further improve the effectiveness of these interventions.

Keywords — At-Risk Students, Close Monitoring, Dropout, Student Engagement

I. Introduction

The issue of students at risk of dropping out of school is a significant challenge to educational systems worldwide. Student-at-risk of Dropping Out commonly known as SARDO is a term coined by the Philippines' Department of Education, defined as, a student who is likely to become a candidate to drop out (Timbal, 2019). Students at risk of dropping out often face many challenges, including academic difficulties, socioeconomic barriers, mental health concerns, and personal issues. According to Martinez (2003) dropping out refers to a student leaving the course without ever returning. Similarly, Janosz et al. (1997), stated that the experience of dropping out of school is generally negative. They stated that students at risk of dropout tend to have a history of poor grades, grade repetition, poor motivation, truancy, problematic behaviour, poor relationships with other students and teachers, and less participation in extracurricular activities. Close monitoring is an important intervention strategy to identify and support these learners before they disengage entirely from the educational system. Numerous studies highlight the importance of early identification and intervention for at-risk students. According to Dynarsky and Gleason (2002), early warning systems monitoring academic performance, attendance, and behavior can effectively identify students likely to drop out. The study of Frazelle and Nagel (2015) demonstrated that schools utilizing data-driven decision-making and monitoring tools could significantly reduce dropout rates by identifying at-risk students early and providing targeted support. Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006) emphasize the role of personalized support and continuous monitoring in keeping students engaged. Engagement of students in school activities can help minimize learners' at-risk of dropping out. "Engagement can best be understood as a relationship: between the student and school community, the student and school adults, the student and peers, the student and instruction, and the student and curriculum" (Yazzie-Minz, 2010, p. 1). Close monitoring has been linked to enhanced student-teacher relationships, fostering a supportive

learning environment that encourages student persistence (Spark, 2013). Additionally, research by Balfanz and Byrnes (2012), suggests that targeted interventions, including close monitoring, significantly reduce dropout rates. By demonstrating genuine care and interest in students' well-being and academic progress, educators can cultivate a sense of belonging and support that is instrumental in mitigating dropout risk.

This research aims to identify the impact of close monitoring on learners at risk of dropping out in several elementary schools from the district of Baleno, Masbate province, examining the effectiveness of various monitoring strategies and their outcomes on student retention and success.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the influences of close monitoring to the academic performance of learners at risk of dropping out?
2. What are the perceptions of the learners at risk of dropping out towards the support and interventions they received through close monitoring?
3. What challenges are encountered by the teachers during the close monitoring of learners at risk of dropping out? and
4. What are the specific strategies and interventions used through close monitoring by the teachers to prevent dropouts among at-risk learners?

II. Methodology

Design. This study employs quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of close monitoring on at-risk learners. According to (Bhandari, 2020), Quantitative Research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations.

Sampling. The respondents include 20 students identified as at risk of dropping out from several elementary schools in Masbate province, and 17 teachers involved in the monitoring program to provide insights into the implementation and effectiveness of monitoring strategies. The purposive sampling technique is used to select at-risk students based on their academic performance, poor attendance, and behavioral issues. Teachers are selected through a convenience sampling method based on their involvement in monitoring programs.

Ethical Issues. During the distribution of the questionnaire in paper form, a signed letter of permission from the PSDS was introduced to the principals to inform them about the survey to be conducted. The primary instrument for data collection is the survey questionnaire designed to gather data on students' experiences and perceptions of monitoring programs and to gather data

from teachers on their encountered challenges, and strategies employed during the process. The data gathered are kept confidential, participants have remained anonymous, and the RA 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 is strictly followed.

Research Procedure. Before the questionnaire distribution, a letter asking for permission was sent to the Public Schools District Supervisor. The researchers personally distributed the questionnaires together with the signed letter to the targeted respondents. The researchers released and retrieved the accomplished questionnaire at its scheduled time. Upon the retrieval of the 100% answered survey questionnaires, the data were analyzed and interpreted by getting the weighted mean of their responses.

Treatment of Data. To measure the influence of close monitoring, learners perception, and strategies and interventions, weighted mean was employed. Below is the five-point Likert scale with descriptive interpretation and analysis.

Scale	Description	Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	Very Highly Perceived
3.51-4.50	Agree (A)	Highly Perceived
2.51-3.50	Neutral (N)	Moderately Perceived
1.51-2.50	Disagree (D)	Slightly Perceived
1.00-1.50	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Not Perceived

To find out how serious are the challenges encountered by the teachers during the close monitoring of learners at-risk of dropping out, a weighted mean was used. The five-point Likert scale is presented below with a descriptive interpretation and analysis of the seriousness of the challenges encountered.

Scale	Description	Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Very Serious (VS)	Very Highly Serious
3.51-4.50	Serious (S)	Highly Serious
2.51-3.50	Fairly Serious (FS)	Moderately Serious
1.51-2.50	Slightly Serious (SS)	Slightly Serious
1.00-1.50	Not Serious (NS)	Not Serious

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1: The Influence of Close Monitoring on the Academic Performance of Learners At-Risk of Dropping Out

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Degree of Effect	
1. Close monitoring can help me overcome challenges in my academic performance.	4.50	A	Highly Perceived
2. It helps me identify areas where I need help in my studies.	4.70	SA	Very Highly Perceived
3. It helps me to complete my assignments on time.	4.65	SA	Very Highly Perceived

4. It has increased my attendance and participation.	4.40	A	Highly Perceived
5. It helps me feel more connected to my teachers and school community.	4.75	SA	Very Highly Perceived
Average Weighted Mean	4.60	SA	Very Highly Perceived

Legend: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), & (SD) Strongly Disagree)

Table 1 presents the perceived influence of close monitoring on the academic performance of learners at-risk of dropping out. Three indicators, as shown in the table were rated strongly agree while two indicators were evaluated as agree. It can be noted that three of the five items survey registered strongly agree as the main influence of close monitoring. These statements are students believe that close monitoring can help identify areas where they need help (4.70), it helps to complete assignments on time (4.65), and students find that it helps them feel more connected to their teachers and school community (4.75). The computed average weighted mean of 4.60 revealed a strongly agree rating which means students perceive close monitoring as highly beneficial, therefore, implementing or maintaining close monitoring practices can significantly improve students' academic performances and overall engagement with their education. According to Dotterer and Lowe (2011), supportive teacher-student relationships are essential in fostering a sense of belonging, which directly influences students' academic engagement and persistence. Perceived competence and relatedness are serious for sustained motivation and retention in educational settings (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Implementing close monitoring practices not only helps in identifying areas where students need support but also ensures timely completion of assignments leading to a stronger connection between students and school community.

Table 2: Perception of Learners At-Risk of Dropping Out of the Support and Interventions they Received through Close Monitoring

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Degree of Effect	
1. Close monitoring makes me feel more motivated to stay in school.	4.70	SA	Very Highly Perceived
2. The interventions make me feel more supported in my academic journey.	4.35	A	Highly Perceived
3. The additional resources provided like tutoring and counseling are beneficial to me.	4.55	SA	Very Highly Perceived
4. It makes me feel that they care about my success.	4.45	A	Highly Perceived
5. The feedback from my teachers during close monitoring sessions is found to be constructive and encouraging.	4.55	SA	Very Highly Perceived
Average Weighted Mean	4.52	SA	Very Highly Perceived

Legend: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), & (SD) Strongly Disagree)

Table 2 shows the perceptions of learners at-risk of dropping out of the support and interventions they received through close monitoring. Three indicators, as shown in the table were rated strongly agree while two indicators were rated as agree. These results show that students very highly perceive close monitoring in three indicators such as:

1. Motivation to stay in school (4.70), close monitoring significantly enhances students' motivation to stay in school. According to Dotter and Lowe (2011), supportive teacher-student relationships are essential in fostering a sense of school belonging, which directly influences students' academic engagement and persistence. The high score of 4.70 for motivation underscores this relationship, aligning with findings from Ryan and Deci (2000), who argue that perceived competence and relatedness are critical for sustained motivation and retention in educational settings.
2. Benefiting from additional resources like tutoring and counseling (4.55), the perception that these resources are very important, it reflects their vital role in academic support. According to Baker et al. (2012), access to academic and emotional support services significantly improves students' performance and well-being. Tutoring and counseling provide targeted assistance that helps address specific academic challenges and emotional needs, which is very essential for at-risk students.
3. Receiving constructive and encouraging feedback (4.55), according to Hattie and Timperley (2007), state that effective feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student achievement. Feedback that is clear, specific, and supportive helps students understand their progress, recognize areas for improvement, and stay motivated.
4. Its average weighted mean (4.52) showed a strongly agree rating which means that the support and interventions received through close monitoring is perceived very positively by the students, indicating its effectiveness in supporting their academic journey.

Table 3: Challenges Encountered by the Teachers during the Close Monitoring on Learners At-Risk of Dropping Out

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Degree of Effect	
1. I often encounter resistance from at-risk students when implementing monitoring strategies.	4.18	S	Highly Serious
2. Balancing close monitoring responsibilities with my regular teaching duties is challenging.	4.53	VS	Very Highly Serious
3. Coordinating with parents or guardians of at-risk students is often challenging.	4.06	S	Highly Serious
4. Limited resources like tutoring and counseling services hinder my ability to effectively support at risk students.	3.82	S	Highly Serious
5. It is difficult to stay motivated and positive when working with at-risk students who show little improvement.	4.06	S	Highly Serious
Average Weighted Mean	4.13	S	Highly Serious

Legend: VS (Very Serious), S (Serious), FS (Fairly Serious), SS (Slightly Serious), & NS (Not Serious)

Table 3 displays the challenges encountered by the teachers in the district of Baleno, Masbate Province during the close monitoring of learners at-risk of dropping out. As can be seen from the table, the average weighted mean is rated 4.13 which is serious. Four indicators were given a serious rating, and one indicator was rated very serious. This can be noted that four of the five items survey registered serious challenges encountered by the teachers. These are teachers encountering resistance from at-risk students (4.18), coordination with parents/guardians (4.06), maintaining motivation (4.06) and dealing with limited resources like tutoring and counseling services (3.82). The one which has the highest weighted mean, balancing close monitoring responsibilities with regular teaching duties (4.53) shows that this is the very serious challenge for the teachers. The average weighted mean shows that addressing these challenges may help in providing better support for both the teachers and at-risk students.

The challenges faced by teachers in the district of Baleno, Masbate Province during close monitoring of at-risk students emphasize the need for systematic support to address these problems. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), teacher well-being and professional support are essential in maintaining effective teaching practices, especially when dealing with at-risk students. Furthermore, Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006) emphasize the importance of parental involvement and resource availability in preventing student dropouts. The serious and very serious challenges identified, highlight the necessity for schools to provide additional resources, professional development, and strategies to improve parent-teacher coordination and student engagement.

Table 4: Specific Strategies and Interventions Used through Close Monitoring by the Teachers to Prevent Dropouts among At-Risk Learners

Strategies and Interventions	Weighted Mean	Degree of Effect	
1. Regular one-on-one meetings with at-risk students.	4.76	SA	Very Highly Perceived
2. Provide additional tutoring outside regular class hours.	4.65	SA	Very Highly Perceived
3. Involving parents or guardians.	4.88	SA	Very Highly Perceived
4. Giving feedback and positive reinforcement.	4.82	SA	Very Highly Perceived
5. Provide mental health resources and counselling.	4.59	SA	Very Highly Perceived
Average Weighted Mean	4.74	SA	Very Highly Perceived

Legend: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), & (SD) Strongly Disagree)

Table 4 shows the specific strategies and interventions used through close monitoring by the teachers to prevent dropouts among at-risk learners. All of the indicators were rated strongly agree. These involve parents or guardians with the highest score of 4.88, followed by giving feedback and positive reinforcement (4.82), regular one-on-one meetings (4.76), additional tutoring (4.65), and providing mental health resources and counseling (4.59). Its average weighted mean rated 4.74 which is strongly agree. It shows that the teachers from the district of Baleno, Masbate Province prioritize these strategies when working with learners at-risk of dropping out.

The strong agreement on the effectiveness of strategies such as parental involvement, feedback, one-on-one meetings, tutoring, and mental health support indicates that these interventions are very helpful in preventing dropouts among at-risk learners. According to Epstein (2010), parental involvement is a key component in improving student outcomes, as it fosters a collaborative approach to education. Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasize that effective feedback significantly enhances student achievement by providing clear guidance and motivation. Additionally, individualized support through one-on-one meetings and tutoring has been shown to address specific academic challenges and promote student success (Baker, Rieg, & Clendaniel, 2006). Providing mental health resources is also essential, as mental well-being directly impacts academic performance and retention (Reinke et al, 2011). Therefore, prioritizing these strategies effectively will support at-risk students and reduce dropout rates.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion of the study, the learners at-risk of dropping out perceived close monitoring as very helpful. It improves their academic performances, timely assignment completion, and increase connection to their teachers and school community. Close monitoring serves as a motivation to at-risk learners to learn, able to access additional resources like tutoring and counselling, and receive constructive feedback. Though teachers experienced challenges like balancing monitoring with teaching duties, student resistance, parental coordination, motivation maintenance, and limited resources, they are able to prioritize effective strategies such as parental involvement, feedback and positive reinforcement, one-on-one meetings, additional tutoring, and mental health resources and counselling to learners at-risk of dropping out.

V. Recommendations

1. Schools should maintain or implement close monitoring practices to improve the academic performances and school engagement
2. Schools should continue the close monitoring activities focusing on motivational support, additional resources like tutoring and counselling, and providing constructive feedback to effectively support the academic success of at-risk students.
3. Teachers must be provided with additional resources, training, and time management strategies to effectively balance their regular teaching responsibilities with their close monitoring activities.
4. Educational institutions should continue prioritizing parental involvement, positive feedback, regular one-on-one meetings with at-risk students, additional tutoring, and

mental health services for students at-risk of dropping out, and give adequate support and resources for teachers to maintain the effectiveness of close monitoring.

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