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**Ethics and Integrity in Accounting and Business: Building Trust in an Intricate World**

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## **Charting Confidence: Bibliometric Insights into Academic Dropout and Academic Achievement**

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### **Abstract**

This study uses bibliometric analysis to review the research on the effects of academic dropout among university and college students. The analysis draws on a sample of 287 articles published in the SCOPUS database between 1984 and 2024. This paper conducts an in-depth examination of global research on burnout among university students. It underscores the factors contributing to academic dropout which academic persistent, student motivation, engagement, financial aid, academic performance and attitude. Additionally, the paper identifies leading contributors in terms of authors, articles, journals, and keywords, presenting analyses of co-citation, co-occurrence, and co-authorship networks. This paper furnishes a comprehensive overview of the current landscape in university student burnout literature, serving as a valuable resource for future scholars seeking to comprehend the evolution of this academic discourse and its intellectual framework. The country with the highest number of SCOPUS-indexed journals were determined using a mixed qualitative-quantitative methodology, identifying Spain as the most productive country. The findings also revealed that most authors have at least one publication published in SCOPUS journals within the timeframe, and Universidad de Oviedo has the highest collaboration between researchers or authors from different organizations.

### **Keywords**

Academic dropout, university student, college student, academic achievement

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### **1.0 Introduction**

Academic dropout is a significant issue that affects students at all levels of school, with immediate and long-term consequences. It refers to the phenomena in which students discontinue their academic programs before completing their degrees or courses. Personal, economical, and academic obstacles can all contribute to a student's exit from the educational system. Each aspect might influence the decision to drop out, making it a complex subject that must be addressed from multiple perspectives.

Financial strain is one of the leading causes of academic dropouts. Many students struggle to manage the costs of higher education, including tuition, textbooks, and living expenses. For some, these financial pressures might become onerous, prompting them to withdraw from their education in order to find work or address other financial needs. Institutions and authorities must investigate ways to improve financial support and resources in order to alleviate this pressure and lower dropout rates.

Academic challenges have an important impact in the dropout rate. Students who struggle with academics, whether due to a lack of preparation, poor assistance, or personal issues, may grow frustrated and withdraw

from their programs. Effective academic guidance, tutoring, and mental health assistance are critical in assisting students to overcome these challenges. Educational institutions may help students better overcome their academic obstacles by offering focused assistance and fostering a more supportive learning atmosphere.

Finally, personal and social considerations such as family obligations, health concerns, or a lack of involvement in the academic community might influence a student's choice to drop out. These elements frequently interact in complicated ways, making it critical for institutions to provide comprehensive support systems. Programs that address students' larger life concerns, such as childcare, counselling, and community-building activities, can help them stay in school and succeed. Addressing the core causes of academic dropout demands a comprehensive approach that takes into account both students' individual needs and the larger educational environment.

The objective of this study is to offer some insight on a topic that has proven to be of dramatic relevance and significant momentum in recent years, especially on the higher education perspective. A thorough exploration of prevailing studies will create opportunity to gain knowledge on the existing dimensions of factors involving academic dropout among higher education system which immediately will highlight the potential significant alternatives to reduce the scenario.

This study will first highlight the current research trends and notable contributing authors in the field of academic dropout. According to Ellegaard and Wallin (2015), bibliometrics analysis is a valuable method for evaluating the scientific field as it allows researchers to get a comprehensive picture of the historical development of the field of study and to identify variables that are related to the study. Furthermore, bibliometrics analysis is also a useful tool to help researchers to identify possible co-researchers among the most prolific authors (Budd, 1988) and provides information about the growth of the discipline and its most prominent authors (Moed et al., 1985). Therefore, the RQ for the study are:

RQ1. What is the pattern of annual publication trends?

RQ2. Who are the major productive authors?

RQ3. Which author have the highest citation count?

RQ4. Which countries are the most productive?

RQ5. Which affiliations are the most productive?

RQ6: Which sponsors are the most productive?

RQ7: Which keywords is frequently used?

It has examined a total of 158 articles for bibliometric analysis published from 1984 to 2024 in the SCOPUS database indexed journals. Finally, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study in the academic dropout literature to employ bibliometric analysis on the names of authors, co-authorship network, and production of papers in the subject by year, up to the end of 2024.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

The primary purpose of universities is to lower student dropout rates, which are used as a key indication in accreditation procedures. Evaluating the cognitive processes and learning skills of kids at risk of academic failure might inform prevention and reduction methods for school dropout. Dropout in higher education has a significant influence on a student's self-esteem, well-being, and employability, but it also imposes a huge

cost on institutions (Choudhary, 2015). Dropout rates are a quality measure for university programs, impacting reputation, profit, and financing (Arce et al, 2015). In European nations, about 20% of students drop out before graduation (Cabrera et al, 2006).

Literature about the causes and persistence of higher education dropout suggests individual, institutional and socioeconomical factors. Tinto's Theory of Dropout is the most commonly recognized model used by educational experts to explain school dropout. The author argues that institutions play a crucial role in students' decision to abandon their studies. They identify five factors that contribute to the risk of desertion among university students: psychological, social, economic, institutional, and interactionist. The university student's personal characteristics, familial and social circumstances, and prior experiences all impact their early aspirations and commitments at the school (Tinto, 1975 & 1987).

Intelligence also play a biggest role of academic excellent. Intelligence is linked to the ability to learn and previous academic accomplishment, which is a reward for participating in learning processes. Although intelligence is strongly heritable, it has been demonstrated to be flexible, particularly in youth. Findings from research by Gallego et al (2021), suggest that disparities in intellect and attentiveness among university students may affect academic achievement. Students with inferior intellect and attentiveness typically have lower weighted grade point averages. A quarter of these pupils were at risk of dropping out. These findings are consistent with prior research, which found that students with poor self-regulation and learning issues were more likely to struggle with maintaining attention throughout class (Minano et al, 2012).

Motivation, metacognition and emotional components are the learning strategies which best differentiate students on the basis of their academic performance. Motivation is the force that drives pupils to study and overcome all problems, is the primary determinant of the learning technique. Metacognitive learning techniques comprised activities and procedures that enabled students to become aware of their own ideas and track their learning progress (O'Malley, 1989). As a result, metacognitive methods appear to have a higher impact on learning processes than other strategies. Students with poor scores in motivation, metacognitive, and affective techniques had a low weighted grade point average. In this sense, children who use bad learning techniques are more likely to choose a surface learning approach, which is associated with lower academic accomplishment.

Students with poor emotional intelligence may experience greater stress throughout the university transition and be more likely to drop out (Aizpurua et al, 2018). Furthermore, pupils who experience significant levels of worry before examinations also do poorly (Hassanbeigi, 2011). Interventions to alleviate anxiety before tests improve academic achievement in higher education students.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The bibliometric methodology encapsulates the application of quantitative techniques (i.e., bibliometric analysis – e.g., year, subject, source, country, author, and affiliation. Data was collected from the SCOPUS database. It is representing the highest available quality of journals and articles in the field of social sciences and also is widely used in conducting studies such as bibliometric analysis (Bergman, 2012). The idea to this method is based on the analysis of database research following Achambault et al. (2009) to decipher how to target the highest quality articles and reviews on earnings management activities. It has been a focus

of the past researcher to made use the ‘bibliographic’ web versions of the database (Archambault et al., 2009).

It is critical to the success of our data collection, as the accuracy in picking the right keyword highly affects the results number. To ensure selecting all or most of the related papers from SCOPUS database, this study adopted this query which was chosen after careful consideration: TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Withdrawal" OR "Dropout" OR "Drop-out" OR "Dropping out" AND "university student" AND "higher education" ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "cp" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE , "j" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE , "p" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE , "final" ). The rationale behind using this query is the various use of terminologies by researchers to express this topic. Hence, this query is more likely to bring most of the papers related to this topic, especially when searching in the topic area. Thus, the final sample of the data in this study is 158 articles and reviews that remain. The final data covers the period for 20 years from year 1984 until 2024.

#### 4.0 Result and Discussion

This section discusses the findings from VOSviewer to determine the answers to the RQ. The present study aims to determine the pattern of annual publication trends, recognise the contributing authors, highlight the articles with the highest citation country, determine the most productive countries and affiliations, determine the most trending scientific journals and determine the present the pattern of collaboration and co-citation trends.

#### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

##### 4.1.1 Annual publication trend

The graph in Figure 1 shows the areas of academic dropout relating to RQ1, which began in 1994. Since then, the growth rate of literature dedicated to the topic has risen significantly after 2021 known as Post Covid era. During this time, many of the students suffering from the mental illness due to lockdown and changes in life routine which attributes to increase research on this area.

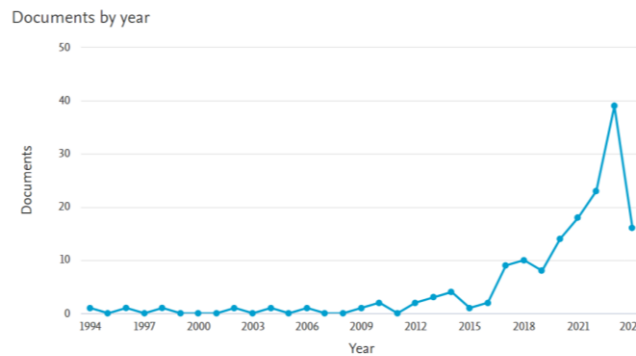


Figure 1: Annual publication trend

#### 4.1.2 Most productive authors

**Table 1: Most productive author**

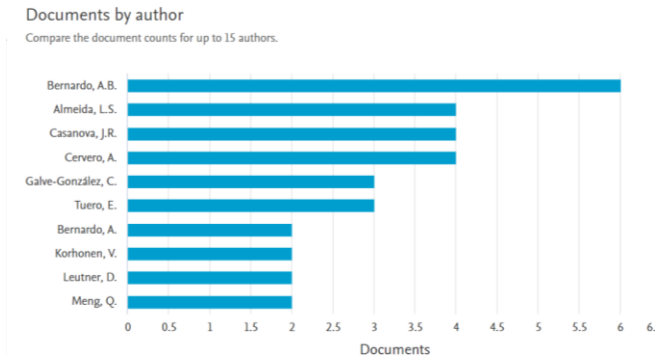


Table 1 presents the most active authors with published documents on academic dropout topics based on 158 publications in the Scopus database to assess RQ2. Major contributing author is Bernado, A.B. which produced six (6) journal articles and followed by Almeida, A.S. and Casanova, J.R which both produced four (4) journal articles in Scopus.

#### 4.1.3. Most cited author

Table 2 presents the most cited authors with published documents on academic dropout topics based on 158 publications in the Scopus database to assess RQ3. From the table, Tinto v is the highest cited authors, followed by Almeida I.S. Almeida I.S also in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the most productive author. Then the 3<sup>rd</sup> place is Perry R.P.

**Table 2: Most cited author**

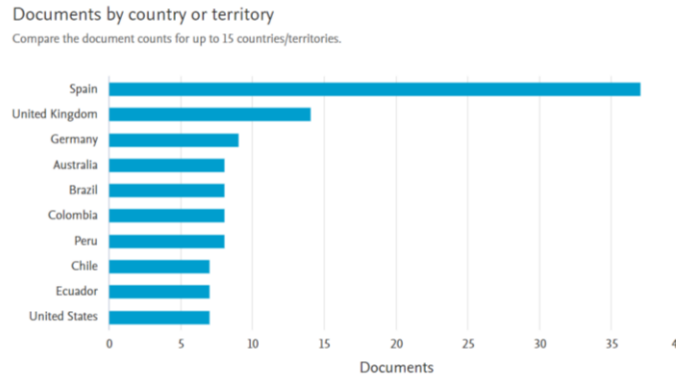
Selected	Author	Citations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	tinto v.	87
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	perry r.p.	27
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	almeida l.s.	45
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ryan r.m.	30
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	pekrun r.	31
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	vansteenkiste m.	28
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	nunez j.c.	36
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	deci e.l.	23
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	bernardo a.b.	31
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	bakker a.b.	34
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	goetz t.	20
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	cervero a.	35
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	bernardo a.	35
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	salmela-aro k.	24
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	soenens b.	19
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	casanova j.r.	26
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	bandura a.	27
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	dresel m.	19
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	kuh g.d.	27

#### 4.1.4 Most productive country

To address RQ4, this study also presents the most productive countries that published documents on academic dropout. Table 3 illustrates the most active countries that contributed to publications in the academic dropout. Spain, with 37 total publications with 435 citations, is rated first due to the high number of researchers interested in this area (refer to Table 3). The practice of academic dropout is becoming more

common in Spain which has prompted academicians to investigate and improve its regulations on student dropout. United Kingdom came second, with a total publication of 14 with 244 citations, followed by Germany in third place, with 9 publications and 254 citations, and Australia is ranked fourth with 8 publications and 170 citations.

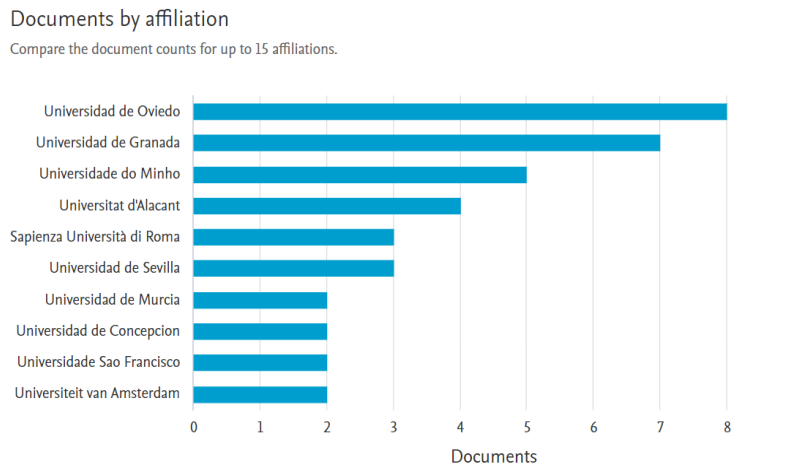
**Table 3: Most productive country**



**4.1.5 Most productive affiliation**

Moving on to RQ5, the analysis of the most productive affiliations in this research on academic dropout provides interesting insights into the global awareness of this topic. Notably, the top 10 productive affiliations worldwide demonstrate a positive increase in recognition and engagement of the subject. Spain has stand out because two university in Spain was in the first and second place. Universidade do Minho Portugal was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place. These institutions’ commitment to producing high-quality research in academic dropout contributes to the broader global understanding of the factors that contributes to the academic dropout. These would help to reduce the number of academic dropout among the students and enhance the great achievement of them.

**Table 4: Most productive affiliation**

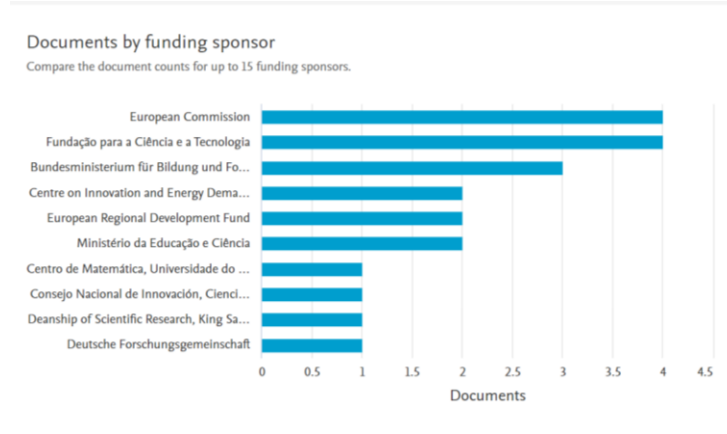


**4.1.6 Most productive sponsorship**

RQ6 stress on the most productive sponsorship in the area of academic dropout research. Productive sponsorship is more than just financial support, it is about forming synergistic partnerships in which

sponsors actively contribute to the creation of industry standards, support research & enhancing education performance, and work together to address ethical concerns. Collaboration with sponsors will ultimately enhance values of ethics and integrity, transparent, and trustworthy business environment. Table 5 show the top ten (10) most productive sponsorship from various organization. Both European Commission and Fundacio para a Ciencia e a Tecnologia sponsor four (4) research project, followed by Bundesministerium fur Bildung which sponsor three (3) research project and Centre on Innovation and Energy, European Regional Development Fund and Ministerio da Educacao e Ciencia sponsor two (2) research project.

**Table 5: Most productive sponsorship**

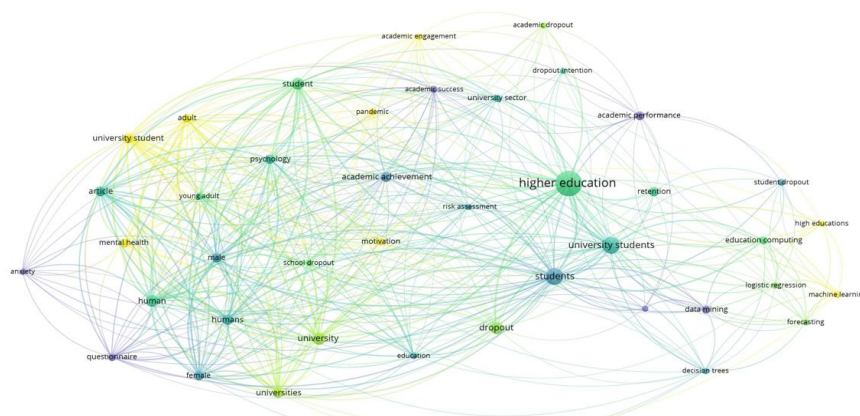


**4.1.7 Most frequent keywords**

RQ7 is about the most frequent keywords used in the academic dropout study. Based on the analysis, the top 8 occurring keywords are presented in Table 7, including higher education, students, university students, dropout, universities, human and universities.

**Table 6: Most frequent keywords**

No	Terms	Frequency
1.	higher education	80
2.	students	34
3.	university students	34
4.	dropout	19
5.	university	19
6.	human	17
7.	humans	14
8.	universities	13



## 5.0 Conclusion

Due to the significance of academic dropout, we want to present a complete assessment of available research on academic dropout using bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric analysis examines research output and publications in a certain research domain, and the information gleaned from bibliometric data is important for assessing trends in a specific research area (Liu et al., 2015). Academic dropout publications have steadily increased from 1994 to 2024. Although the field has evolved and developed, there are still areas of inquiry that future studies might examine. The publications were published in over 20 countries, with Spain having the largest number of publications. This study has contributed to knowledge by presenting the current trend of research on academic dropout. This study also extends and complements previous findings on academic dropout literature using a bibliometric approach and providing meaningful insights into previous literature trends. The outcome of this study will assist researchers in identifying the current gap in the field of academic dropout and, most significantly, recommending a research agenda for the area.

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Tarikh : 20 Januari 2023

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Saya yang menjalankan amanah,

*Setuju.*

*27.1.2023*

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