

# Student Attrition at the International School of Asia and the Pacific Kalinga: Factors, Recommendations, and Action Plans

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## ABSTRACT

The percentage, rate, and factors contributing to attrition differ between institutions, making it pivotal for institutions to delve deeply on these unique causes. The study was conducted in International School of Asia and the Pacific Kalinga which involved data from students who completed exit interviews and used qualitative method of research. Data were analyzed and grouped into themes of factors to achieve interpretations of results. It was revealed that student attrition at ISAP–Kalinga is multi-faceted, with academic, personal, social, institutional, and transfer-specific factors playing interconnected roles. The results were utilized in the crafting of action plan.

**Keywords:** *Student Attrition, ISAP-Kalinga, Academic Integration, Retention Strategies, Qualitative Analysis*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the pressing issues that schools face is student attrition and this remains a significant challenge not just in local context but also in worldwide context. In this case, number of students opt to discontinue their studies, often transferring to other schools or even dropping out completely due to varying factors. The event of student departure has deep implications not only for the enrollment stability but also for the general success and reputation of an institution. Moreover, the percentage, rate, and factors contributing to attrition differ between institutions, making it pivotal for institutions to delve deeply on these unique causes. In the context of the International School of Asia and the Pacific (ISAP) Kalinga campus, student attrition remains as a concern. The results of attrition rates at ISAP-Kalinga are particularly significant, as they not only impact the financial health and institutional reputation but also hinder the educational progress of students. To understand this issue, it is critical to delve on the complex and diverse factors that drive students to leave. These factors can include academic challenges, financial difficulties, personal circumstances, social integration issues, and perceptions of institutional support.

Data from 26 students who participated in exit interviews conducted by the Research and Development Office at ISAP-Kalinga during the first and second semesters of the 2024-2025 academic year sheds light on some of these causes. These interviews, based on the Student Exit Assessment Checklist, provide qualitative insights into students' experiences, offering valuable information about their motivations for leaving. However, given the complexity of student retention, it is essential for ISAP-Kalinga to conduct a more in-depth analysis of these qualitative data to uncover the root causes of

attrition specific to the institution. Studies on student attrition rates or percentages commonly emphasize the negative consequences for both learners and institutions. Student retention challenges are not only a concern for students but also a significant burden on institutions, leading to wasted resources and diminished educational outcomes (Beer and Lawson, 2016). Furthermore, Williams and Ainsworth emphasize that the causes of student attrition are not universal, as they vary from one institution to another. Consequently, it is vital for each institution to examine the specific factors that influence student retention within its own context. Additionally, studies like those conducted by Buchanan and Sharma (2009) stress the significance of gathering qualitative data from students who leave their studies. These perspectives offer invaluable insights into the personal and institutional factors driving student departure. By analyzing such data, institutions can gain a deeper understanding of student experiences and design more targeted and effective retention strategies. As such, qualitative research plays an essential role in improving student services, addressing academic and social challenges, and ultimately reducing the likelihood of future attrition.

### Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded on Tinto’s Student Integration Theory, which says that the withdrawal of students from an academic institution is mainly influenced by the level of academic and social integration. Based on the theory, the lack of integration impacts or weakens the commitment of a student to the institution, increasing the rate of attrition.

From another ground, attrition is highly gauged from external and personal influences, this is what Bean’s Student Attrition Model emphasizes. Based on the model, the role of personal circumstances, financial constraints, and intentions to transfer in students’ withdrawal decisions are main factors to attrition. Furthermore, the idea of perceived institutional support is highly connected to account for students’ experiences with institutional policies, services, and administrative practices.

Guided by the mentioned theories, the study examines academic, personal, social, institutional, and transfer-specific factors affecting student attrition at ISAP–Kalinga. The findings serve as the basis for developing evidence-based recommendations and action plans aimed at improving student retention.

### Conceptual Paradigm

The Input–Process–Output (IPO) model serves as the research paradigm of this study. The input included the attrition factors: academic factors, personal factors, social and campus life factors, institutional factors, transfer specific and the recommendations. The process involved the exit interview, analysis, interpretation and the crafting of plan. The output included the identified factors and the action plans.

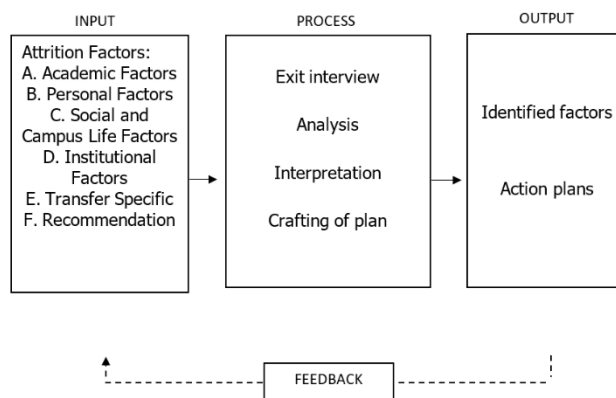


Figure 1. *Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model*

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study generally aimed to explore the reasons behind student attrition at the International School of Asia and the Pacific – Kalinga Campus and to develop strategies for institutional improvement. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the key factors contributing to student attrition at ISAP-Kalinga?
2. What recommendations do students provide to enhance the institution's retention strategies and overall academic experience?
3. What action plans can be developed to address student attrition and improve student retention at ISAP-Kalinga?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This research employed a qualitative research design. This study utilized the existing data from exit interviews conducted with students who discontinued their enrollment at ISAP-Kalinga. The qualitative design allowed for the systematic analysis of narratives, comments, and checklist responses through thematic analysis. Responses from students were examined and grouped into recurring themes corresponding to the major attrition domains identified in the checklist. This process enabled the identification of dominant patterns and institution-specific factors contributing to student attrition at ISAP-Kalinga.

#### **Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study were twenty-six (26) students of the ISAP-Kalinga who discontinued their enrollment during the first and second semesters of Academic Year 2024–2025. These students completed exit interviews administered by the Research and Development Office using the Student Exit Assessment Checklist. The participants were selected through purposive sampling, as only students who formally exited the institution were included. All responses were treated with confidentiality and analyzed in aggregate for research purposes.

#### **Research Instrument**

The study utilized the Student Exit Assessment Checklist; an institutional instrument used during exit interviews with students who discontinue their study at ISAP-Kalinga. The checklist gathers qualitative data on academic, personal, social, institutional, and transfer-specific factors, including open-ended responses. The data obtained from this instrument served as the primary source for thematic analysis and the development of recommendations and action plans.

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data for this study were collected from twenty-six (26) students who discontinued their study at ISAP-Kalinga during the first and second semesters of Academic Year 2024–2025. Prior to the exit interviews, participants were oriented about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. The *Student Exit Assessment Checklist* was used to guide the interviews, which were conducted in a private and comfortable setting to encourage honest and detailed responses. Completed checklists were reviewed for completeness and organized for analysis.

#### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data were analyzed and grouped into themes corresponding to academic, personal, social, institutional, and transfer-related factors. The findings were analyzed to identify key causes of attrition, which then informed the development of evidence-based recommendations and action plans to improve student retention at ISAP-Kalinga.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Factors Contributing to Student Attrition

#### *Academic Factors*

A significant number of participants (15 out of 26, or 57.7%) indicated that academic difficulties influenced their decision to leave. Challenges cited included:

*Heavy academic workload and difficulty keeping up with requirements.*  
*Lack of individualized academic support or tutoring services.*  
*Perceived mismatch between the curriculum and students' learning preferences.*

These findings align with Tinto's Student Integration Theory, which suggests that insufficient academic integration can weaken students' commitment to the institution, thereby increasing the likelihood of withdrawal.

#### *Personal Factors*

Personal circumstances were highlighted by 10 participants (38.5%) as reasons for discontinuing enrollment. These included:

*Financial constraints that made it difficult to continue paying for tuition and other fees.*  
*Family responsibilities or health issues.*  
*Personal motivation or career change considerations.*

Bean's Student Attrition Model supports this finding, emphasizing the impact of personal and external influences on student retention.

#### *Social and Campus Life Factors*

Social integration and participation in campus activities also contributed to attrition. Eight students (30.8%) reported feeling socially disconnected or isolated, citing:

*Difficulty forming friendships or peer support networks.*  
*Limited involvement in extracurricular activities.*  
*Perceptions of inadequate mentorship from faculty or senior students.*

Tinto's theory reinforces that students who experience weak social integration are more likely to leave their institutions.

#### *Institutional Factors*

Some participants (7 out of 26, 26.9%) noted that institutional factors affected their decision. Key concerns included:

*Perceived limited institutional support in terms of counseling, guidance, and academic advising.*  
*Administrative procedures that were seen as cumbersome or unclear.*  
*Insufficient feedback or recognition of student needs.*

### ***Transfer-Specific Factors***

A smaller subset of students (5 out of 26, 19.2%) mentioned that they were transferring to other institutions to pursue specific programs not offered at ISAP–Kalinga or to relocate closer to family. This highlights the role of institutional offerings and program flexibility in retention.

### ***Recommendations from Students***

During exit interviews, students suggested ways to improve retention, which can be grouped as follows:

*Strengthen academic support services, including tutoring, mentoring, and remedial programs.*

*Offer financial assistance or flexible payment plans for students facing economic challenges.*

*Enhance social integration programs, such as peer mentoring, clubs, and student-led activities.*

*Improve institutional communication and administrative responsiveness.*

*Expand program offerings to accommodate diverse student interests and career goals.*

The findings reveal that student attrition at ISAP–Kalinga is multi-faceted, with academic, personal, social, institutional, and transfer-specific factors playing interconnected roles. The study highlights that while external and personal factors are significant, the institution’s policies, support systems, and campus environment can either mitigate or exacerbate attrition risks. Qualitative insights from exit interviews emphasize the need for proactive interventions focused on early identification of at-risk students, enhanced support services, and initiatives that foster stronger academic and social integration. By addressing these factors, ISAP–Kalinga can improve student retention and sustain its educational quality and institutional reputation.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Student attrition at ISAP–Kalinga is influenced by a combination of academic, personal, social, institutional, and transfer-related factors.
2. Academic difficulties and financial constraints are the most commonly cited reasons for discontinuing enrollment.
3. Weak social integration and perceived limited institutional support contribute to students’ decisions to leave.
4. Students transferring to other institutions are often motivated by program availability or proximity to family.
5. Qualitative feedback from exiting students provides valuable insights for designing targeted interventions to improve student retention.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

*For ISAP–Kalinga Administration:*

1. Strengthen academic support services, including tutoring, mentoring programs, and learning workshops.
2. Introduce financial assistance schemes, scholarships, or flexible payment plans for students with economic difficulties.
3. Enhance student social integration by promoting clubs, peer mentoring, and campus-wide events.

4. Improve institutional support through responsive administrative processes, guidance services, and transparent communication.
5. Explore expansion of academic programs and course offerings to meet diverse student needs and interests.

### Action Plan

Objective	Activities/Strategies	Responsible Person(s)/Office	Timeline	Success Indicators/Outcomes
1. Strengthen academic support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct regular diagnostic assessments to identify at-risk students</li> <li>• Implement peer tutoring and mentoring programs</li> <li>• Organize remedial workshops for challenging subjects</li> <li>• Provide faculty-led learning support sessions</li> </ul>	Teachers, Guidance Office	Start at beginning of each semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in academic-related attrition</li> <li>• Increased student performance and engagement</li> <li>• Positive feedback in mid-semester surveys</li> </ul>
2. Provide financial assistance for students in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish scholarship programs and financial aid schemes</li> <li>• Introduce flexible payment plans</li> <li>• Conduct financial counseling sessions for students and parents</li> </ul>	Finance Office, Student Services, Administration	Reviewed annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased student retention despite financial constraints</li> <li>• Uptake of financial assistance programs</li> <li>• Fewer students citing financial reasons for leaving</li> </ul>
3. Improve social integration and campus life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch peer mentoring and buddy programs for new students</li> <li>• Organize club fairs, team-building activities, and social</li> </ul>	Student Services, Club Coordinators, Guidance Office	Start each semester; review quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher participation in campus activities</li> <li>• Increased sense of belonging in student surveys</li> <li>• Reduction in social isolation complaints</li> </ul>

	<p>events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate student-led interest groups</li> </ul>			
4. Enhance institutional support and administrative responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline administrative processes for enrollment, counseling, and academic inquiries</li> <li>• Provide regular updates on policies and programs</li> <li>• Train staff on student engagement and support</li> </ul>	Administration, Guidance Office, Registrar	Implement within 3 months; continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faster response time to student concerns</li> <li>• Higher satisfaction ratings in exit and current student surveys</li> <li>• Reduction in attrition due to institutional dissatisfaction</li> </ul>
5. Expand academic program offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct needs assessment surveys to determine desired programs</li> <li>• Explore development of specialized courses or elective tracks</li> <li>• Partner with other institutions for unique programs</li> </ul>	Academic Affairs, Administration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader program offerings matching student interests</li> <li>• Decrease in transfer-related attrition</li> <li>• Positive student feedback on program variety</li> </ul>
6. Early identification of at-risk students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor attendance, grades, and participation trends</li> <li>• Conduct periodic check-ins with students showing signs of disengagement</li> <li>• Implement an early alert system for potential withdrawals</li> </ul>	Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Academic Affairs	Review every semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely intervention with at-risk students</li> <li>• Improved retention rates among previously vulnerable students</li> <li>• Documented cases of successful intervention</li> </ul>
7. Collect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct semesterly</li> </ul>	Research&Develop	Every semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous improvement</li> </ul>

ongoing student feedback	surveys on student satisfaction and engagement  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate focus groups to discuss concerns and suggestions</li> <li>• Use exit interviews to refine interventions</li> </ul>	ment Office, Student Services		based on feedback  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of emerging issues before they lead to attrition</li> <li>• Positive trend in satisfaction metrics</li> </ul>
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