Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine what variables that teachers report to be most reliable predictors of the potential dropout. Subsequently, it provides knowledge for the formulation of appropriate intervention strategies.

This is a survey study. 23 teachers not knowing the aims of survey were invited to report their perceptions of 550 students from two high schools in a formal survey. Then, another teacher survey was then applied to identify whether students had become school dropouts or not. Chi square, Phi correlation, multinomial logistic regression, binary logistic regression and log-linear modeling were used to analyze the results.

The findings from this study suggested five variables are the most reliable predictors reported by teachers to identify the potential dropout (i.e. poor academic performance, part-time job, absenteeism, suspension and family structure risk). Furthermore, five combinations are most associated with school dropout (i.e. absenteeism with discipline problem, absenteeism with tardiness, work with tardiness, discipline problem with tardiness, absenteeism with suspension). Besides the combinations, six other predictors are statistically reliable in predicting student's study status (i.e. primary education completion in Macao, absenteeism, school transfer, suspension, poor academic performance and part-time job). Apart from poor teacher relationship and poor peer relationship, all characteristic variables are statistically significant and associated with school dropout; and there is a significant difference between dropouts and persisters.

Keywords: Dropout, Academic performance, Learning motivation