

Exploring Students' Pathways in the College of Education: Entry, Retention and Attrition Patterns

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Abstract— Student journeys in the College of Education, marked by high dropout rates, uneven retention, and various entry factors, lead to lower graduation rates, longer time to degree completion, and a shortage of qualified teachers despite intervention efforts. This research examines enrollment patterns, transfer and dropout rates, graduation rates, and primary factors influencing student attrition in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at a prominent tertiary institution in Ozamiz City, Northwestern Mindanao, from 2013 to 2023. The respondents included current students, alumni, and academic advisors affiliated with these programs. Quantitative analysis of historical enrollment records, transfer, dropout, and graduation rates utilized descriptive statistics and documentary analysis to identify trends, patterns, and potential reasons for fluctuations in these metrics. The BEED enrollment remained relatively stable, while BSED experienced significant volatility. Both programs showed varying dropout and transfer rates with no consistent trends. Graduation rates for BEED and BSED programs fluctuated significantly. Student attrition was primarily due to personal factors, with financial, administrative, and employment challenges also playing significant roles. These findings underscore the need for targeted strategies to enhance student retention and success. Fluctuations in enrollment, dropout, transfer, and graduation rates in the BEED and BSED programs from 2013 to 2023 were influenced by personal, financial, academic, and employment factors, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to enhance student retention and success. Future researchers may conduct thorough analyses of enrollment, dropout rates, student transfers, and graduation rates, implementing targeted interventions such as recruitment strategies, academic support programs, and enhanced student services to optimize educational outcomes in teacher education programs.

Keywords— enrollment patterns, dropout rates, graduation rates, and transfer rates.

I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding student pathways in the College of Education is important, given the problems of high dropout rates, uneven retention, and multiple factors influencing entry. These have a negative impact on graduation rates, extend time-to-degree completion, and contribute to teacher shortages. What influences student mental health includes academic performance and major choices (Yue & Fu, 2017) financial difficulties and family responsibilities (Nieuwoudt & Pedler, 2023) and pre-college metrics, namely high school GPA, and standardized test scores (Bansiong & Balagtey, 2020). Additionally, underrepresented students and those in STEM fields face additional challenges (Dwyer et al., 2020).

This study focuses on Misamis University's College of Education from 2013 to 2023 to examine entry, retention, and attrition patterns, offering practical insights for improving policies and strategies to enhance student success. By addressing gaps in existing research, particularly regarding underrepresented students and demographic influences, this research aims to inform

interventions to reduce attrition and improve retention (Brown et al., 2020).

Findings will emphasize academic readiness, support systems, and institutional strategies for managing financial and personal challenges (Nieuwoudt & Pedler, 2023). Moreover, information on transfer behaviors and pre-college metrics will inform admissions and retention policies (Bansiong & Balagtey, 2020). This study is only possible in the College of Education, but the impact is profound as it shapes preparation for future teachers and deals with the national teacher shortage problem (Castro et al., 2018).

Ultimately, this research will add to the general understanding of student pathways and support education leaders in increasing retention, decreasing dropout rates, and promoting student success within the College of Education.

Theoretical Framework

This study applies Bourdieu's Social-Cultural Capital Theory, Tinto's Academic Engagement and Persistence

Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in understanding the complex issues that influence retention and success in students. Bourdieu points to the relationship between socioeconomic status and cultural resources as determinants of students' experiences in the education process. Tinto places a greater focus on academic and social integration to influence persistence. Bronfenbrenner provides a holistic approach for examining the complex interactions across time among diverse environmental systems, including family and friends, peer groups, institutional policies, and societal norms, which ultimately influence student pathways. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors impacting entry, retention, and attrition, offering valuable insights for developing targeted strategies to enhance student success within the College of Education.

Conceptual Framework

The current study reviews entry, retention, and attrition patterns for BEED and BSED students within the College of Education. These are tracked over the years 2013-2023. Entry relates to the enrollment of students; that is how it helps in the planning of resources, review of programs, and support to the decision-making processes. Retention refers to the percentage of students who remain enrolled or graduated with a specific period, graduation rate being an indicator of success metrics. Attrition refers to students leaving their programs due to academic, personal, or financial reasons, which include transfer and dropout. Transfers face issues such as readjustment to new settings and financial problems, while dropouts are due to academic performance, economic reasons, and lack of support. It is very important to understand these dynamics to enhance academic outcomes and improve institutional strategies.

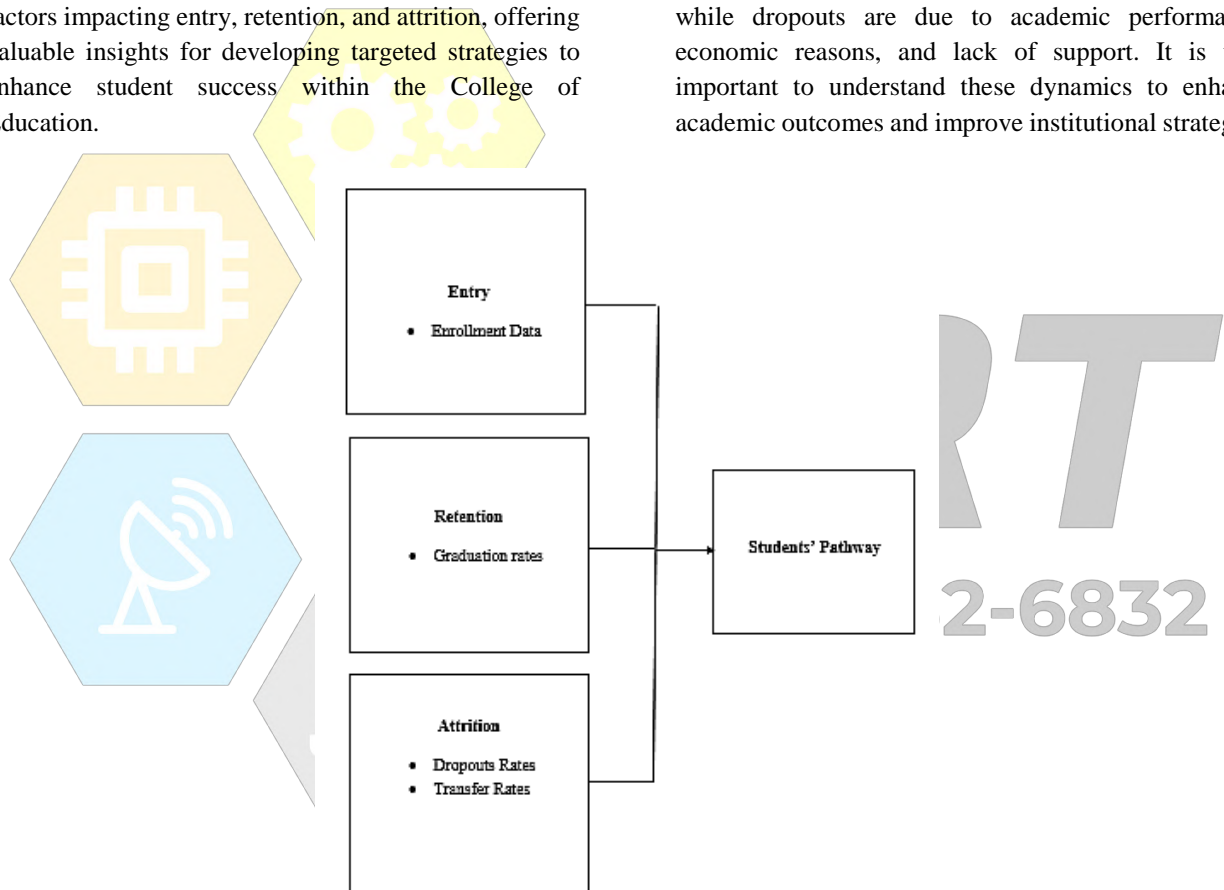


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study
Source: Processed by the researchers.

Statements of the Problem

This study aimed to investigate various aspects of student pathways within the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the pattern of student entries into the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023?
2. What are the dropout rates among students enrolled in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED)

programs at the College of Education over the period from 2013 to 2023?

3. What are the transfer rates among students enrolled in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at the College of Education over the period from 2013 to 2023?
4. What is the successful graduation rate of students in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023?
5. What are the primary factors or reasons contributing to student shifts and dropouts among students enrolled in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023?

II. METHODS

A. Research Design

This quantitative study utilized a descriptive longitudinal design to trace student pathways in the College of Education at Misamis University from 2013 to 2023. The method was best suited for observing and reporting on student characteristics and study variables without manipulation, thus making it suitable for studying enrollment trends, transfer rates, dropout rates, and graduation rates. By analyzing the patterns of BEED and BSED programs over a decade, the study gave a holistic view of student entry, retention, graduation, and attrition, thus offering valuable insights into the factors that influence student pathways and outcomes.

B. Research Setting

Conducted at a distinguished tertiary institution in Ozamiz City, Northwestern Mindanao, this research is done at the first university in the region to attain the "Autonomous Status" of CHED. The university, accredited for excellence with ISO 9001:2008 certification and holding PACUCOA's most accredited programs in Region X, has its College of Education by CHED as Center of Development (COD) for exceptional teacher education programs. The study is conducted with the intention of providing meaningful insights into the pathways of students in this noble College, furthering the improvement of educational practices and policies.

C. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study included current students, alumni, and academic advisors affiliated with the

Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs at the College of Education. Current students provided insights into their ongoing educational experiences and challenges, while alumni offered retrospective perspectives on their pathways through the programs and post-graduation outcomes. Academic advisors contributed their professional insights into factors affecting student retention and attrition within the educational framework. Together, these respondents provided a comprehensive view of student pathways, retention dynamics, and attrition patterns within the College of Education.

D. Instruments

This research analyzed student progression, retention, and attrition trends in the BEED and BSED programs of the College of Education from 2013 to 2023. Using a quantitative approach, historical enrollment records were analyzed to track annual admissions and discern trends over the decade. Transfer, dropout, and graduation rates were calculated from longitudinal data to provide insights into retention and completion patterns. Documentary analysis was used to investigate the factors that determine trends in drops, withdrawals, and fluctuations in enrollments and graduation numbers. It provided an overview of trends and underlying reasons behind these patterns.

E. Data Collection

This study explored student pathways, retention, and attrition patterns in the BEED and BSED programs at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023. A quantitative approach was used to analyze historical enrollment records to track annual admissions and discern trends over the decade. Transfer, dropout, and graduation rates were calculated from longitudinal data, providing insights into retention and completion patterns. Documentary analysis was carried out to reveal factors that cause shifts, dropouts, and trends in enrollment and graduation, providing a rich understanding of these trends and what may be causing these trends.

F. Ethical Considerations

The data collection adhered to ethical rules, which involved following the Data Privacy Act of 2021 in safeguarding Respondents personal information and privacy. Ethical consideration, as adopted by Bryman, Bell, and Harley (2022), follows the rules of fairness, respect, and confidentiality. Data management was entrusted to the college department secretary.

Information was safely stored and only utilized for the study, hence strictly following the requirement of both institutions and laws. Respondents identities were protected in reporting findings so that the respondent's anonymity is maintained and education knowledge is built while maintaining integrity and objectivity in the research process.

G. Data Analysis

This study adopted several methods in analyzing the data, examining the pathways of students enrolled in BEED and BSED at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023. For instance, through the descriptive statistics- such as frequency and percentage- historical enrollment records could be used in establishing trends and patterns on yearly entries of students in the establishment. In the process, there was the easy identification of notable changes or deviation that might have occurred in the decade. Longitudinal data from the College's records allowed for the computation of retention rates, shifted rates, and dropout rates among students, using statistical methods such as mean and standard deviation to analyze these rates over the study period and potentially compare trends between the BEED and BSED programs. This can be analyzed using graduation rates where the proportion of students graduating yearly was

used as an indication of the overall pattern of completing their programs. Taken together, the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation analyses tried to delve deeply into student pathway dynamics, retention dynamics, graduation rates, and how these are affected by attrition among BEED and BSED graduates during the years under review in the College of Education.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pattern of Student Entries

From the patterns of student entries in the BEED and BSED programs from 2013 to 2023, there is a clear trend. BSED enrollment peaked in 2015 and then started a general decline with fluctuations until it hit the lowest points in 2018 and 2020, recovering slightly by 2023. BEED had a more stable trend, though with a drop in 2016 and then a gradual increase from 2021. While BSED had higher but more volatile enrollment, BEED had steadier trends, indicating differences in the demand for the programs and influencing factors such as employment prospects and educational policies. External factors like COVID-19 and academic qualifications also affected the enrollment trends, thus requiring supportive strategies like entrance tests to enhance retention and success.

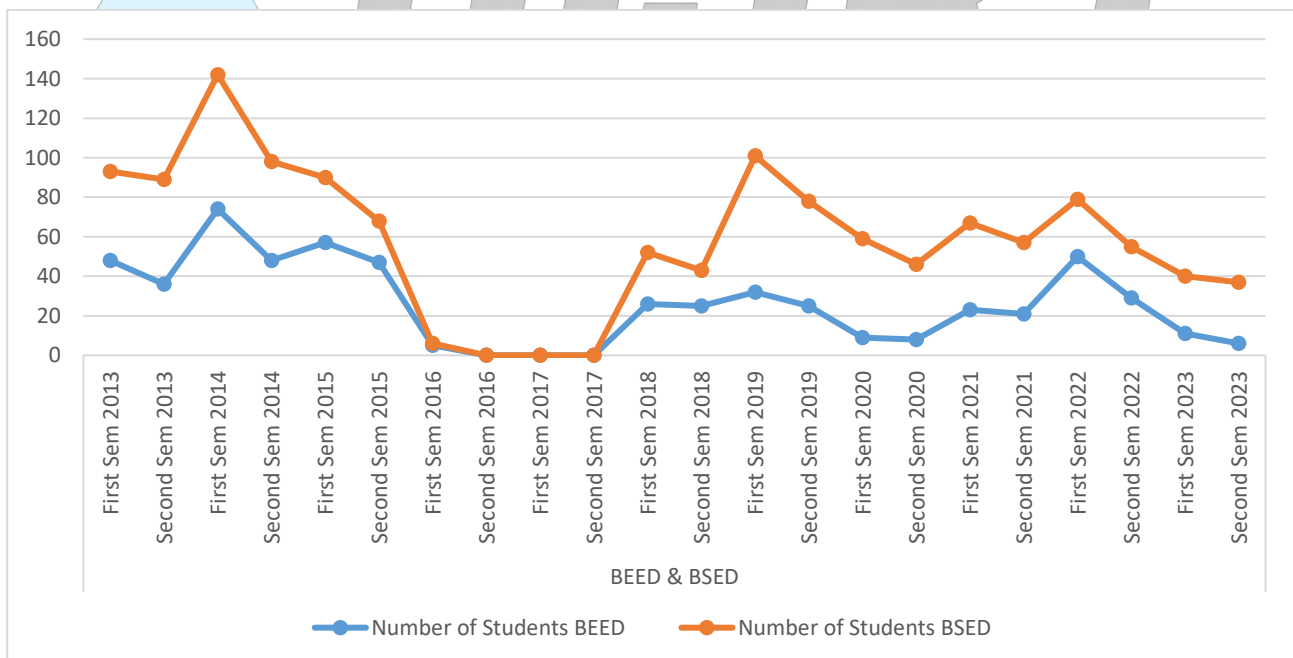


Figure I. Patterns of Student Entries in BEED & BSED

Source: The data was processed using Microsoft Excel

Dropout Rates

Dropout rates of the BEED and BSED programs from 2013 to 2023 ranged prominently, with BEED reaching

a massive surge of 80% in 2016, and BSED reaching its peak of 40% in 2015. More surges were marked in 2018 and 2021; however, rates leveled off at 10-20% by 2022-

2023. Such trends reflect the retention problems due to various causes like personal economics, academic satisfaction, performance, and family conditions.

Future research would include direct interviews and also input from stakeholders toward institution-specific causes. Tailored interventions, such as profiling cognitive and learning strategies, would also be advised to reduce dropout rates and enhance student retention.

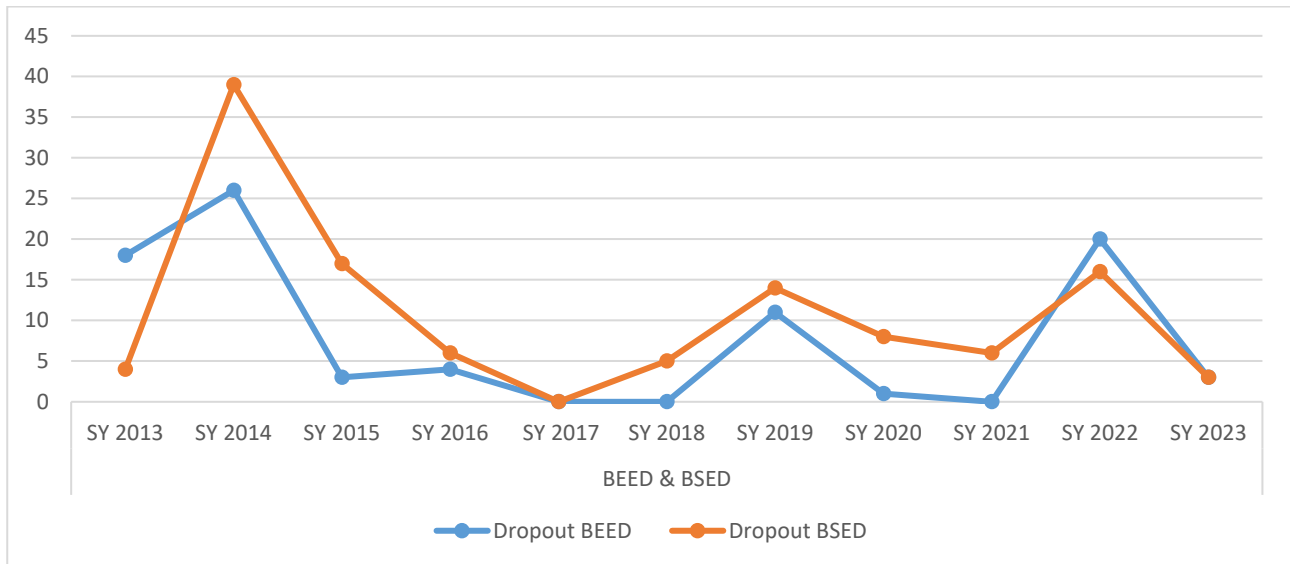


Figure II. Dropout Rates in BEED & BSED

Source: The data was processed using Microsoft Excel

Transfer Rates

Transfer rates in the BEED and BSED programs were volatile from 2013 to 2023, peaking at 16% in SY 2015 for BEED and 9% in SY 2019 for BSED. These changes indicate factors affecting students' choices to transfer. According to research, first-generation students tend to drop out of college instead of transferring, and having a strong sense of belonging reduces the likelihood of

transferring (Ishitani & Kamer, 2022). There is also a pattern of credit transfer among first-year and transfer students, with some implications for advising and institutional practices (Yang et al., 2018). Transfer decisions depend on social interaction, GPA, institutional satisfaction, and opportunities to engage in student activities (Bean, 1980, 1982). Research should continue into these variables and their resolution as ways to promote retention and discourage transfers.

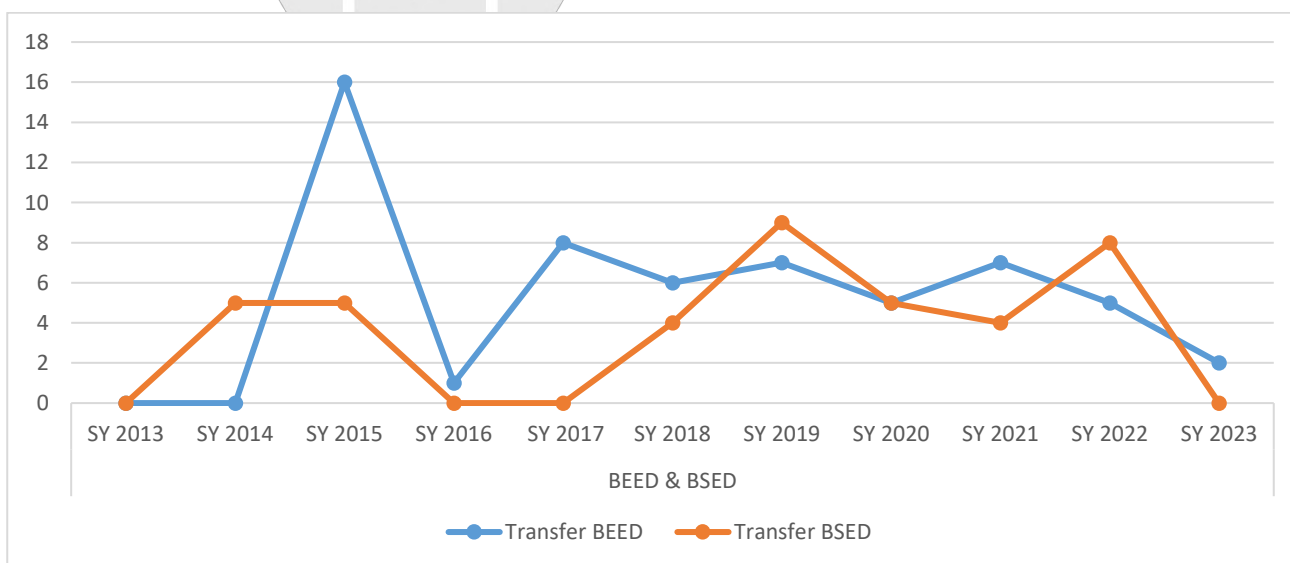


Figure III. Transfer Rates in BEED & BSED / Source: The data was processed using Microsoft Excel

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are the percentage of students who complete their programs within a given period. In the BEED program from 2013 to 2023, enrollment fluctuated, peaking in 2015 with 80 students, while graduation rates declined from 26% in 2013 to 0% in 2020 and 2021, with slight recovery to 58% in 2022 and 34% in 2023. The BSED program showed similar trends, with enrollment peaking at 142 in 2018, and graduation rates declining from 18% in 2013 to 0% in 2020 and 2021, recovering to 19% in 2022 and 16% in 2023. Contributing factors include dropout rates, course challenges, and curriculum changes. Factors such as

academic support, effective advising, curriculum relevance, and institutional practices have proven to improve graduation rates, as highlighted by studies (Millea et al., 2018).

The pandemic, however, exacerbated the course completion and delayed graduation due to learning challenges online (Bulman & Fairlie, 2022). The university should investigate the underlying causes of these trends, analyze student data, and implement targeted interventions, including enhanced support services, teaching improvements, and curriculum adjustments, with regular monitoring to ensure sustainable improvement.

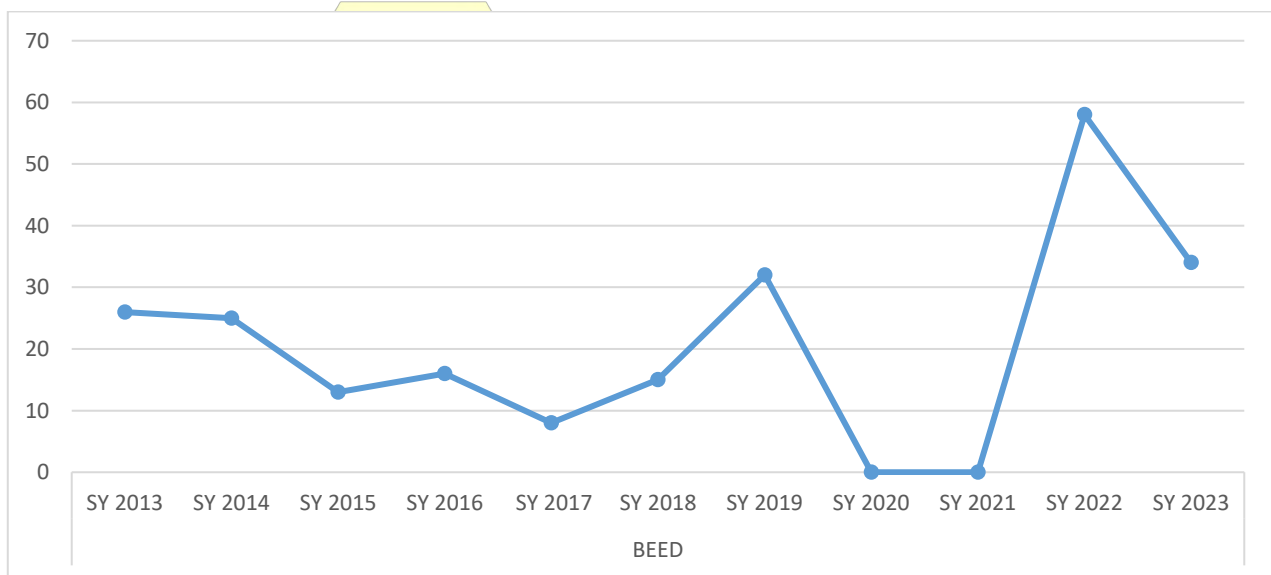


Figure (a)IV. Graduation Rates in BEED
Source: The data was processed using Microsoft Excel

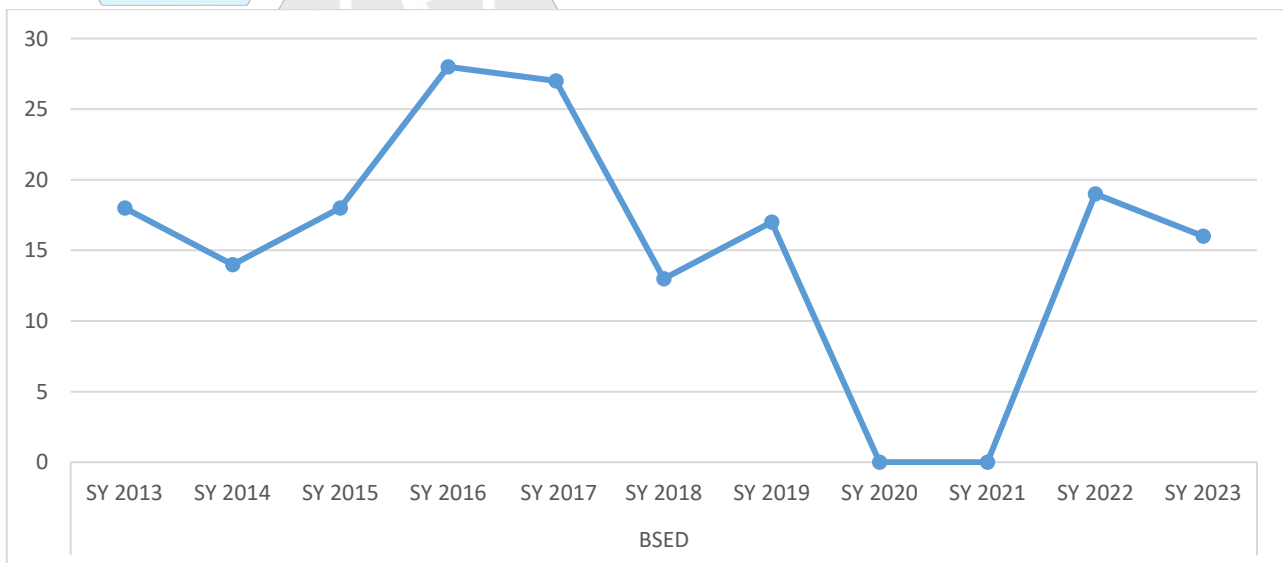


Figure (b)IV. Graduation Rates in BSED
Source: The data was processed using Microsoft Excel

Primary Factors or Reasons Contributing to Student Transfer and Dropouts

Key factors leading to student attrition at MU are personal 51.64%, institutional 17.77%, academic 6.28%, and employment-related 15.03%.

Personal factors. This was headed by the desire for a change of environment 17%, followed by nearness to family 12% and changing residence 11.5%. Financial constraints 3.8%, health-related problems 0.8%, and other competing family obligations 0.6% also emerged.

Institutional factors. High tuition fees (10%), scheduling conflicts (5.2%), and unavailability of preferred programs (1.1%) were the most important. Other reasons were dissatisfaction with academic standards (0.6%) and faculty approachability (0.3%).

Academic factors. Some students (5.2%) felt that they had a better chance of completing their degree elsewhere, while a small percentage left due to failing grades (0.6%) or excessive course requirements (0.5%).

It involves employment-related factors, such as job demands necessitating advanced degrees (9%), and conflicts between work and studies (3.6%).

Recommendations. Counseling and support for family and health needs to address personal challenges. Review tuition fees, optimize course scheduling, and increase program offerings to address institutional factors. Academic support through tutoring and mentoring. Flexible learning options for employed students. A student-centered, holistic approach integrating these strategies will improve retention and success rates at MU.

Table 1. Financial challenges, academic difficulties, a lack of support services, personal circumstances, and dissatisfaction with the program were the primary factors contributing to student transfers and dropouts among those enrolled at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023.

Reasons for Leaving MU	Frequency	Percentage	Ranks
Personal			
Transfer of Residence/Migration	42	11.47	3
Wants to experience different school environments	62	16.94	1
Want to study near my family	47	12.84	2
Encountered unexpected expenses	14	3.83	7
Influence by parents/ relatives/ benefactors	24	6.56	5
Encountered health-related problems	3	0.82	13
Marital situations change once educational plan	3	0.82	13
Difficulty in commuting	6	1.64	11
Cost of living in Ozamiz City is too high	9	2.44	9
Experienced emotional problems	4	1.1	12
Feeling of non- belongingness	4	1.1	12
Family responsibilities were too great	2	0.55	14
Institutional			
Experienced class scheduling problems	19	5.19	6
Tuition and other fee were more than I could afford	39	10.66	4
Desired major subject/s are off semester and I have to wait another semester/ school year	4	1.1	12
Dissatisfied with the academic instruction/standard of my college	2	0.55	14
Faculty and staff are not approachable	1	0.27	15
Classrooms are not ventilated	1	0.27	15
Academic			
Better chance of finishing in other schools	19	5.19	6
Failed in my major subject/s	2	0.55	14
Too many requirements	1	0.27	15
Dissatisfied with my grades	1	0.27	15
Too many required subjects	1	0.27	15
Employment			

Job requires me to pursue masteral/ doctoral degree	33	9.02	4
Conflict between the demand of jobs and studies	13	3.55	8
Job requires to enroll another baccalaureate program	5	1.37	10
Accepted a full-time job	3	0.82	13
Could not find a part time job in Ozamiz City	1	0.27	15
Job no longer requires me to continue my college education	1	0.27	15

Source: The data was processed using Microsoft Word

IV. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study explored student pathways in the BEED and BSED programs at the College of Education from 2013 to 2023. It analyzed enrollment patterns, dropout and transfer rates, graduation rates, and factors influencing student attrition to provide insights into enrollment, retention, and completion dynamics, ultimately informing strategies for improving program effectiveness and student success.

Based on Social-Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1977), Academic Engagement and Persistence Theory (Tinto, 1982), and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the research used a quantitative, descriptive design. Data collection involved the current students, alumni, and academic advisors, and it was described using historical enrollment records and descriptive statistics in tracking trends, calculating dropout and transfer rates, and determining graduation rates. Movements and dropouts were ranked in terms of frequency and percentage. There is observance of ethical guidelines including the Data Privacy Act of 2021. Findings are designed to inform practice regarding strategies that support retention, academic support, and teacher preparation for K-12.

Findings

The following were the salient findings of the study:

1. The BSED enrollment experienced significant fluctuations and a general decline after 2015, while BEED enrollment remained relatively stable with minor fluctuations, indicating different trends in student interest and program demand over the years.
2. The dropout rates for BEED and BSED programs fluctuated over the years, with no consistent trend for either program.
3. The transfer rates for BEED and BSED programs fluctuated over the years, with no consistent trend for either program.

4. Graduation rates for the BEED and BSED programs have fluctuated significantly over the years, with BEED generally showing improvement and stability by 2023, while BSED experienced notable declines, particularly in 2020, but also showed recovery by 2023, reflecting the need for further analysis of factors affecting these trends.
5. Student attrition at Misamis University was primarily driven by personal factors, with significant contributions from financial and administrative challenges, employment-related demands, and, to a lesser extent, academic factors.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are made:

1. The number of students entering both BEED and BSED programs has fluctuated over the years, indicating potential factors influencing student enrollment decisions.
2. The dropout rates for BEED and BSED programs have fluctuated over the years, with no consistent trend for either program.
3. The transfer rates for BEED and BSED programs have fluctuated over the years, with no consistent trend for either program, suggesting the need for further investigation and potential interventions.
4. The graduation rates in both BEED and BSED programs fluctuated over the years, with varying peaks and declines noted. Overall, significant improvements were observed in both programs by 2023, with higher graduation rates achieved compared to earlier years, demonstrating potential enhancements in program effectiveness and support mechanisms for student success.
5. The primary factors contributing to student shifts and dropouts at Misamis University from 2013 to 2023 were diverse. Personal reasons like the desire for different school environments and proximity to family were the most significant, followed by institutional financial challenges, academic concerns, and employment-related issues. Addressing these factors through targeted support

services, financial aid adjustments, flexible scheduling, and enhanced academic advising can help improve student retention rates.

Recommendations

The researchers present our findings and conclusions on enrollment trends to the esteemed personnel of the College of Education, recommending specific actions for program enhancement based on data from 2013 to 2023.

1. The Dean may collaborate with academic advisors and career services to implement targeted outreach initiatives, enhance marketing strategies for the BSED program, and develop tailored support mechanisms for improving student engagement and retention. Regular surveys and focus groups with students can also provide insights to guide program adjustments and resource allocation.
2. The Dean and faculty may closely examine the fluctuating dropout rates in the BEED and BSED programs, identify contributing factors, and implement targeted interventions to stabilize and reduce student attrition.
3. The Dean may form a faculty task force to analyze the fluctuating transfer rates in BEED and BSED programs and implement targeted interventions to improve student retention.
4. To address the fluctuations in graduation rates for the BEED and BSED programs, the Dean may form a task force of faculty, advisors, and student representatives to analyze factors influencing these trends and develop targeted interventions to enhance student retention and success in both programs.
5. The Dean may implement targeted support services that focus on personal and financial challenges, including financial aid resources, counseling, flexible academic schedules, and enhanced communication between students and administration to mitigate administrative hurdles.
6. It is recommended that administrators plan projects that enhance the university's facilities and environment and organize activities that address and satisfy the student's needs.

Future researchers may conduct thorough analyses of enrollment, dropout rates, student transfers, and graduation rates, implementing targeted interventions such as recruitment strategies, academic support programs, and enhanced student services to optimize educational outcomes in teacher education programs.

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