Factors Contributing to Higher Education Dropouts in the UAE:

A Case Study

By

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Abstract

Every year, a number of students are accepted to complete their studies in the academic institutions, but in return there are a number of students drop from the programs and leave without completion. Therefore, this case study aimed to investigate the factors that contribute to students' dropout from higher education programs in the UAE academic institutions. Five participants using convenient sampling to participate in the study. All participants were the college dropouts were chosen because they were dropped out from a UAE higher education institution without completion. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the students' views, ideas and reasons of dropout. Findings showed that the most important factors affecting their 'dropouts were time difficulties, challenging coursework, lack of family supports, program content and excessive coursework load and also location of institutions. Based on the study, recommendations are provided for future research and practice.

Keywords: dropout, higher studies, financial issues, family supports, student's decisions.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Dropout in higher education refers to students' withdrawal from colleges and universities before completing a qualification. It is one of the international issues in higher education, which has been investigated in several studies (e.g., Elena, Crespo & Míguez, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2018). Dropout occurs for diverse reasons. These reasons include but not limited to economic, social, and personal factors. According to Chen (2008), socioeconomic and racial/ethnic are reasons in college student dropout, which shows the impact of financial aid on student dropout from higher education. Dropout can be linked to psychological, educational, family, institutional and social factors. Besides, it can be related to students' incompatibility with work or the university itself, such as the college environment, the instructors, and other difficulties (Elena et al., 2015).

The UAE's education vision 2030 aims to develop students' skills, build innovative educational system and create academic programs that enhance the country's competitiveness at a global level (MOE, 2017). In the United Arab Emirates, there are five federal institutions and 69 local state and private institutions (Nasir, 2017). UAE Ministry of Education (MOE) provides facilities to students to complete higher education through opening universities and colleges in each region, introducing new programs that suit the needs of the country and the students and giving scholarships to all nationals who meet the admission criteria. Despite these facilities, there is a considerable percentage of students' dropout. According to the UAE federal institutions, the rate of college students' dropout is estimated at 14% from the enrolled students (Pennington, 2017).

From my own experience as a graduate student in one of the colleges of education in the United Arab Emirates, I found that there is a high percentage of dropout. The students who

dropped out from the same cohort I was enrolled in was around 50% from the admitted students. It is confirmed by the College's Registrar (Personal Communication, 2019) that the dropout percentage from the graduate programs ranges between 30% and 50% from the admitted students. However, there are limited data regarding the reasons of students' dropout in the UAE context. Only few published studies have addressed the factors of dropout in the UAE (e.g., Naser, 2017). Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the factors behind graduate students' dropout from the UAE universities and colleges and provide in-depth analysis of these factors in order to be attended to by the UAE universities, colleges and the MOE to reduce the number of students' drop-out.

Purpose of the study
The study aims to investigate the reasons of graduate students' dropout from higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates.

Research Questions
1. Why do the graduate student's dropout from higher education in the United Arab Emirates?
2. What are the common factors that contribute to thire dropout from higher education?

Significance of the study
Dropout can be depicted as common phenomena in UAE that is happened with different reasons of lack of self-confidence, discouragement and family background. Despite of the development of education and economy and the increase in the number of universities in the UAE, many students still dropout from higher education. I realized that drop-outs has increased in our country because we are in a developing country with many job opportunities. Especially, males have the largest proportion of drop out in higher education rather than females. Accordingly, this study attempts to examine the reasons for higher education dropout in UAE. Also, it will benefit stakeholders such as Ministry of Education, universities and colleges.

Limitations

       One limitation in this study is the sample size. The sample size is very small which makes the generalization of the findings is limited. Another limitation in this study is using one data collection tool, which limits the triangulation of the data. If the researcher has access to more students, she would use another data collection tool such as focus group. A third limitation is that few participants did not answer some of the questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides several different studies related to dropout in some countries of the world. Literature review show in a specific way that relates to the problem statement, research questions and research purpose are essential and reasonable in light of what has already been discovered by researchers.

Researchers, Krstić, Ilić and Videnović (2017) defined dropout is non-completion education. To explain, that students who have not completed the year in which they started and did not receive final marks or a certificate proving that they have completed the study, this abandon of education. Dropouts from universities occur for several reasons. Several factors determine the reasons for higher education dropout. Based on the literature review, four elements are considered to be causes of student's reluctance to complete their higher education. The first factor is related to the students; their knowledge, academic performance, and decisions (Kim & Kim, 2018; Liga & Irina, 2014; Casanova, Cervero, Núñez, Almeida & Bernardo, 2018; Diseth, 2011; Hailikari, Nevgi & Komulainen, 2008; Zbigniew & Komendant, 2018).

The second factor is related to the higher education institution itself, which plays a major role in the dropout percentage. For example, students might dropout because of improper teaching strategies or inconvenient timetable and education courses (Kim & Kim, 2018; Maria, Barbara, & Carla, 2015; Morera, Molina, Olmedilla, Hernandez, & Romero, 2019; Pierrakeas, Xenos, Panagiotakopoulos, Vergidis, 2004; Zbigniew & Komendant, 2018; Moore, Quin, Burroughs, 2015).

The third factor is related to the family such as family circumstances, lack of motivation and support (Pierrakeas et al 2004; Latif, Choudhary, Hammayun, 2015; Khan, Hossain &Alam, 2018). Finally, financial aid is one of the factors of higher education dropout (Kim &

Kim, 2018; Murray, 2014; Zewotir, North, & Murray, 2015; Styger, Van Vuuren & Heymans, 2015; Castelló, Pardo, Sala-Bubaré, & Suñe-Soler, 2017; Khan et al 2018).

Dropout Factors Related to the Students

Dropout is a severe problem happening now at universities. Graduate students often drop out from institutions as a lack of knowledge in specific in giving courses, academic performance or their decisions. Many researchers (e.g., Kim & Kim, 2018; Liga & Irina, 2014) forecast students themselves could be a factor of dropout. For example, their knowledge, academic performance, and student's decisions. These variables could be reasons for leaving the university before completion. Nevertheless, data showed that learning, academic achievement, and decisions affect the increasing rate of student's dropout (Kim & Kim, 2018; Liga &Irina,2014). Possible causes have been examined at a university dropout in South Korea. The rate of dropout has nearly doubled from 1.17% in 2010 to 2.099% in 2015. Kim & Kim (2018) stated that students drop out because they do not have the required knowledge for a specific course. According to Khan, Hossain and Alam (2018), the pressure of study was a big problem for Bangladesh's students. They reported that 35% of students have dropout from the university because of the difficulties of the programs.

Moreover, Liga and Irina (2014) showed that the main reason for dropping out is students, who have a lack of secondary school knowledge to study and complete their education (2014). Liga and Irina (2014) investigated the causes of the first-year students' dropout rates in the Latvia University of Agriculture. Students were selected from five faculties of engineering science enrolled in LUA from 2011 to 2012. The results of this study showed that approximately 34.4% of students leave the LUA during the first year because of the poor knowledge in Mathematics.

Academic performance is confirmed as a determining variable of students' dropout According to Casanova et al (2018), academic accomplishment has affected student's decision to remain or abandon the study. Through Casanova's et al (2018) study, the researchers surveyed 2,970 first-year students at a public university in the north of Portugal. The results showed that the case of the dropout was (65.6%). Accordingly, academic achievement during the first year has affected academic competencies. Therefore, academic performance results in increasing student's decisions to dropout because of low performance in the first year. These results are similar to other research (e.g., Cerezo et al., 2015; Diseth, 2011; Hailikari et al., 2008) which showed that dropout is mainly dependent on academic achievement. Castelló et al. (2017) stated that personal and research skills have affected the completion of doctoral programmers in Spanish universities. The student's answers to the questionnaire and open-ended questions illustrated that students have not convinced with their skills and abilities. Researchers (e.g. Castelló et al., 2017; Zbigniew & Komendant, 2018) indicated that students are incapable of carrying out a research project because of lack of skills. Likewise, some participants think that they have a lack of knowledge in design, collection, and analysis of data. Subsequently, students felt that they are unable to complete the academic and doctoral programmers and decided to drop out.

Dropout Factors Related to the Higher Education Institution

The lack of facilities in higher education institutions is one of the factors that are related to the university environment that cause students 'dropout. Furthermore, structural characteristics of higher education institution; such as type, size, and location have contributed to dropout. For example, universities in urban areas have 14.5% fewer dropouts than those in rural areas (Kim & Kim, 2018). A study by Maria, Barbara and Carla (2015) showed that the

percentage of Master students' dropout in Spain was 15.6% in 2009/2010. This dropout rate was collected from private, public, and modality universities. The dropout of Spanish students was related to lack of university support, academic self-efficacy and educational values.

The results of another study by Morera et al. (2019) showed that students' lack of motivation was the reason for engineering degree dropouts in Spanish Universities The study has been conducted to determinate the reasons of dropout of engineering degree of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, industrial electronics engineering, and software engineering in Córdoba university. A case study combined a quantitative and qualitative survey of 315 participants. Noticeably, the quantitative survey showed that almost 50% of the students have dropped out or have decided to drop out at least in one of the subjects registered. However, a qualitative survey was asked only to the students who had dropout in at least one subject, and they were 203 participants. Participants reported that the causes of dropout were related to the university itself. Poor planning of the course, high level of the course, long syllabus and too difficult exams have been identified as factors of dropout from the courses. The research study concluded that the university needs to reverse this situation by doing outreach activities, tutorial action, syllabus revision, and subject organization.

Dropout Factors Related to Education Courses

Education courses also impact on student's dropout since of workload, poor planning of courses, not interesting courses. Pierrakeas et al (2004) identified that dropout rates and causes for two different distance education courses in Greek education university. Data was collected from a survey of two different programmers such as an undergraduate course leading to a Bachelor's degree and a postgraduate course leading to a Master's degree in education. This study used three different sources for data collection. Like student registry records, tutors' class

records and short structured interviews. In this study, 446 participants were taking part in this study, 338 undergraduate students and 108 graduate students.

However, research results appeared the rate of dropped out from undergraduate students was 349 and 173 dropped out from graduate students in the period 1999 to 2001. Also, they noticed that the causes of student dropout come from academic reasons. Lack of assistance, improper learning materials, and teaching methods used. Moreover, researchers (Pierrakeas et al., 2004; Zbigniew, Komendant,2018) indicated that teaching staff affects student's dropout. Students who have dropout from University showed that they were suffering from inadequate treatment by teachers. Also, the teaching staff was concentrated more on criticizing rather than on teaching. That led to having a low level of commitment to education, the absence of engage with students and a lack of teaching skills. Thus, these extrinsic (institutional-related) factors affected student's abilities, feeling bored in classes and student dissatisfaction with courses.

Researcher Moore el at, 2015, appeared the difficulty of the course is factor shaping student's decision to withdraw from their programme. Moore el at, 2015 noticed that students found the course challenging, not as expected and not interested. Besides, students were left programme because of the workload in assignments associated with the course. Students withdraw from higher education in Ireland were suffering from education courses and that cause student's dropout.

Dropout Factors Related to the Family

The family is the most influential factor in motivating their adults to succeed in their studying. However, absence of motivation and support led adults to dropout from higher education studies. Parents could affect their children's study life and increase the rate of dropout in higher education. To illustrate this issue, many parents are not interested in educating their

children. which leads to increase the number of students who abandon their studies in universities (Latif et al.,2015). Latif et al.,2015revealed the causes of student's dropouts and their impact on the economy in Pakistan. The findings are drawn from the extensive literature review of students' dropout in different countries. They found several factors that contributed to students' dropout from higher studies. They found that causes of dropout are attributed to uneducated family, early marriage and looking for jobs (Latif et al.,2015; Casanova et al.,2018).

In line with Pierrakeas et al.,2004, Khan et al 2018, they situated family as a reason of dropout because it relates to marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, travel problems, the death of a family member and separation. The finding stated that in Bangladesh, there is a huge percentage of women. The dropout rate for the woman who got married was 77%. The reasons for that because their family forces them to drop out and get married. Also, the survey revealed that 4.5% of students have left the university to get a job and assist their family.

Dropout Factors Related to Financial Issues

Financial aid and poverty are one of the causes that induce students to leave their studies before graduation. Kim & Kim (2018) and Murray (2014) propose that financial loads such as tuition fees, scholarships, and student debt critically influence students' decisions to dropout. In 2007, students joining South Africa's higher education system was limited. The statistics showed that 25% of all student's dropout was in their first year of study. Consequently, the lack of finance increased African students' dropout's rate.

Additionally, Zewotir, North, and Murray (2015) focused on postgraduate students' dropout at KwaZulu-Natal University in South Africa. They attempt to estimate the time that master students take to complete or dropout from a master's programme. The findings stated that financial aid was one of the factors that induce students to be reluctant to complete their

studies in the Master's program between the years 2004 and 2011. In addition, the results showed that the dropout rate in the first year of conducting the survey was 35.4%; however, after two years 21.5% of Master's students dropped out. Also, researchers motioned that financial assistance cannot be the only cause of desertion, however, it reduces the length of time that Master's students take and complete a master's program (Zewotir, North, and Murray, 2015).

Styger, Vuuren, and Heymans (2015) investigated the postgraduate students' dropout rate at South Africa universities. They observed and investigated the students 'dropout rate in South African universities. They noted that in 2010 the percentage of dropout ranged from 30 to 67% for Master's degrees and from 50 to 68% for doctoral degrees. Such dropout was attributed to the fact that students were not prepared for the academic challenges. Researchers suggested that there should be funding framework at universities. Besides, they also suggested that universities with low dropout should be rewarded, and those with high dropout should be punished. Other researchers (Castelló et al2017; Khan, Hossain, & Alam,2018) also determined funding as cause of dropout of doctoral students.

The impact of Student Dropout

Dropout has a negative impact on the economy of the country. Latif el at (2015) stated that in Pakistan, students' dropout influenced the economy of the country. This percentage of dropout cost the country over $200 billion. Also, students who are not educated influence the economy of the country because they spend their lives jobless or on government support.

Moreover, Latif el at (2015) reported that student dropout would reduce the literacy rate and has a non-innovative environment. For example, dropout will reduce the knowledge of students and may lead to unemployment in the country. Therefore, the state will have difficulty

in keeping pace with the development rapidly. Besides, student dropouts limited career options. According to Kokemuller (2019), students who dropout do not get more choices in a career in comparison with the students who complete their study and graduate. Hence, student dropout affects students in getting a job.

Reducing university dropout phenomena can be overcome with several factors. Larsen, Sommersel, and Larsen, (2013) stated that motivation is important factors for lowering university dropout. Thus, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation have potential means for reducing university dropout. Intrinsic motivation means students motivate themselves to complete their study whereas extrinsic motivation means students get motivation or benefits from outside such as career orientation and job expectations. In line with Larsen el at (2013), the students should know have an idea about their majors, procedures, rules and institutions' environment before application. Thus, an institution should provide information to the students and make an orientation day, which will help students to understand more about academic institutions to prepare themselves well for joining such institutions.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the research design, sample and sampling procedures, data collection tools, data analysis and thorough considerations of the ethics.

Research Design

The qualitative research used to carry out the present study. the research project was designed primarily for exploratory study. It is used to gain the reasons that led to the emergence of dropout phenomenon and understanding students' opinions and motives about dropout. There are different ways to collect data such as individual interviews, group discussions, and a questionnaire among others (Creswell.2007). But for a qualitative study the sample size is typically small (Crowe et al2011).

Within the qualitative study, the case study used as a methodology. To explain, an approach and empirical inquiry that investigate a phenomenon that was happening in real life. Besides, it examines the phenomena in depth with a single individual or group of people to meet research purpose (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Hence, this case study investigated factors that contribute to higher education dropout in UAE, using individual semi-structured interviews.

Study Participants

The participants in this study were five Emirati students, including two males and three females who dropped out from their graduate studies before completion. Three female and two male students voluntarily agreed to participate in this research project. All participants were identified with a pseudonym. Three participants were dropped out from first years, while the other two participant dropouts from the second year. All of the participants studied in English.

Convenience sampling was used to recruit the participants for the study (Ary, Cheser, Sorensen & Walker, 2013). The researcher chooses this way of sampling for convenient access

to participants from family, friends, and colleagues who dropped out from their graduate studies. The two criteria were used in choosing participants including the participant must be a: being an Emirati national and also had dropped out from graduate studies before completion.

Data Collection Tools

A semi-structured interview was used to collect data in this study. A semi-structured interview is a type of conversation which the interviewer does not accurately follow a formal list of questions, but the interviewer can ask more open-ended questions (Creswell.2007). Also, interviewer allowing participant for a discussion rather than a straightforward question and answer questions (Ary, Cheser, Sorensen & Walker, 2013). The semi-structured interview conducted face to face. The interviews used audio recorded upon the approval of the participants and signing a consent form (See Appendix A).

The interview consists of 15 questions (See Appendix B) that given in-depth data regarding the reasons for graduate students' dropout and recommendations to lower the dropout rate among graduate students. The questions were checked by the research advisor to ensure the validity of the data collection tool.

The researcher developed the interview questions based on the experience and the literature. The research advisor validates the interview questions. The research advisor ensured that the interview questions are aligned with the research questions. She also checked the questions for clarity.

Procedures

A letter of invitation was sent to invite people who meet the criteria to participate in a research project (See Appendix C). After agreeing to participate in the study, the participants signed the consent form. The consent form was explained in detail to the participants and all

participants' questions regarding the participation in the study was answered. A reminder about the date, time and place of the interview was sent to each participant by SMS and email enough time before the interview date (See Appendix C).

The researcher reminded the participants that the interview is recorded and made sure to get their permission before starting to audio record the interview. The interview took only one session for each participant, and the duration was 15 to 20 minutes which is the length of the semi-structured interview. After that semi-structured interview conducted between researchers and participants (See Appendix D). The audio recording was kept in a locked folder in the researcher's computer to ensure the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by listening to the audio recorder. Researcher listened to each recorder of five participants. Then, the researcher transcribed participants' answers in laptop. After that, researchers read all participant's responses and find the words with the same meaning. All words with the same meaning highlighted in one color. Finally, researcher emerged codes from the interviews. The researcher's advisor validated the emerged codes, and with the researcher discussed the themes and reached an agreement on the final themes. The data were presented in themes when writing the findings of the study. To come up with the codes (See Appendix E), the researcher read the transcribed interviews for each interviewee many times, and took notes in the margin, then review the notes and come up with a list of the codes. (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the findings and results of the study. Five participants were interviewed using 15 semi-structured interview questions. The following themes were emerged from the data analysis: reasons for joined higher studies, reasons for drop-out from higher studies, time difficulties, types of courses, location of the Institution, family supports, program's content, university support, and student's emotion and potential.

Reasons of Joined Higher Studies

Three student out of five stated that they join the graduate studies to improve their opportunity in pursuing a better job. For example, participant B and E said "I joined graduate studies to get a better job and change my current work field", "it helps me to get a job" respectively. However, two of participant indicated that, they joined the graduate studies to improve their skills and expand their knowledge. Participant C said "I joined this program to expand my knowledge in education". Also, participant A said" I entered higher studies to get high level of knowledge …".

Reasons of Drop-out from Higher Studies

Time Difficulties. Three participant mentioned that, time management was a problem for them. They have difficulty to manage their time between work and study. For example, participant B said, "it's hard to manage your time and you are working in school and study with much-required reading". In addition, she mentioned that the she faced difficulties when she goes back to her home, having no time to prepare for a school. She added "I return back to my home at 9 pm. And there is no time to plan for the next day". Moreover, participant C reported that he needs from his college to consider time issue because he mentioned that "…. adjust my time since I'm full-time teacher. And they must understand somedays we have professional development". Participant D agrees with participant D and reported difficulties in managing his

time to read articles. He said "… the amount of time I needed to complete some reading and the number of readings required" and "I need to teach my children and find some time for my studies, which was difficult". Also, he mentioned that the time did not help him to read and do all work for each courses because of a lot of information and he said "the amount of information I needed to acquire was tremendous and the time a have was not saving me to know all that".

Two participants out of five recommended that the students should manage their time between work and study. For example, participant E said "… like manage their time because in the Master program they do a lot of reading and it needs more time to read many articles". In addition, participant D suggested that students should manage their time to read a book every day for a while. He said "throw all the electronica devises away and just stay with the books for few hours each morning and before sleep".

Types of Courses. Participant B conveyed that some courses in his program of study were difficult and he did not like them at all. Participant B reported "the most coursers I did not like is that takes about theories over and over and it seems like it gives me no help in using it during my work or even outside my job". However, the rest of participants did not show the specific courses they dislike but participant's C and E believed in the way of instructor. For example, participant's C and E said "I guess it what comes from the instructor was the instructor is passionate and knowledgeable capable of teaching their courses" and "I would not say there were courses I did not like but it was depending on teacher" respectively.

On the other hand, all participants specified the most courses they liked in the graduate program. Participant B stated that she prefers courses that stimulates their creativity. Participant B commented "I'm a person who likes anything that talks about creativity and making things".

Participant D said "I liked Dr. X course which is school evaluation because it links to sociology and it was giving us the experience of our daily life".

In addition, two participants (D and E) reported that the most course she like is about numbers and equations. Participant E noted "Actually, I found that, math and physics were the most courses I liked because I like numbers and rules". As well, participant D stated that he liked many courses such as curriculum design, research design and methodology and classroom management and communication. Also, he stated that the reason of liked these courses because of instructor. For example, he said "…courses are very beneficial due to the instructor support and the way of the course itself and teacher's way in teaching".

Location of the Institution. Participants A and E addressed the location of the higher education institution as a factor of dropping out. Participant E said "the university is far away from me maybe around on hour and half". Similarity, participant A said that "the outside difficulty of university was a location of the university. Nevertheless, participants B, C and D did not feel location of college or university are a crucial problem to them and they appeared their satisfaction of location.

Family Supports. Participants in this study described how they get support from their family. Two participants out of five stated that their family motivates and encourage them to complete their study. Participant E said "my family and my husband were encouraged to study the Master program". In addition, participant B also reported that the supported channel outside the institution was her family. She said, "however, outside the institution is my family always supported me to continue my study". Also, participant B showed family involvement in her life. For example, when she left her studies they get upset of her like what she said "leaving my graduate made me get involved in arguments with my parents". While one participant which

participant D indicated that the kind of support needed to complete his graduate studies is family. He said, "from my family need the time and support".

Nevertheless, two participants did not show the importance of the family role in their study life. Participant …… said: "I don't get any supports from my family or friend, even when I left the program no one encourages me to continue".

Program's Content. Three out of five participants stressed that program's content did not match with student's expectations. Participants reported that the amount of work (tasks, assessments, reading and exams) and timing of program which is difficult to do all tasks with. Participant A said "my reasons for leaving the program because of the period of study too long about 3 years and quantity of tasks which gives us every week from each course (study stress)". In addition, participant B also mentioned that "difficulties did you face inside the institution is the timing of the program. Plus, my work took all day and it felt like I was a robot, I go to work come back to get ready to go to college and then get home to sleep and so on".

Moreover, participant D reported that the huge amount of readings did not help him to complete his study at college. To illustrate he said, "the amount of time I needed to complete some reading and the number of readings required, because the college used to give us a huge amount of readings which contains a big number of new vocabs, which needed translation and clarification".

University Support. One participant stated that there was no interaction with others because he was the only one in the classroom. Participant C said, "There was no interaction which is one of my reasons to study and interaction, sharing experience and knowledge and I did not find that through virtual technology, I could not reach them". Two participants recommended that the university should consider student's situations and needs. For

example, participant A said from the institution I need a scholarship, more care about students, encourage and motive students to complete their studies. Also, I need from teaching staff to listen to the students and look at their needs. Likewise, one participant mentioned the importance of considering the student's health. Like what participant B said "I need support from the institution and consider my health. So, when I will get my health better I will find a way to be able to feel like a human not a robot with these long hours of work and study.

Furthermore, one participant mentioned that if he found the support, he will go back and continue his graduate studies. Participant C said, "The support I need from the institution itself, provide me with the right resource to study this program and adjust my time since I'm full-time teaching".

Student's Emotion and Potential. Four participants reported that they feel guilty because they left the program. For example, participant C said, "I felt disappointed because I programmed my life to be a committee for doing a new thing like starting January to study and then this commitment was down and I had to adjust and know I feel not very good". Another participant felt sad because it was the third time to leave the master program. Like what she said "I feel sad because you know it's difficult to understand that you cannot achieve your goal. I did master program three times it different university".

However, two participant declared that the decision of leaving graduate study affected their earnings potential. Participant C said "Actually, it affects my potential because I planned that, If I finished the program of the master, I will be able to get higher salary probably especially if I left the field in which they don't credit the degree much". Also, participant A said

To be honest I was upset about leaving the master program because after I left I

did not find a job and I do nothing at home. It affects my English langue because

I did not use it much at home. Also, I thought I will get a job if do my master degree but it did not happen.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter discussing the findings and connect them to the literature in order to achieve the purpose of the study and answering the research questions

Discussion

As for the factors contributing to higher education dropout in the UAE institutions. From the findings of student's dropout, several reasons were revealed related to students' dropout before completion. Family support is one of these reason related to the students' dropout from UAE higher education institutions. This finding matches the findings of studies by Latif et al. (2015), Casanova et al. (2018), Pierrakeas et al. (2004), and Khan et al. (2018). Latif et al., (2015) found that the absence of parents' motivation and support to their led to increased dropout in universities.

Pierrakeas's et al. 2004 and Khan's et al., 2018 studies reported (that students drop out from the higher education institution due to lack of family support. These studies are in accordance with findings reported by the interviewees. The results showed that, students drop out because they did not get enough support from their family while studying. In addition, findings indicated that even when student's dropout, no one from the family encouraged them to complete their study. As discussed, this is due to the fact that, some students who dropped out from UAE institutions reported that they get engorgement from their family.

Furthermore, dropout factors related to the higher education institution such as faculty members, resources, contents and planning of the courses led the students to dropout. Kim & Kim (2018), Maria, Barbara, and Carla (2015), Morera et al., (2019), Pierrakeas et al, (2004), Zbigniew, and Komendant (2018) reported that some students were suffering the way instructors teach, resources and course planning. In South Korea's universities the students did not find facilities and that led them to dropout from the university. For example, universities in urban

areas have 14.5% fewer dropouts than those in rural areas (Kim &Kim ,2018). The current study revealed similar results. Some students who dropped out of the university because they did not find my facility at the university site. The results showed that students have to drive for an hour and a half to reach the university in center of the city. Thus, the site was a contributing factor in the dropout of UAE postgraduate students.

The findings match with previous reports, showing that students did not get interaction between them and university. For example, university was using online classes and students did not get interaction with students from other university to sharing experience and knowledge. In addition, in Spain dropout rate was 15.6% because of lack of university supports (Maria et al.,2015). Hence, lack of university support and facilities led students leave college without completion. Also, in Spain the reason of students who abandon for engineering degree of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, industrial electronics engineering, and software engineering in Córdoba university was bad planning of courses (Morera et al, 2019). The findings of this study had shown that the students were upset because of a lot of readings. They feel exhausted when reading many articles and understand them all. Accordingly, that show the bad planning of courses because students were working and studying at the same time.

Comparing our results to those of earlier studies, the findings contradictory to the literature review. Findings illustrated students were satisfied with courses and the way of teaching by instructors. They believed that what it comes from the instructor and the instructors are passionate and knowledgeable capable of teaching their courses Also, students from their findings show that they liked courses because of instructors. For instance, way of teaching, strategies used in the classroom, support students all these things were attracting students to satisfy and complete their study. However, Pierrakeas et al., 2004; Zbigniew &

Komendant,2018 stated that the reason for student's dropout was students were suffering from inadequate treatment by teachers. Also, the teaching staff was concentrated more on criticizing rather than on teaching. Also, the teaching staff was concentrated more on criticizing rather than on teaching.

In South Korea, the reasons for dropout from university are student's knowledge, academic performance, and decisions. Thus, they find difficulties to cooperate in the educational direction because of the limit of skills, education, and information they have it already (Kim & Kim, 2018) Findings of this study demonstrated that students were suffering from a lack of knowledge, skills, and experience. They faced difficulties to cooperate with different courses. Hence, that lead students to leave the program before completion. Liga and Irina (2014), stated that students in the Latvia University of Agriculture left before graduation. The reason for dropout was the poor knowledge in Mathematics researchers (Castelló et al., 2017; Zbigniew& Komendant,2018) declared students felt that they are unable to complete the academic and doctoral programmers and decided to drop out. Since, lack of knowledge in research skills such as in design, collection, and analysis of data. A difference between these past studies can only be attributable with finding. Results showed that students who drop out from UAE institutions were liked and dislike different courses. Courses students like they found them beneficial and linking with their work so that help students to understand the content in a secure way. However, courses did not like as theories because they believed this course would not help them in their work.

Slightly superior results were achieved with previous literature review. Findings showed that students did not earn their potential because they dropout before completion. This finding matches Latif et al. 2015) Casanova et al. (2018) Pierrakeas et al. (2004); Khan et al.

(2018). These studies indicated that student's dropout to get a job and assist their family. Plus, 4.5% of students have left the university to get a job and support their family. However, the finding revealed student who drops out from UAE institutions was disappointed because that affected to earn potentials. Student felt upset because they believed having a graduate degree will help them to find a job or get promotion. As discussed, this is due to the fact that findings appeared that students join higher studies to get a job and it was the main reason to complete their higher studies.

The results of the interviews found an apparent reason for the student's abandon. Program content was a cause of leave higher study because the amount of work (tasks, assessments, reading and exams). So, result appeared that students were worries to do daily tasks. Also, that let student to be dispersed because they were working and studying at same time. Researchers Morera et al., 2019 stated student who dropout from Córdoba university were suffering from several causes. For example, poor planning of the course, high level of the course, syllabus too long and exams too difficult. As it is not generally agreed that a lot of tasks, knowledge and poor planning affect student's dropout. According to Liga and Irina (2014) poor knowledge in Mathematics course has increased the rate of leavers. So, luck of knowledge and huge about of knowledge let student to dropout. Researchers Morera et al., 2019 concluded their studies by suggesting university to reverse this situation by doing outreach activities, tutorial action, syllabus revision, and subject organization.

The limitations of previous studies are becoming clear. Previous studies did not show that the significance of time through complete higher studies. The result now provides evidence in how students find difficulties and manage their time through working and studying. The results of this study showed study showed that the students were suffering from lack of time and

a lot of tasks. Because in some courses they needed to read a lot of articles and understand them all. Students explained that they did not have time to read many articles while they are working in the morning and studying in the evening. Moreover, when the classes are in the evening return students from the institution to the home, the students used the time to prepare for the next day because some of them were teachers at school. So, time difficulties were affecting students to leave higher studies before completion.

Implications for Practice

There are many recommendations and suggestions that limit the dropout in universities. These suggestions can be built on the reasons that led to this dropout per the current study findings. First, the universities should plan well for the study programs, especially the master's and doctoral programs, because some of students work in the morning. Teachers and supervisors should study the situation of students to provide them with sufficient time to work on their tasks, assessments and projects. For example, some participants are teachers in schools and have duties at school, workshops, and professional development. The college should consider student needs to feel comfortable and satisfied.

The second recommendation is for the Ministry of Education to monitor government institutions annually and identify the causes of dropouts in universities. As Styger, Vuuren, and Heymans (2015) suggestion, universities with low dropout proportions might be rewarded, and those with high dropout proportions might be punished. This will increase the concern of universities in student's need and reduce the dropout rate.

The third recommendation is to assist students in terms of identifying students' academic weaknesses and focusing on developing their academic performance. For example, interviewers reported that teachers provide many articles to students and that there are difficult understand

and translate into Arabic. English is second language to the UAE students. Thus, institutions should provide courses, provision of free sites, training exams, allocation of time agreed by the teacher and students to strengthen weak skills. These recommendations and suggestions can help universities reduce the dropout rates.

Recommendation four is qualifying students before entering university. Some students enter the university have lack some skills and abilities to overcome academic difficulties. The Ministry of Education can establish and qualify students for university studies by offering training courses. For example, before graduating from school in the ninth to twelfth grade, the course provides and taught based on their tendency or specialty at the university. Ministry of Education can allocate hours for students to be taught or educate, and training courses to gain knowledge of the majors that students will study at university. So that will help institutions and students to avoid dropout, pressure, repetition, and difficulties in the study.

Recommendation for Future Research

Future research should investigate the potential impact of dropout on students in the UAE higher education institutions due to few number of studies in this area of research. The author invites Emirati researchers to investigate the causes of dropout in UAE universities that may reduce the dropout rate that may influence the economy of the country as it happened in universities in South Africa (Zewotir, North, & Murray,2015). Besides, inclusion of a bigger sample size could help researchers to have more findings. Also, comparing between reasons for dropout among male and female to explore causes that led them to withdrawal. The researcher could conduct a questionnaire to teachers and principal of academic institutions because it may help researchers to find solutions of dropout phenomenon. In addition, researchers should include solutions to these problems for students' and academic institutions'

point of view.

Conclusion

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that the dropout from universities is due to several reasons. Although universities receive a number of students each year, there is a percentage of dropout. The major reasons behind graduate students drop out are: difficulty of content, lack of support from the university and family, and time constraints.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A - CONSENT FORM

Factors Contribute to Higher Education Dropout in the UAE: A Case Study

My name is *Marwa Rashid* and I am enrolled in a Master of Education Program at Emirates College for Advanced Education. As part of the Research Project course requirement, I am investigating the factors contribute to higher education dropout in the UAE.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. This form will give you information about the research project and what your participation will involves. Please take the time to read the information below. If you have questions, please ask.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to:

1. Investigate the reasons of the male and the female graduate students' dropout from higher education in the United Arab Emirates.
2. Provide recommendations to lower the percentage of the male and the female graduate students' dropout from higher education in the United Arab Emirates.

Who can participate in the study?
Participants in this study are nationals who dropped out from their graduate studies before completion.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in the study, you will be invited to:

- Complete a semi-structured interview.

- The interview will take approximately (30-45) minutes.

- The interview will be audio recorded

Voluntary participation
You are being asked to make a voluntary decision whether or not to participate in this study. If you decide to participate in the study now, you can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. If you decide not to participate, or if you later decide to discontinue your participation, your decisions will

not affect relations with ECAE.

Risks and benefits

The only risk involved in the participation in the interview time commitment which is approximately 30 to 45 minute. There are no benefits provided to the participants, however, the data gather in this study will benefit the stakeholders as Ministry of Education, universities and colleges to lower the rate of dropout of their graduate students.

Confidentiality, anonymity and data protection

- Interview will be recorded and only accessed by the researcher.
- Your identity and all data provided will anonymous and confidential.
- The interview will be in the researcher's computer in a password protected folder.
- The results of the study will be group data without any reference to individuals. only statistical or group data.

Contacts and questions

You may ask any questions you have now and later. Please contact me via email *017022@ecae.ac.ae* or phone *0507509449*. If you have any questions concerning your participation in this research project, please contact the ECAE Research Office: research@ecae.ac.ae.

Participant's statement*:*

I agree that:

- I have read the Information and Consent Form.
- The project has been explained to me verbally. *{Delete if not applicable e.g. for online studies}*
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study.
- I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions.
- I am voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant / (or parent/guardian)	Date

Print Name:

Investigator's statement:

I confirm that I have carefully explained the purpose of the study to the participant and outlined any reasonable, foreseeable risks or benefits (where applicable).

Signature of Principal Investigator	Date

APPENDIX B -INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview questions

Demographic Data

Participants	Job	Marital status	University you dropped out from	Number of kids And ages	Qualifications

1. What made you join the graduate studies? What were your reasons to continue your study?

2. At what stage in your graduate studies did you dropout? In which semester?

3. What channels of support inside and outside the college did you use during your study?

4. What made you decide to leave your study without completion? What were the reasons behind this decision?

5. Are there any other students left the program before or the same time as you? How many male and how many female students? What are the reasons for their leaving without completing the degree?

6. What was the total number of the students in the program before you dropout?

7. What are you doing now after dropping out from dropping out from graduate studies? What jobs would you have now if you continued your graduate studies?

8. How do you feel about leaving your graduate study?

9. What makes you go back and continue your graduate studies? If you decided to continue, would you continue in the same program or a different program? In the same college or a different college?

10. What are the difficulties that you faced when you were a graduate student inside and outside the college or institution?

11. Which course did you like the most in the program you dropped out from and why?

12. Which course that you did not like the most in the program you dropped out from and why?

13. How would completing your graduate studies affect your future?

14. How do you feel the decision to dropout of higher education or leave your course will affect your earnings levels throughout your lifetime?

15. What would make you and other graduate students complete your graduate studies? What kind of support do you need to complete your graduate studies?

16. What advices do you have for other graduate students that would help them continue their graduate studies?

17. What could be done (by the educational institution) to overcome the challenges that the graduate students and make them dropout before completion?

APPENDIX C– INVITATION AND REMINDER TEXT

Letter of invitation to participate in research project

Research Topic: Factors Contribute to Higher Education Dropout in the UAE: A Case Study

Dear Mr. /Ms.,

My name is Marwa Rashid and I am enrolled in the Master of Education Program at Emirates College for Advanced Education. As part of the Research Project course requirement, I am investigating "Factors Contribute to Higher Education Dropout in the UAE: A Case Study".

I would like you to be part of this research study. If you decide to take part in the study, I will get in touch with you by telephone or send a message to determine a time for an interview. The interview consists of 17 questions and it will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your help

Yours sincerely

Marwa

Reminder Text to Participants

Dear Mr. /Ms.,

This is a gentle reminder regarding the interview that will be conducted with you as part of the research project course requirement.

The interview will be conduction on {day} {date} at {time}. We will meet at {place}. If for any reason you cannot come in the mentioned date and time, please let me know and we will reschedule another time.

Looking forward to meet you. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Regards,

Marwa

APPENDIX D– ANSWERS OF INTERVIEWS
Interview Questions (Participant A)

Demographic data	
Qualifications	Bachelor Degree in Architectural Engineer
Job	Architecture Engineer
University and program you leave from it	UAEU - Architecture
Marital status	Single
Number of kids	0

1. Why did you join the graduate studies? Participant A said, I entered higher studies to get high level of the knowledge and get good job. Also, she mentioned that "if I get Master degree maybe I will be a teacher in a university. However, she said, "in my hometown there is a few opportunities to get a job and I think studying master will help me to get a job because I have graduated since 6 years ago.

2. At what stage in your graduate studies did you leave? Participant A said, I have left the Master program in the second week.

3. How many students left the program before or with you? What were their reasons for leaving? Participant Aside," I Don't have idea about number of students who left the program because I left in the second week. Also, Participant A side, "my reasons of leaving the program because the period of study too long about 3 years and quantity of tasks which gives us every week from each courses (study stress). Also, she said "I do not have that much of knowledge and my classmate have a high level of skills. And all of them were man with rich experience and I don't have experience.

4. What are you doing now? I have job in private Sector.

5. How the decision of leaving your graduate study would affect your earnings potential? To be honest I was upset about leaving the master program because after I left I did not find a job and I do nothing at home. It affects my English langue because I did not use it

much at home. Also, I thought I will get a job if do my master degree but it did not happen".

6.   How do you feel about leaving your graduate study? Participant A said about that, "I feel remorse and I want to come back to study".

7. What made you decide to leave your study without completion? I thought that get a job and earn experience better than to study without experiences because if I have a lot of experiences that will facilitate to complete program without facing any difficulties.

8. Which course did you like the most in the graduate program? Why? "Researching and reading courses because these are continuous learning methods".

9. Which course did not you like the most in the graduate program? Why? Participant A said about that, "actually I like all courses because I have studied them in AB program".

10. What channels of support (inside and outside the institution) did you use during your study? Participant A indicated that, "I don't get any supports from my family or friend, even when I left the program no one encourage me to continue. Also, that teaching staff and administration did not encourage me to complete and asking me about my reasons.

11. What would make you go back and continue your graduate studies? Participant A said about that, "Continue my graduate studies will increase my knowledge and for the work environment's need. Also, to get high positions at my work".

12. If you decided to continue, would you continue in the same program or in a different program? Why? "I would continue in the different program because before three years' trends are different from now. For example, my AB degree is in architectural engineering so, I would complete in business or leadership because it matches with the labor market.

13. What difficulties did you face (inside and outside the institution) as a graduate student? I could say my English Language was not in a goof level. Also, a lot of tasks which gives us every week from each courses. However, the outside difficulties were a location of the university but it is not much difficult like inside institution difficulties.

14. What kind of support (family and institution) do you need to complete your graduate studies? Participant A said, "from institution I need a scholarship more care about students, encourage and motive students to complete their studies. Also, I need from teaching staff listen to the students and look at their needs. However, from my family, I

need them to encourage me complete my study but they do not care as much on studying they need me to get a job butter than study.

15. What advices do you have for other graduate students that would help them complete their study? I need to advise them to complete their study because there are many universities provide a scholarship to students. Also, choose the best program and sure they will continue in it without drop out.

Demographic data	
Qualifications	Bachelor in Early childhood
Job	English teacher
University and program you leave from it	Emirates college for advance education
Marital status	Single
Number of kids	-

Interview Questions (Participant B)

1. Why did you join the graduate studies?

I joined graduate studies to get a better job and change my current work field

2. At what stage in your graduate studies did you leave?

At the end of the Second semester

3. How many students left the program before or with you? What were their reasons for leaving?

I can remember one, she left program because of the difficulty of the program. Also, because she was pregnant and it was hard for her to work in morning and study at evening.

4. What are you doing now?

Currently working at the same job that I want to change later on. Which is English teacher.

5. How the decision of leaving your graduate study would affect your earnings potential?

Actually, it affects my potential because I planned that, If I finished the program of the master, I will be able to get higher salary probably especially if I left the field in which they don't credit the degree much. Moreover, I will not change my job till I had Master degree.

6. How do you feel about leaving your graduate study?

Ummmm... To be honest, I felt guilty and really bad. Also, it made me get involved into arguments with my parents. So, now thinking to join master program.

7. What made you decide to leave your study without completion?

I decide to leave to, it temporary for my health condition which kept getting worse day by day. Because I think I'm exhausting myself working all day at school with professional development and that attending Master's classes. So, I return back to my home at 9 pm. And there is no time to plan for the next day. So once I get back on my feet probably I will get back to the master's programs.

8. Which course did you like the most in the graduate program? Why?

I'm a person who likes anything that talks about creativity and making things, it always attracts me, and also managing and leadership. like classroom management course the instructor always let us create a poster and present it to the classmate.

9. Which course did not you like the most in the graduate program? Why?

However, the most coursers I did not like is that takes about theories over and over and it seems like it gives me no help in using it during my work or even outside my job.

10. What channels of support (inside and outside the institution) did you use during your study?

The support that I have it from inside institution is my doctors, they support and encourage us. Also, more resources online and the library. However, outside the institution is my family was always support me to continue my study.

11. What would make you go back and continue your graduate studies?

As I mentioned earlier, if I would back to study only to change my job field it's not for me. And I feel like I'm not in the right place for me.

12. If you decided to continue, would you continue in the same program or in a different program? Why?

Umm... I still think where to go until the time I know I can come back the higher chances is I will get back to the old program.

13. What difficulties did you face (inside and outside the institution) as a graduate student?

Actually the difficulties did you face inside institution is timing of the program. Plus, my work took all day and it felt like I was a robot, I go to work come back to get ready to go to college and then get home to sleep and so on. And, outside the institution is my time management and it's hard to manage your time and you are working in school and study with much required reading.

Interview Questions (Participant C)

Demographic data	
Qualifications	Bachelor of Art and Master of Education
Job	Art teacher
University and program you leave from it	Emirates college for advance education
Marital status	Single
Number of kids	-

1. Why did you join the graduate studies? Participant C said" I joined this program to border my knowledge in education. Also, having the potential to be able to evaluate art program, school. Also, to learn about methods and procedure of evaluating".

2. At what stage in your graduate studies did you leave? I left the program after first week.

3. How many students left the program before or with you? What were their reasons for leaving? I was the first one of leave and there was someone had a potential to leave but I do not know if he left or no. The reasons for leaving were … because the program was not as a promised and did not mention that will be through virtual technology, and I was only the students in AD and the other three students were in Ajman. There was no interaction which is one of my reasons to study and interaction, sharing experience and knowledge and I did not find that through virtual technology, I could not reach them. Also, that was not shared, all this information when I applied for the program. So, the first week was not meet my exception and someone told me it will meet my exception but I joined the program. After that, I change my idea and leave program.

4. What are you doing now? Art teacher in AD school.

5. How the decision of leaving your graduate study would affect your earnings potential? Actually, it did not affect my potential in a strong way. Although I had a different plan when I took the decision I moved to plan B.

6. How do you feel about leaving your graduate study? I felt disappointed because I programmed my life to be a committee for doing a new thing like starting January to study and then this commitment was down and I had to adjust and know I feel not very good.

7. What made you decide to leave your study without completion? I left the program basically because it did not meet my exceptions and the curriculum of program, syllabus, how the program will be taught, instructions all these things were not shared with me prior my joining.

8. Which course did you like the most in the graduate program? Why? I liked Dr.X course which is school evaluation. I liked it because it links to sociology and it was giving us the experience of our daily life.

9. Which course did not you like the most in the graduate program? Why? There was no course I did not like all of the courses were interesting. And I guess it what comes from the instructor was the instructor is passionate and knowledgeable capable of teaching their courses.

10. What channels of support (inside and outside the institution) did you use during your study? Yeah… So, I think the support was also, the instructor which is my academic council which is Dr. Rida. And outside the institution I would not say, support as much but I made my decision of myself.

11. What would make you go back and continue your graduate studies? I would continue if only gain trust and having a program that is shard properly that would exceptions would meet. I know that you cannot describe how it would be exactly but, at least I need reliable information for me to join the program.

12. If you decided to continue, would you continue in the same program or in a different program? Why? Throw the choices that I have right now I would choose that same, but if they offer more choices I might choose different program.

13. What difficulties did you face (inside and outside the institution) as a graduate student? To be honest I did not face any difficulties because I was already an alumnus in this college. So, everything was smooth my application and my withdrawal.

14. What kind of support (family and institution) do you need to complete your graduate studies? The support I need from the institution itself, provide me with the right resource to study this program and adjust my time since I'm full-time teaching. And they must understand somedays we have professional development.so, I need them to consider my situation.

15. What advices do you have for other graduate students that would help them complete their study? The advice is about this institution because they have good teachers. Also, they need to know what the program they need to study. Also, need to know what are they getting into they need to know how the program is taught and know reasons for coming to this program than they will do it.

Interview Questions (Participant D)

Demographic data	
Qualifications	Bachelor of Emergency Medical
Job	Head of medical training and continuing education branch in Abu Dhabi police station
University and program you leave from it	Emirates College for Advance Education
Marital status	Married
Number of kids	4

1.Why did you join the graduate studies?

I join the graduate studies because I wanted to develop my skill in education, training and delivering knowledge, plus it helps me to improve in my current job.

2. At what stage in your graduate studies did you leave?

I left the graduate studies at the second year.

3. How many students left the program before or with you? What were their reasons for leaving?

At the first year, 3 students were left because of medical issue.

4. What are you doing now?

Working in police station

5. How the decision of leaving your graduate study would affect your earnings potential?

Actually, it did not affect my potential in a strong way. Because I did not learn from the institution that much and I will complete my studies in other institution.

6. How do you feel about leaving your graduate study?

I feel happy, because you know as I mentioned in previse answer I did not lean that much from the program. So I feel okay because I will complete in other institution.

7. What made you decide to leave your study without completion?

I left the program before completion because I found some difficulties due to my work nature in the emergency department, plus the amount of time I needed to complete some

reading and the number of readings required, because the college used to give us a huge amount of readings which contains a big number of new vocabs, which needed translation and clarification. On the other hand, I am father of four children, so I need to teach my children and find some time for my studies, which was difficult.

8. Which course did you like the most in the graduate program? Why?

Ummm .. Actually, I found the curriculum design and assessment course beneficial and research design and methodology from the second semester, and from the first semester I found critical perspectives on teaching and learning, and classroom management and communication courses are very beneficial due to the instructor support and the way of the course itself and teacher's way in teaching.

9. Which course did not you like the most in the graduate program? Why?

Ummm...I would not say there were no benefit from the course, but I have mentioned the most beneficial courses however, the amount of information I needed to acquire was tremendous and the time a have was not saving me to know all that.

10. What channels of support (inside and outside the institution) did you use during your study?

Inside the institution, I found out the support I needed from only two doctors and they stood with me and tried to help me as much as they can and I am really appreciating their support (Dr Nagla and Rida) thank you very much. However, for outside support I did not get that much support because I responsible about myself.

11. What would make you go back and continue your graduate studies?

Ummmm... If it is in same institution they should allow me more time on each course plus less readings, because I needed more time to understand the readings in order to start discussion and writing. Consider our situation if we absent and late plus much supports from teacher and adviser.

12. If you decided to continue, would you continue in the same program or in a different program? Why?

To be honest it depends if in the same program if the above requirement were fulfilled. But now I'm thinking in anther program.

13. What difficulties did you face (inside and outside the institution) as a graduate student?

Actually, finding the right program because we did not really know much about the programs and content. Also, I found difficulty in research methodology courses because it thought us in summer and the period was only five weeks with three assessment and presentation. The instructor did not explain well for us and we lost in this course.

14. What kind of support (family and institution) do you need to complete your graduate studies?

As I am a graduate from another specialty, I require more support on readings, critical analysis and writing or extra pieces of information for the writing parts. From the family the time and support, without creating any problems then asking for solutions.

15. What advices do you have for other graduate students that would help them complete their study?

I will encourage them to throw all the electronica devises away and just stay with the books for few hours each morning and before sleep. Find the appropriate program and work hard to achieve the goals. Also, make an agreement with their families and children if they let them complete their studies.

Interview Questions (Participant E)

Demographic data	
Qualifications	Bachelor of Electronic Engineering
Job	House wife
University and program you leave from it	Sharjah University
Marital status	Married
Number of kids	1

1. Why did you join the graduate studies?

Firstly, I joined this program because of different reasons. After I left my job I decided to complete my study because I need to border my knowledge and it helps me to get a job. Also, my family and my husband were encouraged to study Master program because completing a Master in engineering a matching with labor match in these years.

2. At what stage in your graduate studies did you leave?

I left the graduate studies at the first semester.

3. How many students left the program before or with you? What were their reasons for leaving?

No one had left the program because I left at the beginning of first semester. And I was the first one how left he program. I had left the program because I was pregnant and my health condition does not help me to drive my care because the university is fare away from me maybe around on hour and half.

4. What are you doing now?

Try to find a job.

5. How the decision of leaving your graduate study would affect your earnings potential?

Actually, it did affect my potential in a strong way. Because I did not get a job from five years' age when I had left my first job. Also, it is my goal to get a Master degree in Engineering. So, now I do not think to complete my study. Right know I need to get a job in anything to help my family.

6. How do you feel about leaving your graduate study?

I feel sad, because you know it's difficult to understand that you cannot achieve your goal. I did master program three times it different university. Also, as you know I will have a new baby and my age in almost 30 and I do not think I will complete my study. I need to get experience to get a job.

7. What made you decide to leave your study without completion?

I left the program before completion because I found some difficulties in location. In my city there is a same university but they do not open classes for us because our number was small and there are no more teachers to teach. Also, I had left the program because I was pregnant and my health condition does not help me to drive my care because the university is fare away from me maybe around on hour and half.

Which course did you like the most in the graduate program? Why?

Ummm ... Actually, I found that, math and physics were the most courses I liked because I like numbers and rules.

8. Which course did not you like the most in the graduate program? Why?

Ummm...I would not say there were courses I did not like but it was depending on teacher. And all courses are related together like create a rules, equations.

9. What channels of support (inside and outside the institution) did you use during your study?

Inside the institution, they give me a scholarship to study Master program. Also, resources and teacher they were support me too. However, outside institution, my husband was always encouraging me to complete my study. He was always pushing me to work hard and do not give up.

10. What would make you go back and continue your graduate studies?

Ummmm... If I got a job with a good salary, I will continue my studies. Also, my kids ummm I mean when they will get grow up because know I want to take care of them. Also, if I got a scholarship from the university I will continue and also, if they offer the right courses.

11. If you decided to continue, would you continue in the same program or in a different program? Why?

Of course same program, because I did bachelor in Engineering and it's difficult to study different program. I know some students did not continue they master studies

because they studied different courses because they do not have enough knowledge about the courses.

12. What difficulties did you face (inside and outside the institution) as a graduate student?

Actually, I did not find many difficulties, only the distance between, my home and the university and it was the reason of dropout.

13. What kind of support (family and institution) do you need to complete your graduate studies?

I need support from institution is to consider our situation because I'm far from the university. At least two class in my city because they have same university and one class is there.

14. What advices do you have for other graduate students that would help them complete their study?

I would encourage them to put plan from the program before a study like manage their time because in the Master program they do a lot of reading and it needs more time to read many articles. Also, they should understand that it is not an easy program but you should revise all the content you have done with it. Also, always ask the teachers if you do not understand anything.

APPENDIX E– CODING

Code	Category	Themes
Code 1: I entered higher studies to get high level of the knowledge and get good job **Code 2:** I joined graduate studies to get a better job and change my current work field **Code 3:** I joined this program to border my knowledge in education **Code 4**: I join the graduate studies because I wanted to develop my skill in education, training and delivering knowledge **Code 5:** I need to border my knowledge and it helps me to get a job.	Joined Higher Studies	Reasons of Joined Higher Studies
Code 1: There is no time to plan for the next day **Code 2:** It's hard to manage your time and you are working **Code 3:** The amount of time I needed to complete some reading **Code 4**: I'm full-time teaching.	Time	Time Difficulties
Code 1: The most coursers I did not like is that takes about theories **Code 2:** Anything that talks about creativity and making things **code 3:** I liked school evaluation because it links to sociology. **Code 4**: Math and physics were the most courses I liked. **Code 5:** liked many courses such as curriculum design.	Courses they like and did not like	Types of Courses

Code 1: The university is far away. **Code 2:** The outside difficulty of university was a location.	Location	Location of the Institution
Code 1: My family and my husband were encouraged to study. **Code 2:** My family always supported me. **Code 3:** From my family need the time and support. **Code 4**: I don't get any supports from my family. **Code 5:** There was no interaction. **Code 6:** I need support from the institution. **Code 6:** Provide me with the right resource.	Supports	Family's Support University Support
Code 1: I entered higher studies to get high level of the knowledge and get good job **Code 2:** I joined graduate studies to get a better job and change my current work field **Code 3:** I joined this program to border my knowledge in education **Code 4**: I join the graduate studies because I wanted to develop my skill in education, training and delivering knowledge **Code 5:** I need to border my knowledge and it helps me to get a job.	Content	Program's Content

Code 1: I felt disappointed. **Code 2:** I feel sad. **Code 3:** It affects my potential because…. **Code 4**: To be honest I was upset.	Emotion and Potential	Student's Emotion and Potential