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# Bridging the Gap between High School and University Education: Social, Psychological, and Environmental Challenges in Student Transition

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## ABSTRACT

The transition from high school to university can be challenging for students worldwide. It has long been recognized that students face difficulties during the transition from high school to college. In particular, the significant failure rates during the first semester of the university are frequently caused by the differences in study levels between these two educational institutes. Students who have excelled in high school may still face psychological, social, and environmental difficulties at the university level, sometimes resulting in them failing their courses. The success rate in the first year of university courses is often average or below average. There may be different perspectives amongst many stakeholders, including administrators, researchers, university students, instructors, and schoolteachers, on the causes of this gap and potential solutions. This study aims to examine the various root causes of the challenges and provide potential approaches to closing the gaps.

This paper aims to investigate the connection between high school and university education and to explore various approaches to education that conceptualize this relationship. This study will use a mixed-methods approach to look into the factors that lead to the challenges faced by first-year college students. Surveys will be used to collect quantitative data from university teachers, schoolteachers, and university students for a brief survey about the transition period between high school and university education. This will shed light on these students' perceptions and experiences during their first semester of college.

**KEYWORDS:** transition; schools; universities; psychological; social; environmental

## INTRODUCTION

Academic competency is the main goal of schools, and the curriculum and pedagogical framework are created to help pupils achieve higher grades rather than focusing on career counseling. Even if they may have received outstanding results at the end of their education, some students may not know how to choose their university program of study. As a result, individuals enroll in classes that are not in line with their true interests because of the opinions of friends and family. As a result, students making the move to college struggle to adjust to the new pedagogy and framework.

The transition from high school to university is normative around the globe, but the transition between learning in school and a university environment is significantly challenging for many reasons including different teaching/learning styles and methods, and more largely the subject contents. There is a growing discussion on how students can be supported in the transition as many universities around the world recognize the need to support their students as they enter the university learning environment, and in potentially improving the overall student experience.

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The transition from primary to secondary education is common for children worldwide. However, this transition is seen as a significant challenge due to different learning styles, teaching methods, and broader subject content. Understanding the experience of transition between school and university is crucial for all subjects, as it presents academic, personal, social, administrative, and even academic challenges. A discipline-specific approach to considering the transition may enable the process to take place more smoothly and create more transition-aware educators and learners. The transition is part of developing a learning identity, where students must adjust, including connecting pre-university and university experiences. This can be enhanced by the opportunity to form positive social relationships with other students and staff. This can begin with visits to higher education institutions and contact with current students, enabling school students to imagine what being a student would be like and continuing in the early months of university. Partnerships between schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) can be established, and sustainable partnerships between individuals across education stages supported by institutions, local authorities, and subject associations are essential. Teacher conferences organized by various departments at the university can facilitate interactions between educators at schools and universities. Extended induction periods can also be used to ease the transition.

Students face substantial social, psychological, and environmental obstacles when they move to a university, in addition to academic adaptations. Socially, they have to learn how to interact with new people, adjust to different cultural contexts, and find a place in the new atmosphere. Increased academic demands, independence, and decision-making responsibilities can psychologically cause students to feel stressed, anxious, and self-conscious. Students' motivation and mental health may suffer as a result of the difficult transition from comfortable school settings to enormous higher education institutions. Their overall adjustment may be impacted by environmental changes, such as modifications to housing arrangements, learning environments, and institutional support systems. Universities must put in place extensive support networks, such as academic advising, mental health services, and inclusive campus programs that encourage student involvement and well-being, to address these issues.

Beyond academic transition, higher education plays a pivotal role in societal and economic development. According to Human Capital Theory, education is an investment that enhances individual productivity and economic performance. It also promotes social mobility by providing disadvantaged individuals with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic status. Cultural theories, such as Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, emphasize that higher education not only provides knowledge but also enhances social power and connections. Additionally, universities serve as hubs for innovation, contributing to the advancement of the knowledge society. They also foster civic engagement, lifelong learning, and responsible citizenship, equipping individuals with the skills to navigate evolving professional landscapes.

Given the complexity of the transition from school to university and the broader significance of higher education, this research aims to explore the challenges students face during this transition and identify effective strategies to facilitate their academic and social adjustment. By analyzing existing practices and proposing improvements, this study seeks to contribute to a more seamless transition experience, ultimately enhancing student success and retention in higher education.

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To examine the social factors that pose challenges during the student transition from school to college.
2. To analyze the psychological aspects that present difficulties for students as they go from school to college.
3. To examine the environmental situations that create difficulties for students when they go from school to college.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

### Bridging the Gap between High School and University Education

The transition from high school to university education is one marked by critical moments in students'

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academic and personal development. These are severe changes in the patterns of learning and teaching and social demands students usually must encounter. Though these changes offer students significantly rewarding experiences, they tend to limit student success. More and more research has examined these processes and the future state of research, exploring the factors that affect the transition and the strategies that can be adopted to ease the process and improve educational outcomes.

**Challenges in Transition: Academic and Institutional Gaps**

Academic preparedness is often stated as one of the two main hurdles students need to navigate in the transition from high school to university. The different methods of teaching and learning in these two spaces usually leave students ill-prepared for the expectations of higher education. According to Smith, Walker, and Brown (2023), there is also a mismatch in the quantitative skills required in STEM fields, while many fail to prepare them for university-level coursework. There are also Taylor and Green (2022) who mention that curricular disjunction across education levels serves to compound this further, particularly for the technical and science-based disciplines. Moreover, the university environment could affect how students conceptualize their approach to learning. According to research conducted by Kim and Lee (2021), secondary school students' expectations about the academic rigor and independent learning required at university are often misaligned with the reality of higher education, leading to shock and stress during their first year.

Institutional practices also mitigate or aggravate the transitional challenges. Orientation programs are one of the significant avenues through which students adapt to a different academic environment. Walker and Johnson (2023) describe a standardized orientation program adopted at the University of Western Sydney and integrated peer mentoring, extended induction periods, and student handbooks. Such interventions are meant to ease the academic and social adjustment process to foster a sense of inclusion among first-year students. This is particularly critical for students who face an additional hurdle, such as first-generation university students (Carter & Rose, 2018). Research indicates that first-generational students, who tend to lack sufficient information about the expectations of high education, bear heavier transition stresses (Carter & Rose, 2018).

**Psychological and Social Dimensions of Transition**

Transitions to universities also have their psychological and social dimensions. Miller and Smith (2022) underscored that learners are under serious stress and anxiety at this time, based on not-so-understood academic expectations and social alienation. Resilience through counseling or mental health guidance could be very effective in dealing with these subjects. Another major area on which student success depends is social integration. According to Tinto's integration model, meaningful relationships with peers and faculty contribute to a student's sense of belonging and academic persistence (Johnson & Patel, 2023).

Prior expectations towards university also play a part in his or her social and emotional adjustment to university life. For instance, in a study conducted by Taylor and Green (2022), they discovered that unrealistic expectations about university life will strongly correlate with feelings of isolation and stress during the first year. The research by Kim and Lee (2021) discusses how academic workload and social environment expectations shape overall university adjustment outcomes for students. According to the authors, preparing students by creating clear expectations through active orientation programs will solve this problem.

Therefore, the more students will have opportunities to socialize during early life at university, the better it is for them. Williams and Adams (2023) describe how structured social interactions, such as orientation events and peer mentoring, are important for establishing connections among students, as well as the confidence they will provide. Such relationships foster mental well-being and can form a basis for collaboration and success in the academic setting. Furthermore, fostering emotional health in first-year students is just as much a necessity to guarantee their retention in academic studies. Psychological support systems including counseling and stress-management resources serve a similar purpose of helping navigate the stresses those students encounter (Sullivan et al., 2022).

**The Role of Collaborative Partnerships**

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Effective collaboration between secondary and tertiary education providers is an effective means of bridging the academic divide. Singh and Bhardwaj (2023) opine that such partnerships could involve activities aligning high school methodology with university expectations. For instance, joint teacher training sessions could be set up where educators share insights on curriculum design and instructional strategies. Taylor and Green (2022) corroborate such statements, arguing that cooperation among graduate schools and universities would encourage students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in college life.

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) GEES group further exemplifies collaboration in terms of transition strategies in geography and environmental sciences (Walker et al., 2023). By integrating induction periods with discipline-appropriate activities, the group has revealed the potential of specific interventions for effective transition. These partnerships also bring clarity to expectations on both dimensions - that of students and educators- thus ensuring the fulfillment of the demands of the university curriculum.

Thus, partnerships do not only limit curriculum alignment and academic support. In emphasizing the relationship that needs to be built between students and faculty, Kim and Lee (2021) highlight the importance of sustainability in these collaborations communications develop more possibilities for students to feel at ease seeking assistance as they encounter challenges during the transition to university.

**Leveraging Technology for Transition Support**

Over the past few years, technology has created great assistance to students in the transition from school to university. Potential students can make use of online portals as well as digital communities to meet other prospective students and current university attendees, thus creating a space to share experiences and alleviate their concerns. Smith et al. (2023) noted how digital tools enhance accessibility or inclusion and even give this kind of digitization relevance for students from various backgrounds. Virtual mentorships and online orientation modules serve as significant examples of how technology can help bridge the information gap between high schools and universities. In addition, students want those virtual resources to feel like they are part of the academic environment and, thus, have tutorials, discussion forums, and academic support.

On the other hand, technology has its role in enhancing students' psychological well-being. The role of mental health apps and online counseling platforms in the provision of psychological support to students is discussed by Sullivan et al. (2022); these are most applicable to students who may feel hesitant about using on-site psychological assistance.

**Discipline-Specific and Contextual Considerations**

Unlike disciplines, challenges are not common for every transition to a university. Such fields as STEM bring serious challenges to the learner, mostly based on the specific skills called for. Smith, Walker, and Brown (2023), say that targeted intervention through summer bridge programs is needed to solve the gaps in skills specific to such areas. Likewise, Umbach, Padgett, and Pascarella (2022) add that mentoring programs addressing discipline can help students understand more the academic as well as social demands within their own chosen field.

Besides variations between different disciplines, various contextual conditions relate to the size, location, or demographics of the students of the institution that affect the transition process. Roberts (2023) also adds that such universities must have varying modes of flexibility not only to house their students but also so that the support systems they provide are accessible and effective. Students such would be those whose cultural and socio-economic backgrounds differ because they are expected to face more barriers in transitioning into universities for different reasons (Singh & Bhardwaj, 2023).

**A Holistic Approach to Bridging the Gap**

Addressing the challenges of transitioning from high school to university requires a comprehensive approach that integrates academic, psychological, social, and technological measures. The Department of Education (2023) noted the importance of career counseling in high schools to help students make decisions about their

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studies at the university level. Such a combination between student interests and academic programs would lessen the chances of student's disengagement and dropout.

Roberts (2023) said that flexible teaching strategies should embrace learning styles and cultural diversities, complementing each other. Joint school-university-local authority partnerships will enhance even the best transition process as it lay out an intuitive educational continuum. Teacher conferences, joint workshops, and sector crossover initiatives could help exchange best practices among stakeholders thus enhancing the readiness of students.

**Research Design & Methodology:**This study was conducted using a descriptive survey study using a questionnaire as a research instrument to obtain data and information. The purpose of this research is to identify the gap between high school and university education. The structure of the questionnaire is designed to include questions related to social, psychological, and environmental effects based on educational profiles. A survey was distributed to various academic institutes. A total of 104 members participated in the survey. The questionnaire has been validated through a pilot study and reviewed by senior professionals to ensure its relevance and clarity.

**Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)**

- Cronbach's alpha (α), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, measures the internal consistency, or reliability, of a set of items. It is a common measure of how well the items in a questionnaire measure the same underlying construct.

| Cronbach's alpha | Internal consistency |
|---|---|
| $\alpha \geq 0.9$ | Excellent |
| $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ | Good |
| $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ | Acceptable |
| $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ | Questionable |
| $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ | Poor |
| $0.5 > \alpha$ | Unacceptable |

- The Cronbach's alpha was computed for the entire set of questions, including demographic questions, and also separately without the demographic questions. The computations were performed using IBM SPSS.

**Interpretation**: A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.880 indicates good internal consistency. This suggests that the questionnaire items are measuring the intended construct reliably.

Since Cronbach's alpha is 88%, it is considered a good value, which supports the use of the questionnaire for data collection.

The questionnaire is a reliable and effective instrument for data collection, as validated by the pilot study, expert screening, and reliability analysis.

Statistical methods have been carried out to analyze the collected data. The survey's structure was divided into three categories.

**Social effects brought about by the transition from school to HEI.**

Social effects such as challenges in being away from home, developing independence but not being responsible, parental monitoring on academics, and the impact of social media.

**1. Being away from home is challenging.**

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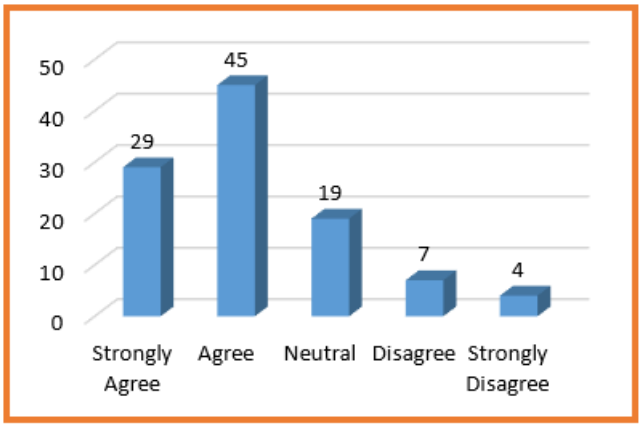
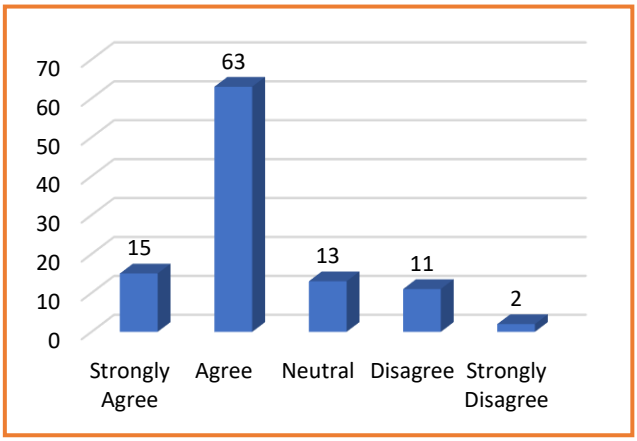
| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 29 | 28 | 28 |
| **Agree** | 45 | 43 | 71 |
| **Neutral** | 19 | 18 | 89 |
| **Disagree** | 7 | 7 | 96 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (71%) agree or strongly agree that being away from home is challenging, 18% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (11%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

**2. Students may develop independence in managing their academic work.**

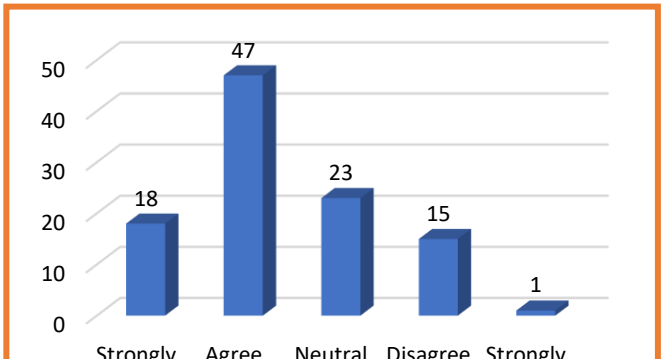
| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 15 | 14 | 14 |
| **Agree** | 63 | 61 | 75 |
| **Neutral** | 13 | 13 | 88 |
| **Disagree** | 11 | 11 | 98 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (75%) agree or strongly agree that students may develop independence in managing their academic work, 13% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (13%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

**3. Students may not develop responsible behavior for their academics.**

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 18 | 17 | 17 |
| **Agree** | 47 | 45 | 63 |



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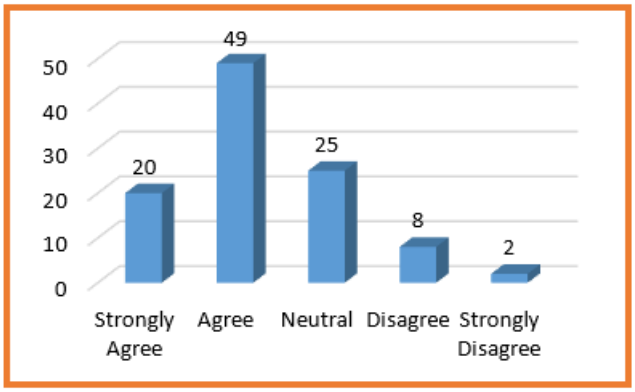
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Neutral** | 23 | 22 | 85 |
| **Disagree** | 15 | 14 | 99 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |

The majority of respondents (62%) agree or strongly agree that students may not develop responsible behavior for their academics. 22% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (15%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

**4. Decline in parental monitoring of academic performance.**

| | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 20 | 19 | 19 |
| **Agree** | 49 | 47 | 66 |
| **Neutral** | 25 | 24 | 90 |
| **Disagree** | 8 | 8 | 98 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (66%) agree or strongly agree that there is a decline in parental monitoring of academic performance. 24% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (10%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

**5. Exposure to social media and its impact on academics.**

| | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 37 | 36 | 36 |
| **Agree** | 49 | 47 | 83 |
| **Neutral** | 15 | 14 | 97 |
| **Disagree** | 3 | 3 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |

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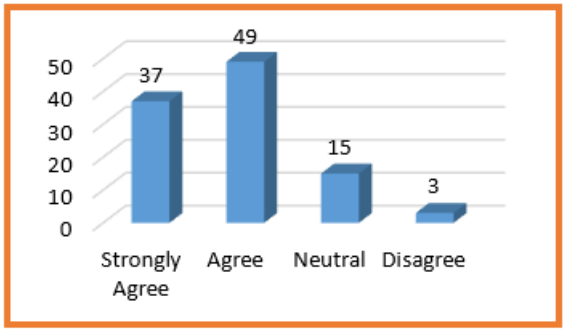



The majority of respondents (83%) agree or strongly agree that exposure to social media impacts academics. 14% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (3%) disagree with the statement.

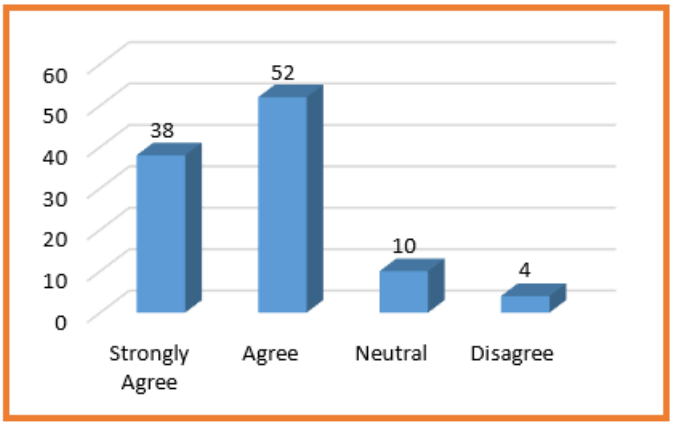
Overall impact factors of Social effects in the transition from school to HEI are observed as 71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, it is challenging for students that being away from home. Whereas 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students develop independence, 62% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students may not develop responsible behavior in academics. However, 66% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed on the decline in parental monitoring, and 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that exposure to social media impacts academics.

**II. Psychological effects brought about by the transition from school to HEI.**

**Psychological effects** such as transition in thought processes, lack of interest in studies, and achieving success.

**1. The process of transitioning from school to university has a significant impact on the students' thought processes.**

| | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 38 | 37 | 37 |
| **Agree** | 52 | 50 | 87 |
| **Neutral** | 10 | 10 | 96 |
| **Disagree** | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (87%) agree or strongly agree that the process of transitioning from school to university has a significant impact on students' thought processes. 10% of respondents feel neutral about this

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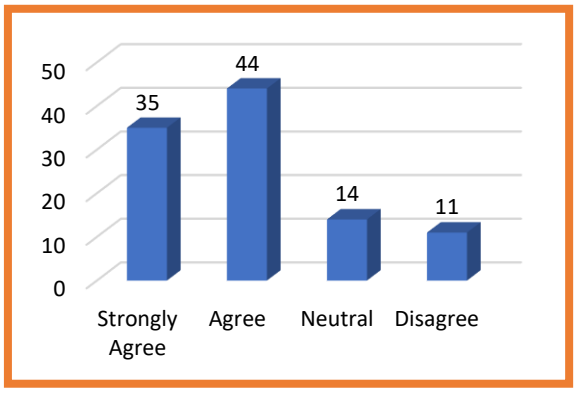
statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (4%) disagree with the statement.

**2. Students feel burdened due to different mediums of instruction.**

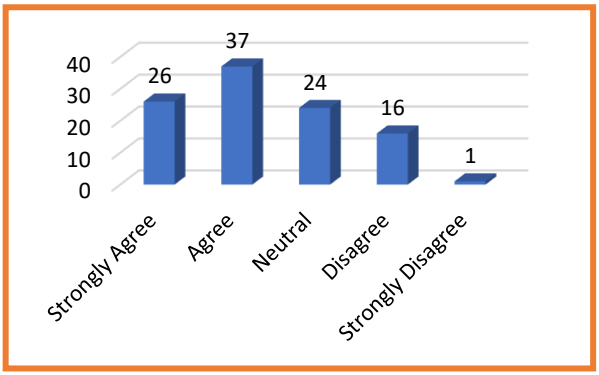
| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 35 | 34 | 34 |
| **Agree** | 44 | 42 | 76 |
| **Neutral** | 14 | 14 | 89 |
| **Disagree** | 11 | 11 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (76%) agree or strongly agree that students feel burdened due to different mediums of instruction. 14% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (11%) disagree with the statement.

**3. Lack of interest in the study due to self-assurance.**

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 26 | 25 | 25 |
| **Agree** | 37 | 36 | 61 |
| **Neutral** | 24 | 23 | 84 |
| **Disagree** | 16 | 15 | 99 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (61%) agree or strongly agree that students lack interest in studying due to self-assurance. 23% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (16%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

**4. Lack of practicing skills after school or college hours due to presumption.**

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 21 | 20 | 20 |
| **Agree** | 46 | 44 | 64 |
| **Neutral** | 29 | 28 | 92 |
| **Disagree** | 8 | 8 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |

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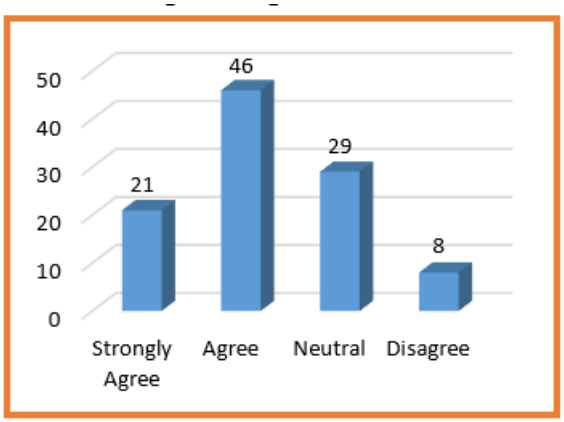
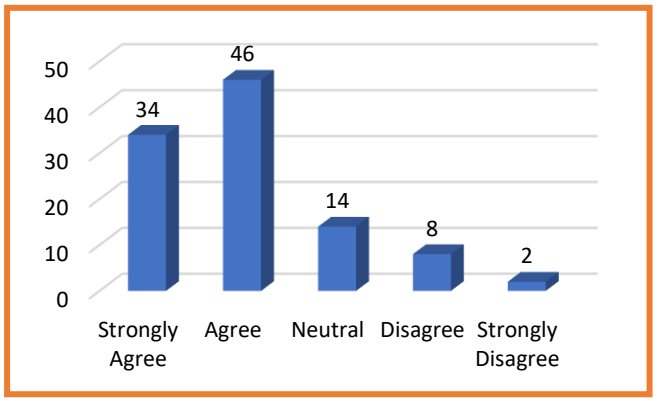



The majority of respondents (64%) agree or strongly agree that there is a lack of practicing skills after school or college hours due to presumption. 28% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (8%) disagree with the statement.

**5. Schools focus on achieving success in exams as their top priority.**

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 34 | 33 | 33 |
| **Agree** | 46 | 44 | 77 |
| **Neutral** | 14 | 14 | 90 |
| **Disagree** | 8 | 8 | 98 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (77%) agree or strongly agree that schools focus on achieving success in exams as their top priority. 14% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (10%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Overall impact factors of psychological effects in transition from school to HEI are observed as 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, the process of transitioning from school to university has a significant impact on the students' thought processes. Whereas 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students feel burdened due to different mediums of instruction, 61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that lack of interest in the study is due to self-assurance. However, 64% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed on **the** lack of practicing skills after school or college hours due to the presumption that 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that schools focus on achieving success in exams as their top priority.

**ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO HEI.**

**Environmental** effects such as medium of communication, instruction used, impact of environment on student's behavior, and variations in teaching and learning methodologies.

**1. The way concepts are understood can be influenced by the medium of communication used.**

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|

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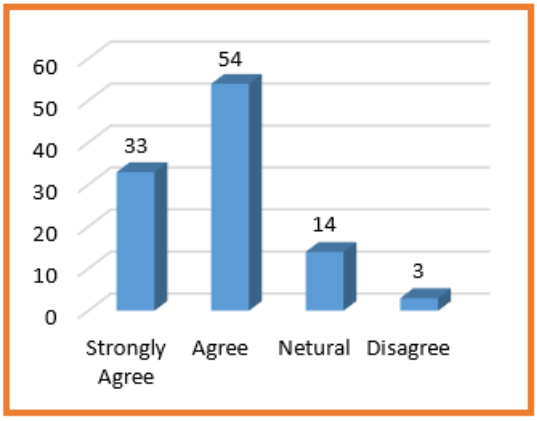
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 33 | 32 | 32 |
| **Agree** | 54 | 52 | 84 |
| **Neutral** | 14 | 14 | 97 |
| **Disagree** | 3 | 3 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |

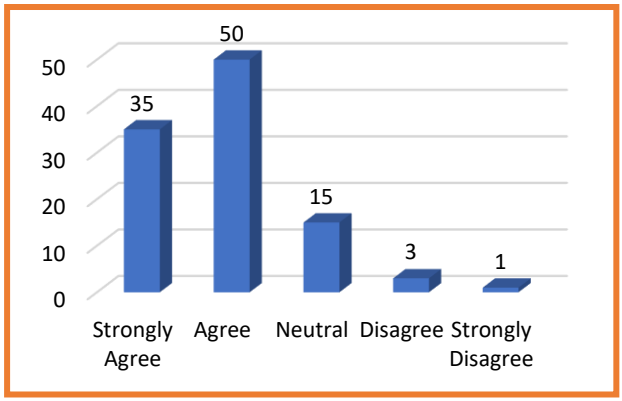



The majority of respondents (84%) agree or strongly agree that the way concepts are understood can be influenced by the medium of communication used. 14% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (3%) disagree with the statement.

**2. The way concepts are grasped can be influenced by the medium of instruction used.**

The majority of respondents (82%) agree or strongly agree that the way concepts are grasped can be influenced by the medium of instruction used. 14% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (4%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 35 | 34 | 34 |
| **Agree** | 50 | 48 | 82 |
| **Neutral** | 15 | 14 | 96 |
| **Disagree** | 3 | 3 | 99 |
| **Strongly Disagree** | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 35 | 34 | 34 |
| **Agree** | 50 | 48 | 82 |

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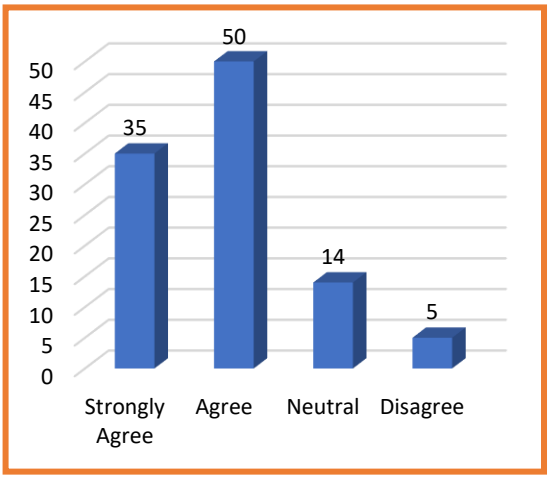
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Neutral** | 14 | 14 | 95 |
| **Disagree** | 5 | 5 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |

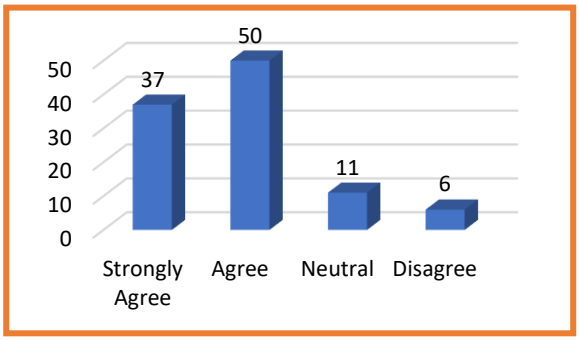
**3. Variations in teaching methodologies affect students' academic performance.**




The majority of respondents (82%) agree or strongly agree that variations in teaching methodologies affect students' academic performance. 14% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (5%) disagree with the statement.

**4. Variations in learning methodologies affect students' academic achievement.**

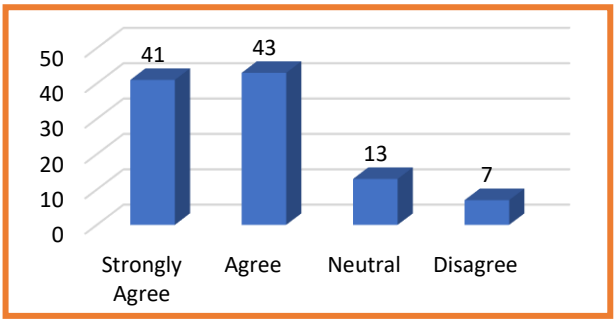
| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 37 | 36 | 36 |
| **Agree** | 50 | 48 | 84 |
| **Neutral** | 11 | 11 | 94 |
| **Disagree** | 6 | 6 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (84%) agree or strongly agree that variations in learning methodologies affect students' academic achievement. 11% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (6%) disagree with the statement.

**5. A change in environment can have an impact on a student's behavior.**

| | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strongly Agree** | 41 | 39 | 39 |
| **Agree** | 43 | 41 | 81 |
| **Neutral** | 13 | 13 | 93 |
| **Disagree** | 7 | 7 | 100 |
| **Total** | 104 | 100 | |




The majority of respondents (81%) agree or strongly agree that a change in environment can have an impact on a student's behavior. 13% of respondents feel neutral about this statement. A smaller portion of the respondents (7%) disagree with the statement.

Overall impact factors of environmental effects in transition from school to HEI are observed as 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the way concepts are understood can be influenced by the medium

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of communication used. Whereas 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the way concepts are understood can be influenced by the medium of communication used, 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the variations in teaching methodologies affect students' academic performance. However, 84% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that variations in learning methodologies affect students' academic achievement, and 81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a change in environment can have an impact on a student's behavior.

**Conclusion:**No doubt, change comes with leaving high school and entering university; it is perhaps one of the most important and complex undertakings. Both arms of this change academic and personal, are not without challenge. Students often find it difficult to progress from the almost teacher-centered and quite structured modes of the secondary system to the more rugged and student-determined variants that characterize university life. In their new environment, students have difficulty adjusting to new styles of teaching as well as their corresponding level of expectation and social setting. Most students were also not adequately prepared for some academic gaps, especially in terms of number and specific areas of study. Stress and anxieties from psychological factors compounded by social isolation further magnify the transition period. This can lead to dropouts and diminished performance in most cases specifically for first-generation students who are not even getting enough guidance. Universities must adopt a holistic approach that integrates academic support with well-structured mentorship programs, extended induction periods, and psychological support. Enhancing collaborations between secondary schools and higher education institutions is crucial for facilitating this transition, thereby ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the demands of university life.Universities need to initiate comprehensive programs of combined academic and psychological counseling with social integration. Instead, programs of orientation that include peer mentoring with clear academic expectations would prepare the students for university life much more seamlessly than just the initial introductions in the conduct of such programs. Further cooperation added to the relationship between the secondary school and university concerning curriculum understanding and teaching methods would prepare the students better for what awaits them when they reach the bated arena of higher education. This would therefore go a long way in reducing the gap between secondary and tertiary education, as it would involve communication and mutual understanding between educators from both levels. Additionally, creating a sense of belonging through social engagement is what the success of students relies on overall. Research reveals that such students feel socially integrated and supported, which makes them more likely to stay in school during their first year and later. Hence, it is essential to have a very inclusive and supportive environment, not just for academic success but also for mental and emotional well-being. In addition, institutions should leverage technology to provide accessible resources as well as virtual communities that can further enrich students' experience. Bridging the gap between high school and university requires a comprehensive approach addressing three dimensions: academic, social, and psychological. Interventions will combine targeted actions with support systems and institutional collaborations that will ease such transition and, therefore, benefit students in terms of success and well-being. This research underscores the need for a more structured and student-centered approach to bridging the gap between high school and university education, university education, ultimately contributing to higher student retention rates and improved educational outcomes.

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**Annexures / Sample Questionnaire**

**Survey form (to be filled by employees in School and HEI)**
Please note that there are no wrong answers. Kindly answer the questionnaire based on your opinion and experience. Also, be assured that the data will be kept confidential.

Please note that a question marked with an asterisk (*) is mandatory and must be answered.

**Demographic Profile:**
Name (*Optional)*: _____

**Gender ***

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Male
Female

**Age ***
20 years & below
21-25 years
26-30 years
31-35 years
36-40 years
41-45 years
46-50 years
50 years & above

**Educational Details ***
Foundation
Diploma
Bachelors
Masters
Doctorate
Post-doctorate

**Designation ***
Student at University
Teacher in School
Lecturer in College / University

**Social effects brought about by the transition from school to HEI.**

1. Being away from home is challenging.
2. Students may develop independence in managing their academic work, but that does not necessarily make them responsible for it.
3. Decline in parental monitoring of academic performance.
4. Exposure to social media and its impact on academics.

**Psychological effects brought about by the transition from school to HEI.**

5. The process of transitioning from school to university has a significant impact on the students' thought processes.
6. Students feel burdened and lack interest in studying.
7. Schools focus on achieving success in exams as their top priority.

**Environmental effects brought about by the transition from school to HEI.**

8. The way concepts are understood or grasped can be influenced by the medium of communication or instruction used.
9. Variations in teaching and learning methodologies affect students' academic performance.
10. A change in environment can have an impact on a student's behavior.