

## Analysis

# Education Success: Is Dropout A Raider?

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**SUMMARY**

“I have never let my schooling interfere with my education”, Mark Twain once said. It is really true for many people. They dropped out of their educational institutes and casted impact throughout the globe. IT giants like Gates, Jobs, Zuckerberg and many others proved their productivity becoming billionaires. Their valor to become successful overcame the humiliation of being a dropout. Only the success stories get published. No one values enormous failure stories. Dropping college can only be a wise decision if you are an exceptionally wise and smart person. For a normal person, it’s better to earn a degree. Never lose college just for the fun of exploring world. Talk to yourself, know your desires and passions well, be persistent and take calculated risks. Do proper planning and then finally decide to leave formal education. Doing the things you love is always better than struggling to work against one’s own will. In the modern times, degree is not a ticket to a high profiled job. If you are spending time in college learning almost nothing, then it’s time to think out of box. What is better for one may not be good for you. So consult yourself instead of others to take a life-turning decision. ■

**KEYWORDS**

Education Success; Professionalism; Dropout; Schooling; Intelligence

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This article is written on a computer using Windows (developed by Bill Gates and assisted by Allen). You may probably have a system designed by Apple (founder Steve Jobs). As you will like it, it might be saved into your Drop-box (co-founded by Arash Ferdowsi) and soon get shared on social media via Twitter (co-founded by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone), Facebook (CEO Mark Zuckerberg), Whatsapp (co-developed by Jan Koum) and so on. All these great contributions resulted from the creative minds of dropouts. To be true, even an article like this would have been impossible without dropouts to reach you. These technologies of dropouts have influenced the world in a great manner. Their innovations have become somehow a part of culture now.

Gates and Allen were taking classes together in high school and both entered business together and laid foundations of Traf-o-Data that was a tool for tracking the traffic flow in Seattle area. After completing high school, both separated as Gates entered Harvard and Allen moved to Washington State University. When Gates placed his first foot in Harvard as a regular student, he was already programming computers for last five years. At the age of 13, he created a computerized version of tic-tac-toe. Both Gates and Allen soon dropped out their respective schools to team up once again starting the big game – Microsoft. It was 1975 when he dropped Harvard and focused full time on Microsoft. This step proved to be a life turning decision and made him the richest man in the world with a total net worth of US \$85.6 billion (as per June 2016.) The software giant fetched every opportunity at the first glance that knocked the door. He received an honorary degree from Harvard in 2007 (1).

It was 1972 when a boy was enrolled in Reed College in Portland, Oregon but had to leave it just after a semester due to financial crisis. After dropping out, he worked as a video game designer for Atari. He then made a rucksack through India. As he returned, he started team work with high school friend Steve Wozniak. He had started to work along with his friend on their first product in his family garage. The young man was late Steve Jobs and Apple 1 was released by 1976 (2). His total net worth was \$10.2 billion at the time of his death in 2011 (3).

Mark Zuckerberg is the big name when it's about social media and is one of the youngest self-made billionaire. He is the founder of what most of us visit daily and many spend hours socializing and sharing knowledge of one's own particular interest. When Mark Elliot Zuckerberg (born 14th May, 1984) was young, he started to write software for his own fun. His teacher started to believe strongly in his capabilities. Facebook – having a very large number of users owes to Zuckerberg. However his previous classmates, the Winklevoss twins accused Zuckerberg to have their idea stolen for the website. The legal dispute

was finally put to rest in 2011 with \$65 million settlement. We see Facebook almost all blue and that's because Zuckerberg himself is red-green colorblind and blue seems for him a rich color (4).

We hear about these big names that dropped out of college but were lucky enough to find enormous success. This is as per the fact that these stories are scarce, eye-catching and inspirational. We do not come to know about the people who dropped college and stuck earning an income far less or equal to those who have professional degrees in higher education. These stories are frequent, uninteresting and dry. After all, what works for others may not work on us.

College may not be your essential requirement if you are an exceptionally smart person, highly determined and passionate or you have a one in century idea. Gates, Jobs, Zuckerberg, etc could check all the boxes. Hence they became influential entrepreneurs (though Gates and Zuckerberg stole the ideas as well) and entered with broad shoulders into high-tech world. For other high earning professions like medicine, law, finance, high level management, engineering, there lie strong barriers that can only be overcome by obtaining advanced degrees. Even a four year bachelor degree is not sufficient in many cases.

The sensational media spreading stories of drop-out millionaires miss one thing: A large portion of America's 30 million college dropouts is more likely to be unemployed and poor than the graduates (5).

Here is a provocative statistic: American youngsters in 1940s had the same likelihood of being a high school graduate as today's American has of becoming a college graduate. The question arises if America can boost college attainment in this century as fast as she increased the high school attainment rate in the previous century? Yes we can at least hope. But at the same time, we know that more American adults drop out of college than dropping out of high school (6).

In America, about 80% of whites and Asian students complete their high school in comparison to 55% African-American and Hispanic students (7).

Psychology, we know about the pleasure-pain sequence. A rat shall press a button for cheese knowing that it wants this eatable. In case a person has a strong desire to live in a bungalow, he would prefer becoming a slave of some job even if not liked. The passion to achieve something loveable can lead to run on hard paths. But when a student doesn't know of something or even unsure to achieve, why should he go through this pain sequence? Most students who are thinking to dropout don't know their future. They can't assume their destination and hence fail to receive any sort of pleasure sequence doing something whose effects can even not be imagined. Hence, not seeing any point in their efforts at college, they prefer to leave it.

At the age of 18-24 young adults are not mature enough to become accountable for laying up a pleasure

sequence that is required for the completion of degree. The hope dies at college and other doors of success seem to open more easily which sometimes do and many times do not. The professors and the university ought to set up the pleasure sequence in the classes (8).

According to an estimate, around 1.2 million students leave high school annually in United States, where high school graduation rate has declined to 22nd in the world. That is a student every 26th second or 7,000 a day. Reasons are various. Some of them are inability to meet school and college expenses, bullying, family emergencies, low grades, severe depression and mental sickness, unexpected pregnancies, sick environment, lack of freedom and boredom (9).

Just back in 2012, 1.5 million or simply 53.6% of bachelor's degree-holders were jobless or merely underemployed aged less than 25. It was the highest rate in at least 11 years. In 2000, it was only 41% (10).

According to a research in America, the financial situation of college dropouts is this that 60% of all the college dropouts received no assistance from their parents. &0% of the dropouts had no scholarship or loan support. Hence, the major reason is financial crisis. Now when they drop out, 50% of them have income under \$35,000 per annum. Hence poverty sucks long term (11).

Status dropout shows the percentage of 16-24 year olds who are not enrolled in school and thus not having a high school credential. Based on data from Central Population Survey, the status drop outs decreased from 12% in 1990 to 7% in 2013 for male students. For female students, it declined from 12% in 1990 to 10% in 2000 and decreased further to 6% in 2013.

In each year from 1990 to 2013, rate of status dropout was lower for whites than for blacks and the rate of Whites and Blacks was lower than that of Hispanics.(12)

As per Swedish Association of Local Authorities in Regions (SALAR) 31% of the students are unable to finish Swedish secondary education programs known as gymnasiet within three expected years. Students can enroll in a lot of educational programs with comprising different educational contents, some of which highlight studies preparing the students for university while others are more vocational in nature. Even then, after four years, about a quarter of students remain yet to receive their high school diplomas (13).

When someone drops college there is a probability of getting of the two reactions from the society. "That is impetuous and you have committed a blunder. Get back to college else you will regret it." Or the other reaction can be "That is really great..! Having a real experience of life values more than a piece of paper called degree."

Everyone should not think to leave college for a sound reason. You ought to stay in college if you are happy there and like the opportunities college provide. If you are awarded a scholarship in a good college, just make the best of your time and grab every opportunity developing

yourself. If you want to adopt a profession like dentist, engineer, physician, lawyer, etc then do not think of dropping out at any cost for these professions must need a degree.

You may consider dropping out of school if you are feeling miserable there and not really learning anything but just attend classes to get a degree. If you have a clear image of your desired destination and have other sources than college to develop the desired skills, it can be better to crave freedom for paving your own path. Only then you may hack a way into the work you like (14).

A person who will be successful after dropping out of college depends of a few things. These include persistence and determination, firm belief of being wildly successful, conscious knowledge of one's own character, desires, feelings and motives and most importantly, never give a shit to what other people think about you.

If you do not pay attention to other's thinking, you will certainly not ask anyone who is unaware of your story, your passion and your safety net. You yourself go for it. So if you are thinking to dropout but still asking strangers for advice or worse google it, please do not step ahead. Stay in your college, get your degree, play safe and take the risk later (15).

Why is it so that now people are adopting the dropout path? A billionaire dropout Sean Parker (former co-founder of Napster and ex-president of Facebook) throws some light on it. According to him, now when the marvelous tools of knowledge and learning are available to the whole world at the doorstep for a much cheaper rate, formal education becomes less and much less important for those who can go with the modern trends. He weighs knowledge through self-exploration multiple folds more than college study for the emergence of a new kind of entrepreneur (16). Likewise Mark Twain claimed his schooling not to have interfered with his education.

Adopt Charlie's model of doing free work to get a job you love. It helps to leave a job you hate and find a work you can take interest in. Remember that even if you graduate with a degree, you still are basically unemployed in this economy. Do free work while in school so you may develop real world skills and have a portfolio of great works to show future employer.

Do not assume in the present times that a degree will be a ticket to a job with a healthy salary plus benefits. You should not drown yourself in debts for an institution that is not making you a successful person. Digest the fact that decision of dropping out or continuing college is not a matter of life and death. If the time you are spending (actually wasting if not interested) in lecture halls can be better spent working on a startup idea, it's the time to drop out. Remember, time never comes back and you should not spend it doing something that's not appealing. When you are young, it is actually wise to take smart and calculated risks. So if you are not happy in school/college, find

a better path and think outside the box. You will not regret it (17).

But before leaving the college, ask yourself if you really are able to do something greater. Surely you may have great ideas. But there is a huge gulf between superb ideas and great actions. Have you attained the talents and abilities to help you out in real life business? Have you worked outside your imagination? This can initiate from a summer business you started mowing lawns or may be an internship you once had, but you must need to develop a solid way to express your achievements and abilities. What should be done if your child is serious to quit college?

- **Give him a knowhow of the gap between salary of graduate and dropout.**

Let the youngster who is considering quitting school know about the expanding gulf between earnings of high-school dropouts compared to high-school and college graduates. As per United States Commerce Department, the median annual income of men who leave high school was just \$13,961 in 1993. High school graduates earned \$20,870 and men with some college under belt earned \$23,435 and the college graduates earned \$32,708 per annum.

When it's about women, the gap between average salaries for high-school dropouts and college graduates was even wider, \$7,674 for the dropouts and \$26,043 for graduates.

Three in five high school graduates who were not enrolled in college were employed in comparison to just two in five recent high school dropouts.

- **Work with the staff of school.**

Parents ought to cooperate with the faculty of school and that is one of the key in improving child's experience in school. May be the student is not getting what he aspires more but is kept neglected unconsciously maybe. Perhaps the child is interested in a work-study program that allows him to improve practical knowledge in the field while continuing the school meanwhile.

- **Be supportive and show tenderness.**

Once your son/daughter has made up the mind to drop out of the institute, be very calm to him or else he might not be able to take you into trust while making any decision. You just need not to financially support him. If he lives at home, insist that he pays for the room and other personal expenses. That is important for it will keep the passion of being successful hot (18).

There are a lot of reasons for students to drop college at some level. Their degrees remain uncompleted. A student making decision to enter college based on limited information may not feel well at the institute. They may need an experience of a year to obtain further more information to let their lives shaped well.

Alternately some students experience unexpected blows at college that cause them to exit early. Failing to

complete a degree usually affect student outcomes negatively. The present high school drop-out rate is likely to harm both the students and the economy (19).

Only success stories are published and advertised, not the failure stories. Some reasons of probability of a dropout's success are.

1. Dropout lacks plan B. He neither has a degree nor a guaranteed job to stand on his own feet easily. Thus he pushes himself much harder.
2. A dropout starts a lot earlier. He may start business at 18, may fail several times and work for others gaining experience. By the time his batch mates graduate, doing their masters and entering into the real world, he already would have worked for about 4-5 years and utilizing the experience, can excel exceptionally faster.
3. A dropout has fewer loans, fears and expectations to continue with. Those doing engineering or medical certainly have higher expectations to live up to. But the dropout has one advantage. He sees out of the box more than graduates who can easily access to a job.

To be fair, dropping out the college is like falling from a tall building. It can severely hurt a lot of people. The dropouts like Gates, Jobs and Zuckerberg were successful enough to make distinctions. To them, college was no more a place to chill. They were innately creative and passionate. They had the blessing of luck factor too which we should not underestimate.

But advanced degrees are still much more invaluable for most people. A graduate degree can impact magnificently on your household income making progress in your life. A family with a professional degree holder can make up to 5x of a family with just high school certificate holder. So there are two types of dropout.

1. Those who just drop out of college to make fun of it. They may have been forced out because of unforeseen circumstances compelled to make the horrible decision ruining their lives.
2. Those who drop out to achieve a lot more success getting better opportunities. Their risk is much calculated one. They realize it soon that almost everything can be self-taught.

Now we finally come to what the richest billionaire Bill Gates say about dropping out of college. Recently he said that our main issue is not to get people into the college in first place. The problem is not getting them graduates. Not enough people are finishing what they start. About one fifth of the working age population, he noted, making it 36 million Americans have attended some college without attaining the degree.

He added that although I myself dropped out college and was lucky enough to pursue a healthy career in software, earning a degree is still a much comfortable and confirmatory path towards success (20).

Now the choice is yours. It's up to you either to continue the college to earn a credible degree or else drop it taking a calculated risk. Whatever you do, be wise and give first priority to your passion. ■

## ARTICLE INFORMATION

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