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Predicting Academic Success in Higher Education Using Machine Learning Techniques and Classification Algorithms to Support Data-Driven Counseling

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Abstract

Predicting student academic performance has become an important focus in higher education as institutions aim to improve student retention and success rates. Traditional evaluation methods often rely only on examination results or manual assessment, which may not effectively identify students who require academic support at an early stage. To address this challenge, a machine learning-based academic success prediction system is proposed to analyze various student-related factors and provide data-driven insights for counseling and academic planning. The proposed system collects and processes data related to student demographics, attendance, assignment scores, study behavior, and previous academic records. By applying classification algorithms such as Decision Trees, Random Forest, and Logistic Regression, the system predicts the likelihood of a student achieving academic success or facing academic risk. These predictions help educators and counselors identify students who may need additional guidance, mentoring, or learning support. Experimental evaluation shows that machine learning classification models can accurately predict academic outcomes and significantly assist educators in making informed decisions regarding student support and intervention programs. The system contributes to improving academic performance, reducing dropout rates, and enhancing overall educational quality through intelligent data analysis.

Keywords: Academic Success Prediction, Machine Learning in Education, Classification Algorithms, Educational Data Mining, Data-Driven Counseling, Student Performance Analytics.

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in shaping the intellectual and professional development of students. In higher education institutions, academic success is an important indicator of student progress and institutional effectiveness. Universities and colleges aim to support students in achieving strong academic outcomes, but identifying students who may face academic difficulties at an early stage remains a major challenge. Traditional evaluation methods mainly focus on examination results and overall grades, which may not fully represent a student's learning behavior or potential. In many educational institutions, student performance is monitored through assignments, internal assessments, attendance records, and semester examinations. While these indicators provide valuable information, they are often analyzed separately and manually. This makes it difficult for educators to identify hidden patterns or relationships between different factors affecting student performance. As a result, students who require additional academic guidance or counseling may not be identified in time. The proposed system focuses on

predicting academic success in higher education using machine learning techniques and classification algorithms. The system analyzes various student attributes such as attendance, academic history, assessment scores, and engagement levels to predict academic performance. The results can support educators and counselors in making data-driven decisions and providing timely academic support. By integrating predictive analytics into educational systems, institutions can implement proactive counseling strategies and personalized learning support. This approach helps improve student performance, reduce dropout rates, and enhance the overall quality of higher education through informed and data-driven decision making.

2. Review of Literature

Several researchers have explored the application of machine learning and data analytics techniques to analyze and predict student academic performance in higher education. According to Romero and Ventura (2010), educational data mining plays a significant role in discovering hidden patterns in student

data that can help improve learning outcomes. Their study highlighted that analyzing academic records and learning behaviors can assist institutions in identifying students who may require academic support. Another study conducted by Baker and Yacef (2009) examined the use of data mining techniques in educational environments to predict student success and learning difficulties. The authors emphasized that machine learning models can analyze multiple academic indicators simultaneously, allowing educators to identify patterns that influence student performance. Their research showed that predictive models can support educators in making informed academic decisions. "Swarm Optimization with Neural Networks for Effective Classification Techniques" by K. Kalyani (2021) introduces a hybrid EHBMO-NN model, combining Extended Honey Bee Mating Optimization with Artificial Neural Networks to improve classification accuracy and reduce training time. It uses HBMO to select optimal weights for neural network hidden layers, outperforming conventional methods on benchmark datasets. The accurate cancer classification is very important task for cancer treatment. Recently the informative genes are identified from the thousands of genes for correct cancer classification. The collection of microscopic Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid (DNA) microarray is attached in the solid surface. In this study, DNA microarray data is used for cancer classification. The accurate cancer classification is very important task for cancer treatment. Recently the informative genes are identified from the thousands of genes for correct cancer classification. The collection of microscopic Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid (DNA) microarray is attached in the solid surface. In this study, DNA microarray data is used for cancer classification (6). Further research by Kotsiantis *et al.* (2004) focused on the use of classification algorithms such as Decision Trees, Naïve Bayes, and Neural Networks to predict student performance. The study demonstrated that classification techniques can effectively categorize students based on their academic progress and help identify those who may be at risk of poor performance or dropout. Recent studies have also highlighted the importance of integrating predictive analytics with academic counseling systems. Ahmed and Elaraby (2014) explored the use of machine learning techniques to support early identification of struggling students. Their research indicated that predictive systems combined with academic counseling can improve student retention and provide timely interventions for students who need additional guidance.

3. Existing System

In many higher education institutions, student performance is primarily evaluated using traditional assessment methods such as examinations, assignments, and internal assessments. These evaluations mainly focus on final scores and grades, which may not fully reflect a student's learning behavior or overall academic progress. Important factors such as attendance, participation, and study habits are often not analyzed systematically. In most cases, the analysis of student performance data is carried out manually by educators or academic staff. This manual process can be time-consuming and may not effectively identify patterns or relationships between different academic factors. As a result, students who may be at risk of poor academic performance are not always recognized at an early stage. Another limitation of the existing system is the lack of predictive capabilities. Traditional systems mainly review past performance rather than forecasting future outcomes. This makes it difficult for

institutions to implement early intervention strategies or provide timely academic counseling for students who require additional support. These challenges highlight the need for a more intelligent and data-driven system to analyze student performance and predict academic success.

4. Proposed System

The proposed system focuses on predicting academic success in higher education using machine learning techniques and classification algorithms. The system collects various types of student-related data such as attendance records, assignment scores, examination results, and previous academic performance. This data is processed and analyzed to identify patterns that influence student academic outcomes. Machine learning classification algorithms are applied to the collected data to predict whether a student is likely to achieve academic success or may face academic difficulties. These predictive models help educators and academic counselors identify students who may require additional support or guidance during their studies. The system presents the analyzed results through an interactive dashboard that allows administrators and counselors to monitor student performance trends and risk indicators. By converting raw student data into meaningful insights, the platform supports data-driven decision making in academic counseling. Students and educators can use these insights to understand learning progress and take necessary actions to improve performance. By integrating machine learning with educational data analysis, the proposed system enhances early intervention strategies, improves student outcomes, and supports more effective academic guidance.

5. Experimental Result

The proposed academic success prediction system was evaluated using a dataset containing various student attributes such as attendance percentage, assignment scores, internal assessment marks, and previous academic performance. Machine learning classification algorithms were applied to analyze the dataset and predict student academic outcomes. The experimental results indicate that the system can effectively identify patterns related to student success and academic risk. The analysis revealed that factors such as regular attendance, consistent assignment performance, and higher internal assessment scores have a strong influence on academic success. Students with lower attendance and irregular academic engagement were more likely to fall into the risk category predicted by the classification models.

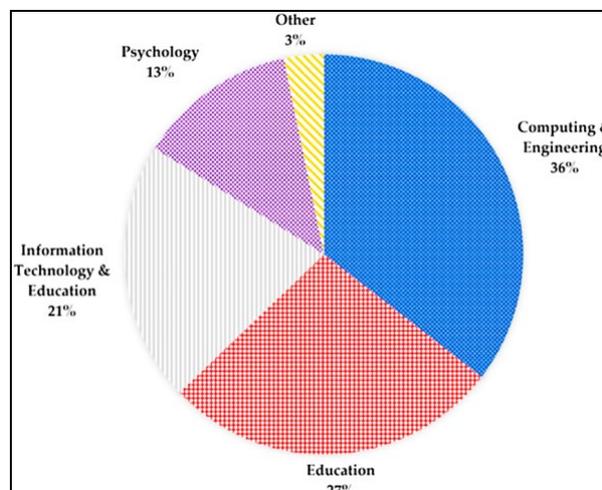


Fig 1: Student Academic Performance Distribution Predicted by the Model

The machine learning models categorized students into different performance groups such as high performance, average performance, and at-risk students. Visualization tools such as pie charts and performance graphs helped educators clearly understand the distribution of student outcomes and identify the proportion of students who may require academic support.

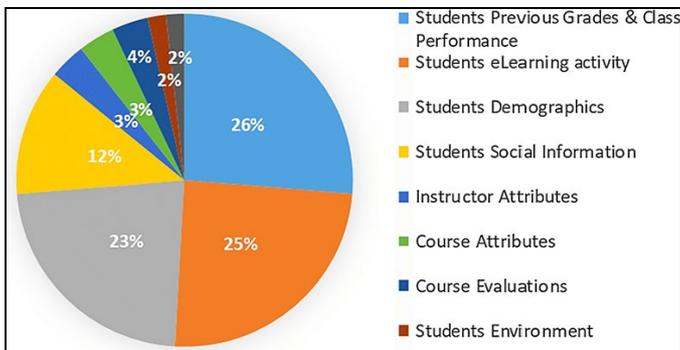


Fig 2: Factors Affecting Students' Performance in Higher Education

6. Conclusion

Predicting academic success in higher education has become increasingly important for improving student performance and reducing dropout rates. Traditional methods of evaluating student performance mainly rely on examination results and manual analysis, which may not effectively identify students who require academic support at an early stage. The proposed system introduces a machine learning-based approach to analyze student data and predict academic outcomes more efficiently. By applying classification algorithms and analyzing various student attributes such as attendance, academic records, and assessment scores, the system provides meaningful insights into student performance patterns. The interactive dashboard allows educators and academic counselors to monitor these insights and identify students who may be at risk of poor academic performance. The results of the experimental analysis show that the proposed system can assist institutions in making data-driven decisions and implementing timely academic interventions. This approach helps improve student success rates, supports personalized academic counseling, and enhances the overall quality of higher education.

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