



Socio-economic Background and Students' Poor Academic Performance in South African Universities

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ABSTRACT Higher education institutions in South Africa are plagued with challenges such as poor academic performance, retention and throughput that need some interventions. The objective of this paper was to examine students' poor socio-economic backgrounds and poor academic performance and how these affect retention and throughput rates of universities. This paper is based on a review of literature where there was a search for articles from various electronic databases. The findings show that the impediments of poor retention and low throughput facing South African higher education institutions are as a result of students who are inadequately prepared from high school. It is also revealed that the poor academic performance of students is due to their poor socio-economic background. Consequently, most students drop out from university and others take longer time to complete their degrees. It is recommended that universities establish peer academic support programs to mitigate these challenges.