EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDENT DROPOUT RATES: A PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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Abstract: This research aimed to investigate the relationship between family dynamics and dropout rates among truant students in Israel. Data was collected through a Likert scale survey distributed via email and social networks, assessing students' opinions on their family relationships. Correlation analysis revealed that students who were more involved in their family life, received stronger family support, had positive family relationships, and shared about school with their families were less likely to drop out. The implications of the findings suggest the importance of fostering strong and inclusive family relationships to mitigate dropout rates. Schools can promote family involvement through various strategies, such as parent-teacher conferences and family engagement events. Customized learning models and technology integration can also enhance student engagement and motivation. However, the study has limitations in terms of sample size, geographical focus, age range, and potential unaddressed factors. Interventions and policies can be developed to reduce dropout rates and create inclusive and supportive educational environments for all students.

Keywords: Student Dropout Rates, family relationships, family dynamics, dropout prevention, parental involvement, truant students.

Student Dropout Rates

Student dropout is a significant issue in education systems worldwide. It refers to students leaving school before completing their education, which can have long-lasting negative consequences for both individuals and society as a whole. Dropout rates vary across different countries and educational levels, but they consistently pose challenges to educational institutions, policymakers, and communities.

Statista (2022) outlines that 90 percent of the world's population had completed primary education in 2020, 66 percent had attained secondary education, and only 40 percent of the global population pursued tertiary education. Adult males are more literate than females, although females almost exclusively pursue tertiary education.

According to recent estimates, over 200 million children will be out of school in 2030. As of 2018, around 16 percent of children globally are missing primary education, and over 30 percent are lower secondary. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the highest proportions of out-of-school children worldwide.

Inequality gaps in education have widened by the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. School closures kept about 90 percent of all students out of school. Around 1.5 billion students and 630 million teachers have already been affected by the pandemic. Recent estimates predict that about 23.8 million students worldwide are at risk of not returning to education institutions, particularly students in tertiary education.

Marginalized children, minority groups, and children with disabilities suffer the most and are left behind, widening educational inequality and learning gaps.

During 2017 - 2018, 707.7 thousand students attended primary schools in Israel, 17,300 of which dropped out. The percentage of dropouts among seventh to 12th graders was 2.5% of all seventh to 12th-grade students. Of the total

number of students who dropped out in 2017 - 2018, 13.1 thousand have not succeeded enrolling in alternative education frameworks, and their share among all 7th to 12th graders was 1.7%. (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

However, it is worth noting that there are still significant numbers in the dropout rates between different populations in Israel. For example, the dropout rate among Arab students is higher than among Jewish students, and the dropout rate among students from a lower socioeconomic background than among those from a higher socioeconomic background.

According to the Association of Local Authorities in Israel, 2010 characteristics of the dropouts include: Students who are regularly absent and exhibit various attendance problems tend to drop out openly; Children and youth of low socioeconomic status; According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2009, based on data from the Ministry of Education, 18% - 26% of Arab youth (minority group) do not study; A high percentage of dropouts are boys. The percentage of dropouts among boys is twice that of dropouts among girls; Students with low self-esteem tend to drop out of school; Children from single-parent families; large families with four or more children; Families in which one parent suffers from some disability; Families where parents are low-educated.

In this article, I will discuss the effect of family relationships on dropout. The hypothesis is - the closer, more inclusive, stronger the relationship with the family, the less likely the student is to drop out.

The significance of studying the relationship between family dynamics and student dropout rates lies in its potential to inform interventions and strategies aimed at reducing dropout rates and promoting educational attainment. Understanding the influence of family relationships on a student's decision to continue their education or drop out can contribute to the development of

targeted support systems and interventions that address underlying familial factors.

Understanding the complex interplay between family dynamics and dropout rates can inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at reducing student attrition. Schools and communities should work collaboratively to promote parental involvement, enhance communication channels between families and schools, and provide support to families facing socio-economic challenges. By fostering strong and supportive family relationships, we can create an environment that encourages educational persistence and increases the chances of academic success for all students.

The family is the basic unity of society in which a person is born, develops and forms as a person. Usually, family relationships largely determine a psychiatrist's development of a person and his behavior (Hristova, 2020).

Impact of Family Relationships on Student Dropout Rates

The issue of student dropout rates has garnered significant attention from educators, researchers, and policymakers alike. Dropout rates not only affect the individual students but also have far-reaching societal and economic consequences. One crucial factor that has been identified as influential in students' decision to drop out of school is the quality of their family relationships. This literature review aims to explore the relationship between family dynamics and dropout rates among students and shed light on the key findings from relevant studies.

Multiple studies have investigated the impact of various family factors on students' likelihood of dropping out. Parental involvement, communication, support, and socio-economic status have emerged as significant predictors of dropout rates. A study by McNeal (2013) found that parental involvement in a student's education, including attending school events and monitoring homework, significantly reduced the likelihood of dropout. Positive and

supportive communication between parents and children has also been associated with lower dropout rates (Spera, 2005).

As supported by the findings from Heyne & Maynard (2016), Khasawneh (2021), Van Breda (2015), and Boualaphet & Goto (2020). These studies highlight various aspects of family influence on students' educational outcomes and provide valuable insights into the significance of family dynamics in dropout prevention.

Heyne & Maynard (2016) suggest that family responsibility plays a role in truancy, where truant students may stay at home instead of attending school due to family factors. This emphasizes the need to understand and address the underlying family issues that contribute to student absenteeism.

Khasawneh (2021) argues that family disinterest in the student's education can lead to a lack of attention to studies. When families do not prioritize or show interest in their child's academic pursuits, it can negatively impact their motivation and engagement in school, increasing the likelihood of dropout.

Van Breda's (2015) study focused on truants' perceptions of their parents' attitudes and involvement in their education. The findings indicate that parental disengagement is a significant factor in truant behavior. Students who perceive their parents to have an unfavorable attitude towards schooling are more likely to exhibit truant behavior. The study emphasizes the importance of parental interest and involvement in their children's education, as it is directly linked to educational aspirations and academic success.

Boualaphet & Goto (2020) conducted research in the Lao People's Democratic Republic to identify determinants of school dropout. Their findings highlight the positive impact of maternal education and the presence of a lower secondary school within the village on reducing dropout rates. Additionally, the study found that net household income and school quality measured by student-teacher ratio had negligible effects on dropout rates. The disadvantage faced by female students in rural areas was also identified as a significant factor.

These studies collectively emphasize the importance of family factors, including parental involvement, attitudes, educational aspirations, and maternal education, in shaping students' educational outcomes and dropout rates. Understanding and addressing these family dynamics can help inform interventions and policies aimed at reducing dropout rates and promoting educational success.

Furthermore, the socio-economic status of the family has been consistently linked to dropout rates. Students from low-income households often face additional challenges, such as limited access to resources and educational opportunities, which can increase the likelihood of dropping out (Alexander et al., 1997). Financial stress within families can also lead to diminished parental support and engagement, further exacerbating the risk of dropout.

Another critical aspect of family dynamics that impacts dropout rates is parental expectations and academic motivation. High parental expectations for academic achievement have been found to positively influence student motivation and persistence, reducing the likelihood of dropout (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Conversely, low parental expectations or lack of parental involvement in setting academic goals can contribute to disengagement and dropout (Valle et al., 2003).

The structure and stability of the family unit also play a role in dropout rates. Research suggests that students from single-parent households, particularly those without a positive father figure, may be at a higher risk of dropping out (Crosnoe, 2004). Frequent family disruptions, such as divorce or parental separation, can contribute to emotional distress and instability, negatively impacting students' academic performance and commitment to education (Amato, 2000).

My research delves into the crucial interplay between family dynamics and student dropout rates, specifically focusing on how students perceive their relationships with their families. By exploring the quality and significance of

these familial connections from the students' perspective, I aim to establish a hypothesis that highlights the inverse relationship between positive family relationships and the likelihood of dropout.

One of the primary factors influencing a student's decision to remain in school or discontinue their education is their perception of their familial relationships. When students perceive their relationships with their families as supportive, nurturing, and harmonious, they tend to experience a greater sense of belonging and emotional well-being. This positive emotional climate within the family unit fosters a conducive environment for academic growth, motivation, and resilience, which, in turn, can act as protective factors against dropout.

When students have a strong and meaningful connection with their families, they often benefit from open lines of communication, trust, and mutual understanding. These factors provide a solid support system that encourages students to seek guidance, share their challenges, and seek assistance when faced with academic or personal difficulties. The presence of such support systems can enhance students' coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills, enabling them to overcome obstacles more effectively.

Furthermore, positive family relationships contribute to the cultivation of healthy self-esteem and self-confidence in students. When students feel valued, respected, and loved within their family, they develop a positive self-image and a belief in their own abilities. This sense of self-worth translates into greater self-motivation, resilience, and a higher level of commitment towards their educational journey.

Conversely, students who perceive their familial relationships as strained, unsupportive, or lacking in emotional connection may experience higher levels of stress, isolation, and disengagement. These negative dynamics within the family unit can create a sense of emotional turmoil, undermining a student's ability to focus on their studies and navigate the challenges of school life

effectively. Consequently, students may be more prone to considering dropout as an escape from their perceived burdens or as a consequence of diminished motivation and self-belief.

A Psychological Investigation

Methodology

Population and sample: The research involves a population of truant students in Israel. The population sample includes 75 dropout students attending alternative education in Kidum Noar - Hila. Also, there is a control group that sustains 13 students that are still in formal school.

Research tools: The research data is collected with the help of a structured Likert scale survey, using Google Forms, simple to use web-based survey tool to conduct survey research, evaluations, and other data collection activities. The survey consists of 20 questions with most questions on a five to seven-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly agree". The survey aims to collect the opinion of the students regarding the relationship with their family. The survey distribution is performed using email and social networks.

Research Procedure: The research sampling is a convenience, haphazard or accidental sampling, where members of the population are chosen based on their relative ease of access. The researcher locates the study participants by prior acquaintance with them, their friends and their teachers. As mentioned previously, the researcher distributes the survey using email and social networks. Participants are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. The results of the research as well as the survey data will be available upon request upon research completion. The researcher complements the study by conducting observations at the truant officer's department as well as at the Kidum Noar - Hila department. As mentioned previously, the data is collected using the Google Forms survey system, that allows the results of the survey to be downloaded in several formats, including Excel and SPSS for result analysis.

Statistical Processing Methods: The statistical analysis is conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). SPSS Statistics is a software package used for interactive, or batched, statistical analysis (Nie, Bent & Hull, 1975). First, the researcher performs descriptive statistics to create and compare metrics for concise and easy-to-understand data. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to assist the researcher in summarizing the data collected from different measurement or evaluation tools. Subsequently, the researcher performs inferential statistics. Statistical inference or inference statistics is a process in which conclusions are drawn about the features of the sample distribution, based on an analysis of empirical information. The analysis of the information makes it possible to draw conclusions about the characteristics of the population.

Research results

The research examined several parameters related to students' family dynamics and their perceptions: family opinion about school, framily history of dropout, frequency of involvement in family life, importance of family support, importance of family relationship, satisfaction from family relationship, share about school, Family causes pain and fear of divorce:

The findings reveal that, on average, the families of students in the dropout group have a positive opinion about school and a low history of dropout, while the students in the formal school group also have positive family opinions about school and a significantly lower history of dropout. Additionally, both groups of students are involved in their family life to some extent, consider family support and relationship important, and share their school experiences with their families. However, the dropout group experiences some pain caused by their family, and both groups have some fear of their parents getting divorced, albeit to a varying degree.

Overall, the students in formal school have higher means for most of the variables, indicating that they have stronger family relationships and less negative experiences with their families compared to the students in the dropout group. These descriptive statistics support hypothesis 5, which states that a stronger and more inclusive relationship with the family is related to a lower likelihood of dropping out.

The correlation findings for the dropout group of students indicate significant relationships between various factors. The frequency of involvement in family life is positively correlated with the importance of family support, importance of family relationship, satisfaction from family relationship, and sharing about school. The importance of family support is positively correlated with the importance of family relationship, satisfaction from family relationship, and sharing about school. Additionally, the importance of family relationship is positively correlated with satisfaction from family relationship, and sharing about school is positively correlated with satisfaction from family relationship.

Overall, the correlations suggest that a stronger and more inclusive relationship with family is associated with a lower likelihood of dropping out. Specifically, students who are more involved in their family life and have stronger family support are less likely to drop out. Additionally, students who share about school with their family and have a positive relationship with them are also less likely to drop out. For students who did not drop out, family support and relationship were found to be very important, with a strong positive correlation between the two. The correlations also suggest that students who have a positive relationship with their family are more likely to share about school with them.

Implications of the research

The findings of this research align with existing literature that emphasizes the crucial role of family relationships in students' educational outcomes and dropout rates. The study provides empirical evidence that a closer,

more inclusive, and stronger relationship with the family is associated with a lower likelihood of dropping out. The results demonstrate that students who are more involved in their family life, receive stronger family support, and have positive relationships with their families are less likely to drop out. Furthermore, students who share about school with their families and maintain positive relationships with them also exhibit lower dropout rates.

The implications of these findings are significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study supports and adds empirical evidence to the existing body of literature that underscores the importance of family dynamics in influencing student educational outcomes. It reinforces the notion that a supportive and positive family environment plays a crucial role in reducing the risk of dropout and promoting academic success.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance of fostering strong and inclusive family relationships to mitigate dropout rates. Schools and educational institutions can implement strategies to promote family involvement, such as organizing parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and family engagement events. Creating opportunities for positive communication between parents, teachers, and students can enhance family-school partnerships and strengthen support networks for students. Additionally, customized learning models, incorporating technology and educational games, can enhance student engagement and motivation, reducing the likelihood of dropout.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study: The research was conducted in Israel with a small sample size of 88 students with disabilities, but only 13 from the control group did not drop out. The geographic focus was on dropout students living in the southern region of the country, and the age range was between 13 and 19. The research focused on topics related to community, contact with community-based agencies, contact with colleagues, contact with family, and self-development of students. Potential limitations include not covering other variables or factors influencing dropout rates.

Further research with larger and more diverse samples from different regions and cultural backgrounds would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between family dynamics and dropout rates.

Additionally, this study focused on the association between family relationships and dropout rates without exploring other potential contributing factors comprehensively. Future research should consider examining the interplay between family relationships and other variables, such as socio-economic status, peer relationships, and school environment, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dropout phenomenon.

Moreover, qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, can provide deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions regarding family relationships and their impact on dropout decisions. Exploring students' voices and narratives can enrich our understanding of the complexities involved in the relationship between family dynamics and dropout rates.

This study underscores the importance of strong family relationships in reducing dropout rates among students. By recognizing and addressing the role of family dynamics, schools and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and strategies to enhance family involvement, support, and communication, ultimately promoting academic persistence and success. Future research should continue to explore these factors to develop more effective interventions and policies to reduce dropout rates and create inclusive and supportive educational environments for all students.

In conclusion, my research highlights the importance of family dynamics in understanding and addressing student dropout rates. Positive family relationships, including parental involvement, support, and communication, play a crucial role in reducing dropout rates. By recognizing and addressing the underlying familial factors, targeted interventions and policies can be developed to promote educational attainment and reduce dropout rates.

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