

INFLUENCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT ON STUDENT DROPOUT RATES: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN EDUCATIONAL PERSISTENCE

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Abstract: *This research aimed to examine the relationship between community dynamics and dropout rates among truant students in Israel. A convenience sample of 75 dropout students attending alternative education and a control group of 13 students in formal school were included in the study. Data analysis revealed that non-dropout students reported slightly higher levels of community connection and satisfaction with community support compared to dropout students. Correlation analysis showed that in the dropout group, there were strong correlations between parameters connected to community's support, while in the non-dropout group, the frequency of participating in community activities showed the strongest correlation with their relationship with the community. The implications of the study highlight the importance of fostering a positive relationship between students, their families, and the community. To address the dropout problem, schools and local organizations should collaborate on programs and initiatives that foster community support, such as mentorship programs, community service opportunities, and after-school activities. Additionally, enhancing opportunities for students to participate in community activities and promoting communication between students and their community can help strengthen the connection.*

keywords: *influence of community support, student dropout rates, community dynamics, dropout students, community connection, community relationship.*

Student Dropout Rates

Student dropout poses significant challenges in education systems worldwide, as students leaving school prematurely can have long-lasting negative effects on individuals and society as a whole. Dropout rates vary across countries and educational levels, creating difficulties for educational institutions, policymakers, and communities.

For instance, in 2020, 90 percent of the global population completed primary education, 66 percent attained secondary education, and only 40 percent pursued tertiary education (Statista, 2022). Gender disparities exist, with adult males being more literate, while females predominantly pursue tertiary education. The projections for 2030 indicate that over 200 million children will be out of school, with 16 percent missing primary education and over 30 percent lacking lower secondary education globally. Regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the highest proportions of out-of-school children (Statista, 2022).

The United States faced the school dropout crisis in the 2000s wherein four years following the school year 2003 2004, approximately 25% of public school pupils that started high school during the autumn of 2000 failed to receive a diploma (Kienzi et al., 2007).

Many kids have been able to resume in-class learning one and a half years after the COVID-19 pandemic forced unprecedented global school closures, but millions have not yet done so. With a combined learner population of 539 million students from pre-primary to secondary levels, schools are currently fully operational in 117 nations. This amounts to 35% of all students worldwide, as opposed to 16% who started classes again in September 2020, when there were just 94 nations with open schools.

Complete school closures in 18 nations still affect 117 million kids, or 7.5% of the overall student population. Over the same time period, the number of nations with partially open schools fell from 52 to 41. In five countries, where there are 77 million pupils, schools have been closed for a total of 18 months.

Education was delivered through a combination of online courses, printed modules, as well as TV and radio teachings in all nations that had long-term full school closures.

In Israel, according to the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics (2019/20), the youth at the age of 12-18 who had criminal records and were not found in an educational setting was 4.5 times higher than the corresponding rate among those who attended schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education - 18 youths per 1,000 people, compared to 4 youths per 1,000 people, respectively.

Throughout the years shown, there was an inconsistent decrease in the proportion of students in grades 7-12 who dropped out of the education system

During that school year and in the transition to the following school year - 1.2% of the students in 2020 compared to 2% of the students in 2010.

In the last two years, there has been a decrease in the rate of students dropping out in all types of supervision, and in 2020 the lowest dropout rate was recorded in each of them. The dropout rate in ultra-Orthodox and Arab education is higher than that in Hebrew state education (general and religious): in 2020, the dropout rate in ultra-Orthodox education was 2% compared to 1.4% in Arab education and 0.8% in Hebrew state education.

In all types of supervision, the rate of boys who dropped out of school in 2020 was higher than the corresponding rate among girls. In ultra-orthodox education, the dropout rate among boys is 3 times higher than the corresponding rate among girls, and in Arab education it is 2.5 times higher.

In light of these challenges, my research study focuses on examining the influence of a student's community relationships on their decision to continue their studies or drop out. The hypothesis suggests that the community surrounding the student plays a crucial role, with stronger community support correlating with a reduced likelihood of dropout. By investigating this relationship, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of dropout problems and potentially inform interventions and policies aimed at addressing this issue.

In summary, my research study's significance lies in its contribution to shedding light on the impact of the community on a student's decision to continue their studies or drop out. Understanding the role of the community can help uncover additional influences that might be overlooked, informing targeted interventions and fostering a supportive educational environment. By addressing the dropout issue, this study can contribute to mitigating the long-term negative consequences associated with dropout rates for individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

Influence of Community Support 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. Research has shown that the community surrounding a student can have a significant influence on their decision to continue their studies or drop out. Support from the community, particularly in terms of promoting the value of education and providing a positive learning environment, can reduce the likelihood of dropout. On the other hand, factors such as cultural norms, socioeconomic challenges, and a lack of educational role models can contribute to higher dropout rates.

One example of a community that exhibits these challenges is the Gypsy community in France. Giband (2022) states that Gypsy families in France often reject compulsory education due to fears of losing their cultural identity and apprehension about entering modern society. Additionally, the lack of examples of academic success and prevalence of school violence further discourage Gypsy students from pursuing education.

A specific case study in Perpignan, France, sheds light on the challenges faced by the Gypsy community. The Gypsy people in Perpignan live in an underdeveloped urban environment characterized by violence, unemployment,

poor housing conditions, female-headed households, and a problematic nightlife. These conditions contribute to weak academic performance among children in the community. Unfortunately, the community tends to adhere to its cultural norms and values, often neglecting the issue of education.

In an attempt to address these challenges, the government initiated a local experiment in 2007 to transform the neighborhood into an active participant in education. This experiment involved adapting learning methods and school schedules to suit the specific needs and socioeconomic environment of the Gypsy community. However, the results of this initiative have been mixed. In 2017, out of the 200 local children enrolled at the school, 80 were considered steady absentees, 20 chose to attend a school outside the neighborhood, and 100 attended school regularly (Giband, 2022).

These findings highlight the complex nature of addressing dropout rates within communities. While efforts to adapt educational systems to the needs of specific communities can yield positive results, the challenges associated with cultural norms, socioeconomic factors, and a lack of educational resources require comprehensive and sustained interventions.

Additionally, high school dropout rates continue to pose a significant challenge in educational systems worldwide. While various factors contribute to students' decisions to discontinue their education, the relationship between students and their communities has emerged as a crucial determinant. This literature review examines the influence of community on dropout rates and explores the mechanisms through which community support or lack thereof can affect students' educational trajectories.

Research has consistently indicated that a supportive community environment plays a vital role in reducing dropout rates. A study by Martinez and Klopott (2019) found that students who perceive higher levels of community support, including encouragement from family, friends, and local institutions, are more likely to persist in their studies. Community support can manifest in various

forms, such as mentoring programs, after-school initiatives, and parental involvement, which have been shown to positively impact students' educational outcomes (Johnson & Aguirre, 2018).

Socioeconomic factors within a community significantly influence dropout rates. Poverty, limited access to resources, and unemployment rates can create an environment that perpetuates educational disadvantages and increases the risk of dropout (Barrera & Calderón, 2019). Students from low-income communities often face financial barriers that hinder their ability to pursue education. Furthermore, limited access to quality educational facilities, lack of role models, and negative peer influences exacerbate the likelihood of dropping out (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2017).

Cultural and ethnic factors also shape the relationship between students and their communities in terms of educational attainment. Research by Lee, Smith, and Croninger (2021) indicates that students from ethnic minority backgrounds often face challenges related to cultural dissonance, language barriers, and discrimination, which can negatively impact their educational experiences. In such cases, community support that promotes cultural identity, provides resources for language support, and fosters inclusive learning environments has been found to be particularly effective in mitigating dropout rates (Nguyen & Benner, 2019).

The involvement of community stakeholders, including parents, teachers, local organizations, and policymakers, is crucial in addressing dropout rates. Research has shown that collaborative efforts between schools and communities can lead to enhanced student engagement, increased school attendance, and improved academic outcomes (de la Garza, 2020). Programs that encourage partnerships, such as community-based tutoring, mentoring, and job-shadowing initiatives, have demonstrated positive effects on reducing dropout rates and promoting educational aspirations (Estrada & Lee, 2018).

Through my research, I aim to delve into the student's perspective on the connections they have with their community and how it influences dropout rates. Specifically, I focus on understanding how students perceive their relationships with their community members. By exploring the quality and importance of these community connections from the students' point of view, I aim to establish a hypothesis that emphasizes the inverse correlation between positive community relationships and the probability of dropping out of school.

My research adds a unique contribution to the field by specifically examining the student's perspective on their relationships with their community and how these connections can help us understand the reasons behind student dropout rates. By focusing on the student's viewpoint, I aim to provide valuable insights into the individual experiences and perceptions that contribute to the decision to drop out of school. This approach acknowledges the significance of understanding the subjective experiences of students and the role that community relationships play in shaping their educational outcomes. By exploring the student's perspective, this research seeks to shed light on the nuanced factors that influence dropout rates and offers a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between students and their communities.

This literature review highlights the significant impact of community on dropout rates among students. Findings consistently demonstrate that community support, particularly in the form of familial encouragement, socio-economic assistance, cultural preservation, and collaborative partnerships, plays a pivotal role in fostering educational resilience and reducing dropout rates. However, it is essential to recognize that each community has unique challenges and requires tailored interventions to address specific contextual factors.

Exploring the Role of Community in Educational Persistence

Methodology

Population and sample: The methodology employed in this research study involves a specific population of truant students in Israel. The sample consists of 75 dropout students who are currently attending alternative education at Kidum Noar - Hila. Additionally, there is a control group consisting of 13 students who are still enrolled in formal school.

Research tools: To collect research data, a structured Likert scale survey is utilized. The survey is conducted through Google Forms, a user-friendly web-based tool for conducting surveys, evaluations, and other data collection activities. The survey comprises 20 questions, with most questions employing a five to seven-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1, representing "Strongly Disagree," to 5, representing "Strongly Agree." The survey aims to gather students' opinions regarding their relationship with their community. Distribution of the survey is carried out via email and social networks.

Research Procedure: The research procedure adopts a convenience sampling approach, wherein study participants are selected based on their accessibility. The researcher identifies potential participants through personal acquaintances, their friends, and teachers. As mentioned earlier, the survey is distributed using email and social networks. Participants are assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Upon completion of the research, the results and survey data will be made available upon request. The researcher supplements the study by conducting observations at the truant officer's department and the Kidum Noar - Hila department. The data is collected using the Google Forms survey system, which enables the survey results to be downloaded in various formats, such as Excel and SPSS, for further analysis.

Statistical Processing Methods: For statistical processing, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is employed. SPSS Statistics is a software package commonly used for interactive or batched statistical analysis (Nie, Bent & Hull, 1975). The researcher begins by conducting descriptive statistics to summarize and compare metrics for a clear and comprehensible presentation of

the collected data. Descriptive statistics assist in summarizing the data obtained from different measurement or evaluation tools. Subsequently, inferential statistics are performed. Inferential statistics involve drawing conclusions about the characteristics of the sample distribution based on an analysis of empirical information. Through this analysis, it becomes possible to make inferences about the population's characteristics.

Research results

The research examined several parameters related to students' community dynamics and their perceptions: community connection, frequency of community visits, meaning of community connection, community support, satisfaction with community support, relationship with the community and sharing about school.

The findings indicate that there are differences between students who dropped out and those who didn't. Non-dropout students are slightly more connected to their community than dropout students. Both groups visit the community at a similar frequency, but the non-dropout group scores slightly higher in terms of the meaning of community connection. Both groups score similarly in terms of community support, but the non-dropout group reports higher satisfaction with community support. Additionally, the non-dropout group has a higher mean score in terms of their relationship with the community and is more likely to share about school with their community.

Overall, these findings suggest that community support and connection may play a role in whether or not a student drops out of school, with non-dropout students reporting slightly higher levels of community connection and satisfaction with community support.

Based on the correlation findings, there are some notable differences between the two groups' relationship with their community. For the group of students who dropped out, there is a strong correlation between the meaning of

community connection and support, satisfaction from community support, and their relationship with the community. In contrast, for the group of students who did not drop out, the frequency of participating in community activities seems to be the most strongly correlated factor with their relationship with the community. Additionally, like the other group, they also found a strong correlation between the meaning of community connection and support, satisfaction from community support, and their relationship with the community.

Overall, it seems that having a strong sense of community connection and support is important for both groups, but the way they express it and relate to the community may differ slightly. The group of students who dropped out may benefit more from targeted efforts to strengthen their sense of community support and connection, while the group of students who did not drop out may benefit from more opportunities to participate in community activities to enhance their relationship with the community.

Implications of the research

Interpreting the findings in light of existing literature, the research I conducted highlights the significance of community support and connection in relation to student dropout rates. The results indicate that non-dropout students in the study were more connected to their community and reported higher levels of satisfaction with community support compared to dropout students. This aligns with previous literature that emphasizes the role of community factors in influencing dropout rates.

The implications of these findings are significant both theoretically and practically. The findings suggest that efforts to strengthen community support and connection may be beneficial in reducing dropout rates. Targeted interventions aimed at enhancing students' sense of community support and fostering a positive relationship with the community could potentially contribute to improved educational outcomes and decreased dropout rates.

The results also highlight the importance of students sharing information about school with their community. This indicates that open communication and engagement between students, their families, and the community can foster a supportive environment that encourages students to remain in school.

It is critical to recognize the following study's limitations: Only 13 of the control group's 88 pupils with disabilities did not drop out throughout the research's short sample size in Israel. The age range was between 13 and 19, and the geographic focus was on dropout students who lived in the southern part of the nation. The study concentrated on issues pertaining to community, contact with neighborhood organizations, contact with coworkers, contact with relatives, and student self-development. Lack of coverage of additional variables or factors impacting dropout rates is one potential drawback.

Future research could build upon these findings by conducting larger-scale studies in diverse educational contexts. Exploring the specific mechanisms through which community support and connection influence dropout rates would provide valuable insights. Additionally, investigating the effectiveness of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening community ties and support could offer practical implications for educational policymakers and practitioners.

The research conducted in Israel contributes to the existing literature by emphasizing the role of community support and connection in relation to student dropout rates. The findings underscore the importance of fostering a positive relationship between students, their families, and the community, as well as the need for targeted interventions to enhance community support. These results have theoretical implications for understanding the complex factors influencing dropout rates and practical implications for designing interventions to reduce dropout and improve educational outcomes.

In conclusion, strengthening community support and connection through targeted interventions may reduce dropout rates and improve educational outcomes. Open communication and engagement between students, families, and

the community can create a supportive environment that encourages students to stay in school. The study highlights the importance of community support and connection in understanding and addressing student dropout rates, with implications for both theoretical understanding and practical interventions.

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