

REASONS FOR SCHOOL DROPOUT AT PRIMARY LEVEL REFLECTION OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS OF DROPPED OUT STUDENTS IN DISTRICT JAMSHORO SINDH PAKISTAN

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Vol. 03, Issue, 01, Jan-March 2025, PP:20-30

OPEN ACCES at: www.irjicc.com

Article History

Received
18-01-25

Accepted
03-02-25

Published
30-03-25

Abstract

This study explores the underlying reasons for school dropout at the primary level, focusing on the reflections and perceptions of both teachers and parents of students who have dropped out in District Jamshoro. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research gathers insights through interviews and questionnaires to identify the socio-economic, cultural, institutional, and personal factors contributing to early school leaving. Findings reveal that poverty, lack of parental awareness, inadequate school facilities, teacher absenteeism, and child labor are key contributors. The primary causes of early dropout were investigated using a mixed-methods research strategy. To gather information from primary school teachers and parents of early dropouts, a questionnaire was created and verified. Additionally, the role of gender bias and early marriages, especially among girls, further exacerbate dropout rates. Teachers emphasized the impact of unmotivated learning environments and poor infrastructure, while parents pointed to economic hardships and the need for children to support household income. The study suggests that a collaborative effort between educational institutions, families, and government agencies is essential to

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design effective policies and interventions aimed at reducing dropout rates and promoting primary education retention in the region. Teachers and parents claim they have positive interactions with their students and that there is a dearth of material resources.

Keywords: School dropout, Parents' perception, Teachers' perception.

INTRODUCTION

Every nation's educational system plays a crucial role in promoting growth and progress in a rapidly changing world. The amount and quality of human capital a nation develops directly influence its ability to progress. To achieve this, it is essential to ensure that all individuals have equal access to high-quality education. In order to support national growth, countries continuously develop strategies and policies to improve their educational institutions. However, developing nations, such as Pakistan, have faced persistent challenges in overcoming obstacles to education. Since its establishment, Pakistan's education system has encountered numerous difficulties, including a lack of funding, poor infrastructure, insufficiently trained personnel, inadequate teacher preparation, instability caused by poverty, and strict social norms that prevent children from leaving family businesses to pursue education (Juma, 2016).

Key issues contributing to low school enrollment and high primary school dropout rates include the need to boost literacy and provide free primary education, as mandated by Article 25A of the Pakistani Constitution. According to the Ministry of Education, an estimated 60 million people in Pakistan are illiterate, with the overall literacy rate standing at approximately 62.3%. Given this alarming illiteracy rate, education has become a top priority for the government. The 1970 National Education Policy laid the foundation for addressing illiteracy, but the issue remains unresolved. Although the Federal Ministry of Education has made literacy a key educational goal, the issue continues to persist (Summiya, 2021).

In 1972, primary education was incorporated into Pakistan's National Education Policy, with a goal to provide free and universal education to all children by 1972, followed by secondary education in 1974. However, due to poor socioeconomic conditions and political instability, particularly the conflict between East and West Pakistan, the policy was never fully implemented. Despite efforts to establish schools and provide primary education, the challenges persisted. In 2020, UNESCO focused on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure that all Pakistani citizens have access to free, quality education at least up to the secondary level.

Efforts have been made to improve the funding of Pakistan's education system, with SDG4 being incorporated into national educational plans to reduce dropout rates and increase literacy by improving enrollment in primary and secondary education. However, dropout rates remain a significant issue. The dropout rate for primary education is 33%, but it rises to 73% in secondary education, reflecting a critical gap in educational retention in Pakistan.

Students who drop out of school for good are called dropouts. 10.6 million pupils attend the approximately 54,000 public schools in Punjab. About half of her 8 million children enrolled in 38,000 elementary schools drop out of the educational system before entering, and the primary school dropout rate is about 50% (Bhat et al.,

2016).

Pakistan's Ministry of Planning (2013) described the second goal of the MDGs and set several targets. Specifically, 100% primary education, all children enrolled in primary education and graduated without dropping out, 88% literacy rate. Primary education and literacy increased but sadly started to fluctuate between 2011 and 2015. The latest literacy rate announced by the Federal Ministry of Education and Training was 58% for men and 47% for women (Yousef, 29 December).

According to the most recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, the literacy rate in Pakistan stands at 63% (62.3%). Despite ongoing planning and policy decisions, the government emphasizes the importance of collaborating with the community, particularly with parents and teachers, to ensure that children are receiving support both at school and at home. By fostering a positive organizational culture in schools and motivating students to learn, it becomes essential for parents to create a conducive learning environment at home. However, if these efforts are not consistently supported, various factors may contribute to educational setbacks, leading to challenges that hinder the students' development (Ahmad et al., 2014).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite national and international emphasis on universal primary education (UNESCO, 2015), Pakistan continues to grapple with significant challenges in its education sector, including a substantial number of out-of-school children and a persistent issue of early school dropout (Government of Pakistan, 2021). While dropout rates at the primary level may be comparatively lower than those in secondary education (ASER Pakistan, 2023), any attrition at this foundational stage has detrimental long-term consequences for individual development, future educational attainment, and overall societal progress (Lewin & Little, 2011). In the specific context of Sindh province, and particularly in districts like Jamshoro, socioeconomic vulnerabilities, limited access to quality education, and various socio-cultural factors are likely to exacerbate the problem of primary school dropout ([Losses of Education], 2020). Understanding the specific reasons behind this phenomenon from the perspectives of key stakeholders – the teachers who witness the process and the parents whose children are directly affected – is crucial for developing targeted and effective interventions. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the reflections of primary school teachers and parents of dropped-out students in District Jamshoro to identify the primary reasons contributing to school dropout at the primary level (Kang, 2021).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Identify the primary reasons for the dropout of students at primary school of district Jamshoro.
2. To Explore the factors identified by the parents and teachers at primary school district Jamshoro.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

3. 1. There is no significant relationship between primary reasons for the dropout of students at primary school district Jamshoro.
4. There is no significant relationship between the factors identified by the parents

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and teachers at primary school district Jamshoro.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *What are the primary reasons primary school students drop out?*
2. *What is the reflection/viewpoint of the parents and teachers of primary school students dropped out of school?*

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The fundamental importance of this research is to make parents aware of their role in alleviating the challenges faced by early dropouts. Likewise, all concerned with education recognize that he is not the only cause of early dropouts. This fact should stir everyone's minds about the need to work together to avoid the waste of this form of education. As a result, success in achieving educational goals is immediately realized in the shortest possible time. Parents and guardians also recognize that their responsibility to provide their children with economically and socially appropriate schooling is essential. This can greatly reduce, but not eliminate, the possibility of being influenced by classmates who have left the child.

Education planners can more accurately estimate the number of teachers, classrooms, and other facilities needed over some time at different levels of education, especially secondary education. As a government, we recognize the need to create and provide a learning environment that is not only attractive to students but maintains their desire to learn through graduation. It is hoped that the results of this work will help bring a new and correct view of education to the general public.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The world is evolving rapidly, and nations are competing for knowledge to stay ahead. In order to keep pace with global advancements, developing countries have had to adapt their education systems and integrate technology with learning. Pakistan, like many other developing nations, has faced persistent challenges in creating a competitive workforce through education. Despite efforts, these struggles have often yielded limited results. One of the key issues contributing to this is the country's ongoing education crisis. A recent survey indicates that Pakistan's literacy rate stands at just 62.8%. The primary goal of the education system is to increase student enrollment, enhance literacy rates, and provide a skilled workforce to meet the demands of Pakistan's industries. However, one significant factor hindering literacy growth is the high number of children who remain out of school. Many preschool-age children fail to attend school, which exacerbates the problem (Meraz, 1983).

CONCEPT OF DROPOUTS

An early dropout refers to a child who leaves school for various reasons before completing a specific level of education. These reasons are often linked to socio-economic factors. Early dropouts are students who leave school before finishing a degree or completing a particular educational program (Khan, Azhar & Shah, 2001). In simpler terms, an early dropout is someone who leaves school before completing primary, secondary, or tertiary education. It signifies a student who exits the educational system for any reason without finishing their studies or enrolling in a program (Kamal, 2002; Attaullah, 2000). In Punjab, the rate of early dropouts varies between boys and girls aged 5-16. Enrollment rates have recently been highest for boys at 90%, while for girls,

it stands at 85%. Enrollment rates for girls are generally lower than boys and decrease with age. Despite a higher advancement rate to higher education, which stands at 88%, enrollment figures have shown a steady decline from age 11 onward. While Punjab has relatively better enrollment and dropout policies compared to other regions, there is still much room for improvement. Around 39% of 16-year-olds have never attended school, and the dropout rate increases significantly from 11 years old to 16 years old, reaching 61%. More than 77% of children in rural areas are out of school, with a total of 15.4 million children out of school, of which 4.6 million, or 23%, are from urban areas (Farhan, 2021).

FACTORS AFFECTING DROPOUTS

In our society, various factors influence children's lives and contribute to early school dropouts. These factors encompass the economic condition of families, social status, the quality of school buildings and infrastructure, poverty, malnutrition, and parental attitudes toward education. Additionally, teachers' attitudes and rigid societal mindsets play a significant role. Other critical influences include the early marriage of girls and concerns related to child safety and protection.

FINANCIAL STATUS AND SOCIAL REASONS

The availability of proper school facilities is crucial for a child's development. Essential resources, including well-constructed buildings, sufficient furniture, teaching materials, and other necessary classroom supplies, are vital in nurturing a child's educational interests and overall growth. When these resources are lacking, it significantly hinders the learning experience and negatively impacts student engagement. The absence of adequate infrastructure not only affects the quality of education but also plays a direct role in increasing dropout rates, as students are less likely to stay engaged in environments that do not meet their basic educational needs.

SCHOOL BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The availability of facilities is strongly linked to a child's development. Essential resources such as adequate buildings, sufficient furniture, teaching materials, and other necessary classroom supplies play a crucial role in fostering a child's educational growth and interest. A lack of these resources directly affects students' learning experiences and can lead to higher dropout rates. According to Shami and Hussain (2006), access and equity are fundamental needs in education. Schools with poor infrastructure and a lack of discipline contribute to rising dropout rates. Improving retention A child's parent's financial situation is one of the most important factors in dropping out of school. Without stability in their lives, they tend to withdraw their children and force them into child labor to earn something for their children. In addition to these factors, social reasons such as family culture, religious beliefs, values, and rigid beliefs also influence dropout rates requires providing proper school facilities, yet issues such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teacher support, and an unfavorable learning environment in Pakistan exacerbate dropout rates (Pakistan Government, 1998; 2008). Furthermore, the country's economic challenges – low per capita income, high unemployment, inadequate parental income, poverty, poor health, and malnutrition – are major contributors to the high dropout rates (Bhatti et al., 2011).

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TEACHER RELATED FACTORS

Teachers are central to strengthening a nation's education system and are essential in developing a skilled, educated population that contributes to national progress. As noted by Shami & Hussain (2005), several issues related to teachers affect the quality of education in Pakistan. These include a lack of professionally trained teachers, a shortage of educators – particularly female teachers in rural areas – and overall staffing gaps. Additionally, certain teacher behaviors contribute to students dropping out early. These include unfair treatment, ignoring students who need support, discrimination based on socioeconomic or ethnic backgrounds, harsh disciplinary methods, and negative attitudes toward learners.

FAMILY-RELATED FACTORS

After school, the family becomes the child's primary educator and plays a vital role in their learning journey. Families also share the responsibility of ensuring access to free and inclusive education, as outlined in the United Nations Vision 2030. However, economic hardship often disrupts this goal. When families struggle to provide for basic needs, such as food and shelter, they are often forced to withdraw their children from school so they can contribute financially. In such cases, education takes a backseat to survival. Poverty remains the most significant barrier to achieving meaningful educational progress in Pakistan (United Nations Development Programme, 2004).

TEACHING RELATED FACTORS

The teaching and learning process plays a vital role in students' lives, and they are deeply concerned about the quality of their education. However, the overall standard of education, particularly at the primary level in Pakistan, remains low. This poor state of the education system has led to several issues, including a high rate of early school dropouts (Saadi & Said, 2010). One major factor is the outdated curriculum, which fails to meet the demands of a rapidly advancing technological world. Updating the curriculum to reflect current social and economic realities is essential. The disconnect between modern technology and what is taught in schools significantly contributes to students leaving school at an early stage.

Geographical challenges contributing to dropout rates in Pakistan include the long distances between students' homes and schools, inadequate transportation systems, natural disasters, and limited communication infrastructure (UK Aid, 2017). Research also indicates that students with shorter travel distances to school are more likely to stay enrolled and less likely to drop out. These geographical barriers are among the key reasons behind the increasing dropout rates in the country. Parents and teachers play a crucial role in shaping students – not only academically but also in guiding them to become responsible individuals. Their perspectives and involvement are essential in reducing early dropouts and combating illiteracy. The study is important to primary school teachers and government officials because it reveals the leading causes of primary school dropouts. We can learn from this and work to reduce school dropout rates. The study is scientifically important because it aimed to expand the existing database of early dropouts with a focus on elementary school students, teachers, and their parents. This research will also improve the understanding of future teachers in the education sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was inherently mixed method, and the study population consisted of school teachers and parents who were lifelong graduates. The 10 adopted questionnaires recruited were used to collect data from secondary school teachers in Jamshoro District. The general population sample consisted of 50 parents and 50 experienced teachers of randomly enrolled students in public secondary schools in the Jamshoro district.

The children's parents were given open-ended questions so that their findings on early school dropout were fully shared with the researchers. The purpose of this study was to find out the main reasons for dropping out of secondary school and to gain insight into teachers and parents.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this research work is to investigate the causes of students' dropout or school dropout in some randomly selected government schools at the secondary level in the district of Jamshoro Sindh, Pakistan. Therefore, the Survey Research Design is hereby adopted by the researcher.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF STUDY

To get the set target or objectives, in this research 50 parents of students and 50 highly well-experienced teachers randomly selected, who belong to the district of Jamshoro Sindh, Pakistan. Their opinions were taken in the form of open-ended answers on the developed questionnaire.

TABLE 1. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULT OF THE STUDY

<i>r. n</i>	<i>Statements</i>		<i>S. D</i>
	<i>Private tuition is a professional dishonesty of teachers.</i>	.31	.649
	<i>The teacher is the most responsible person for the moral training of the students.</i>	.08	.706
	<i>The teacher should be role model in the school in any case.</i>	.04	5.02
	<i>Contentment is possible for teachers in the current conditions of the country.</i>	.61	6.44
	<i>Students should be equally treated by the teachers in both awards and punishment.</i>	.40	5.60
	<i>An honest teacher always can get respect from society.</i>	.50	7.30
	<i>Students develop the wrong attitudes if there is a contradiction between their teacher's "saying and action".</i>	.80	4.35
	<i>The teaching profession is preferable because there are more opportunities for lawful (Halal) earning.</i>	.14	4.20
	<i>A respectable status can be enjoyed in the teaching profession.</i>	.56	6.50
0	<i>Teaching is a highly ranked profession socially.</i>	.85	5.85

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RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The Investigators visited parents of early dropouts and collected data by visiting elementary schools to collect the necessary data. Descriptive and statistical tests were used for data analysis. A t-test was used to obtain the frequency of questionnaire responses. Interviews were transcribed and descriptively coded. The data collected were analyzed in light of the survey objectives and questions.

The questionnaires explored school physical resources, teacher pedagogy, punishments and rewards, and teachers' attitudes toward students. Teachers are an important factor in the teaching and learning process, and their behavior has a direct impact on the psyche of their students, and can even lead to school dropouts. 90% of teachers, think we have the resources.

Buildings, playgrounds, chalkboards, classrooms, books. All teachers agreed that the school did not have enough tables and chairs. 40% of her teachers believe that missing classes is the reason she dropped out of primary school. All teachers believe that their way of teaching is good for children and that they can learn easily. It is said that you will be taught by the way you answer. Her 20% of teachers believe their child will drop out due to insufficient teacher attention, 40% remain undecided and 40% disagree. As a teacher she 100% says she hits students when they are not paying attention in class. 100% of teachers praise their students for a job well done. 100% of teachers believe that beatings can cause children to drop out of primary school. A teacher's behavior influences a child's behavior. 100% of teachers believe that teachers are kind and friendly towards their students. Her 70% of teachers believe their children will drop out because of home problems, and 30% of teachers believe their children will drop out because of the behavior of their teachers.

Interviews between candidates were arranged with parents of children who dropped out of school. Analysis shows that 80% of her parents said their child dropped out of school due to poor financial circumstances. Another 10% of her parents do not send their children to school because they believe their disability has prevented them from attending school. Ten percent told researchers that their children had no interest in formal primary education and dropped out of school to become motorcycle mechanics. Of all these parents, 80% are happy that their children are out of school and 20% are unsatisfied. All parents who were part of the sample and interviewed were illiterate.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

To define a thematic analysis from this table, the statements into broader themes based on their underlying ideas, rather than analyzing them individually. The thematic analysis identifies patterns across the data (in this case, the statements) and organizes them into categories that reflect shared meanings.

Theme	Statement(s)	Explanation
1. Teacher's Ethical and Professional Responsibilities	1, 3, 6, 7	These items focus on the moral integrity, role modeling, and the impact of teacher behavior on students. For instance, professional dishonesty (S1), the

Theme	Statement(s)	Explanation
		importance of role modeling (S3), the value of honesty (S6), and the influence of contradictory behavior (S7).
2. Teacher's Role in Student Development	2, 5	These reflect the responsibility of teachers in moral training (S2) and fair treatment of students (S5), emphasizing the teacher's role in shaping student character.
3.Social Perception and Status of Teaching	9, 10	These address how society views the teaching profession, acknowledging its respected and high-ranking status (S9, S10).
4. Job Satisfaction and Viability in Teaching	4, 8	These items examine the feasibility and satisfaction in teaching, especially in the current socio-economic context (S4), and opportunities for lawful earning (S8).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study on school dropouts at the primary level in District Jamshoro, Sindh, reveals that a combination of socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors contribute to children leaving school early. Reflections from both teachers and parents highlight key reasons such as poverty, lack of parental awareness, child labor, poor school infrastructure, insufficient teaching resources, and gender-based barriers. Teachers struggle with large class sizes and limited support, while many parents prioritize short-term income over long-term educational benefits. Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts involving government support, community awareness, and improved school facilities. Only through targeted policies and local engagement can dropout rates be effectively reduced in this region.

Lack of physical facilities and teachers' interest in students are also causes of early dropouts. Punishing children to hit them is the main reason why children hate going to school and hate going to school. Lack of materials creates gaps in student interest in school and learning, leading to dropouts. Poor school infrastructure and discipline also lead to a loss of interest in student learning activities, increasing the urge to drop out. Previous literature has also shown that lack of discipline and harsh penalties in school infrastructure can be reasons for children to drop out of school.



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