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Dropping out of school: A psychosocial approach

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Abstract

Introduction: School dropout is a pervasive issue with complex origins, often resulting from various forms of violence and challenges faced by students within the educational system. This article explores the multifaceted causes of school dropout and proposes a holistic approach to prevent it.

Methods: This article, structured as a comprehensive review, draws information from existing literature and research studies on school dropout. It synthesizes findings from diverse sources, including academic journals, sociological studies, and educational psychology literature. The information presented here is based on a thorough analysis and synthesis of existing knowledge in school dropouts.

Results: School dropout is not solely the student's decision but is often a consequence of prolonged exposure to subtle forms of violence and challenges within the educational environment. It can lead to various adverse outcomes, including deviant behavior and extremism.

Discussion and Conclusion: A proactive approach within the school ecosystem is crucial. Combating school dropout effectively involves improving the quality of life in schools, eliminating violence, and providing specialized support through school psychologists and assistants. Additionally, teacher training, emotional support, and bridging connections with parents from challenging backgrounds are essential components of this comprehensive strategy. By addressing these issues, schools can create a nurturing environment that minimizes the toll of violence and retains students, ultimately contributing to a more successful educational system.

Take-home message: Addressing school dropout requires a holistic approach centered on prevention. Schools must prioritize students' well-being, combat violence, and employ psychoeducational specialists. Early detection and tailored support can transform the educational experience, fostering student engagement and reducing the cost of violence suffered within schools.

Key words: aggressive behaviors; educational violence; pedagogical approach; school assistance; school dropout; student dropouts; violence.

INTRODUCTION

School dropout is a pressing concern within the educational landscape, impacting students worldwide, including Morocco. The decision of students to discontinue their education prematurely carries far-reaching consequences for their individual futures and society as a whole. This phenomenon, marked by its complexity, is influenced by many factors, ranging from the overall quality of the school experience to the subtle forms of violence that students may encounter.

Despite extensive research on school dropout, a critical research gap persists: the need to examine the dynamics within educational institutions, specifically focusing on the prevalence of various forms of violence and their potential role in contributing to dropout rates. This study seeks to address this gap and aims to shed light on the presence of violence in schools as a contributing factor to the dropout phenomenon. Through a comprehensive analysis, we aim to understand the various manifestations of violence within educational settings and their impact on students' decisions to discontinue their education prematurely [1-6]. Ultimately, this study aims to inform the development of effective preventive strategies and

initiatives to create a safe and supportive learning environment, thus reducing the prevalence of school dropout and its detrimental consequences.

METHODS

This study adopts a theoretical research approach, primarily relying on a narrative literature review. The research methodology extensively examines existing academic literature, encompassing studies, reports, and scholarly articles on school dropout, violence within educational institutions, and associated factors.

The review process is systematic, with a focus on identifying and analyzing key themes, patterns, and trends within the literature. Various databases and academic sources are consulted to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of relevant studies. The inclusion criteria for literature selection encompass studies conducted in diverse settings, with a particular emphasis on those that provide insights into the relationship between violence in schools and the dropout phenomenon.

Analyzing the selected literature involves synthesizing findings, identifying gaps in knowledge, and drawing connections between various aspects of school violence and its potential impact on students' decisions to drop out. The results of this narrative review will inform the discussion and conclusion sections, shedding light on the significance of addressing violence as a crucial factor in dropout prevention.

Overall, this theoretical study aims to contribute valuable insights and perspectives to the existing body of knowledge, ultimately guiding future research and the development of effective strategies to mitigate school dropout rates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The school dropout issue has garnered significant attention for over a decade, becoming a complex social and political concern. As prematurely leaving school carries profound consequences, it encompasses far-reaching social, economic, and psychological implications. Governments across various nations, including Morocco, have implemented anti-dropout initiatives [1].

However, a critical oversight remains regarding risk factors inherent within the school environment, teacher-student dynamics, and immediate surroundings. One notable but often overlooked contributor to school dropout is the presence of mistreatment and bullying within educational institutions [2]. Contrary to the prevailing misconception, dropout cannot be solely attributed to academic failure, learning difficulties, intellectual challenges, or adverse living conditions. This misconception places undue responsibility on the student and their family, framing dropout as a voluntary choice rather than a circumstance they endure [3].

It is essential to recognize that this perspective predominates in urban areas, diverging from rural regions of the Kingdom. In rural settings, 74% of children are engaged in work, driven by the need to financially support themselves and their families [2]. Economic constraints force these young individuals into early employment, making education a secondary consideration. Additionally, in suburban areas and specific towns in the south, early marriages further compound the challenges faced by the female population, obstructing their educational aspirations [2].

In alternative scenarios, some students engage in a conscious dropout process motivated by a perceived lack of significance in their education. This phenomenon manifests as academic demobilization, characterized by waning interest in their studies [3]. In such instances, individuals actively discontinue their schooling, prioritizing paid employment over academic pursuits. Their decision is rooted in the belief that the benefits derived from work outweigh the perceived value of continued education [3].

Nonetheless, various forms of violence, including bullying, stigmatization, the labeling of students with below-average academic performance, an unsupportive teacher attitude, a sense of impunity regarding disciplinary measures, and instances of victimization, serve as compelling factors propelling students to prematurely exit the educational system [2]. Despite the government's concerted efforts to address the issue, persistently high dropout rates underscore the inadequacy of these interventions [1].

Statistics reveal that the implemented measures predominantly concentrate on post-dropout scenarios, lacking a proactive approach and neglecting efforts to enhance the overall quality of school life. Consequently, the intended objectives have not been fully realized, highlighting the critical need for interventions prioritizing prevention and establishing a positive school environment [1].

Intervention by specialists: School psychologists and school assistance

Our proposed hypothesis contends that dropping out of school can be seen as a form of violence and aggression, aligning with the Frustrations-Aggression Theory [1]. According to this hypothesis, students experience this aggression when educational institutions lack or fail to utilize the necessary resources to retain and nurture them (see Figure 1). Essentially, premature departure from the school system is conceptualized as a manifestation of school violence directed against the individual who decides to discontinue their education. In light of these observations, the early detection and intervention in cases of violence or difficulties experienced by students in school, facilitated by psychoeducational specialists and teachers, could significantly enhance the ability to meet students' expectations and prevent school dropout. Proactively identifying

issues and targeted support and intervention can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Boredom, behavioral problems, violence, depression, and demotivation serve as indicators of distress within the school environment national statistics underscore the alarming prevalence of school dropout, which poses a substantial threat to the education of young people.

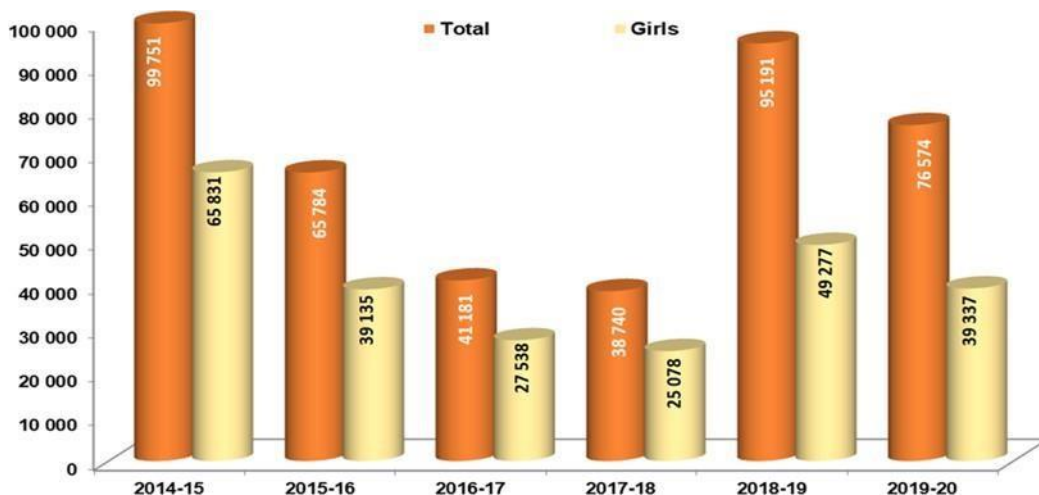


Figure 1. Conceptualization of the school dropout process in Moroccan schools across all levels, particularly in college.

Figure 2 reveals fluctuations in school dropout rates, showing non-linearity over the years. This observation characterizes school dropout as a complex and elusive phenomenon despite the concerted efforts of the Ministry of Education in Morocco. Notably, there was an increase in school dropout during the 2014-2015 school year, followed by a decrease in the subsequent year, with a significant decline between the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

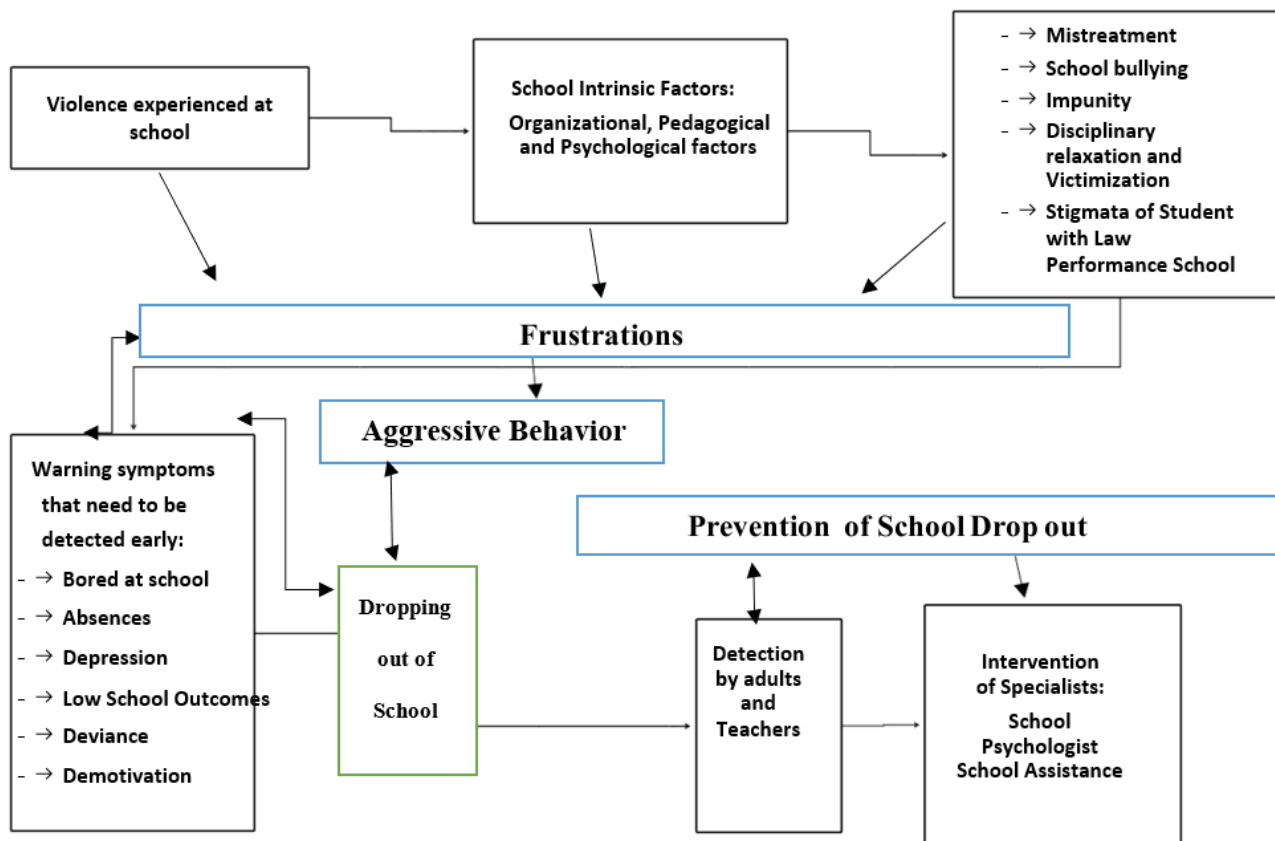


Figure 2. Dropout rates in Moroccan primary education.

However, a notable surge occurred in the 2018-2019 academic year, followed by a slight decrease in the 2019-2020 academic year. It is evident that the decline witnessed from 2015 to 2018 was substantial.

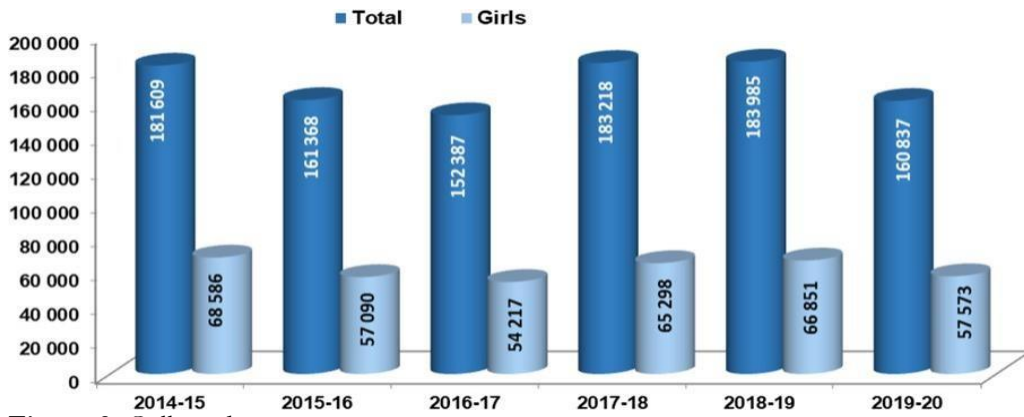


Figure 3. College dropout rates.

The graph depicted in Figure 3 illustrates a significant trend in college dropouts. In the academic year 2014-2015, there were a substantial number of dropouts, totaling 181,609, with 68,586 female students. Subsequently, there was a modest decline in dropout rates from 2015 to 2017. However, beginning in 2017 and extending to 2019, the dropout rates experienced an upward trajectory. Notably, in the academic year 2019-2020, there was a notable surge in dropouts, with 57,573 among female students and a total of 160,837.

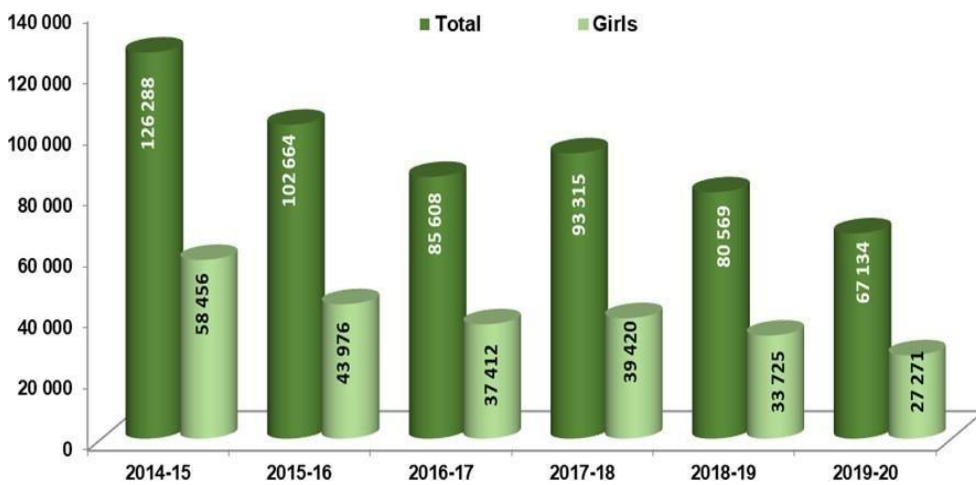


Figure 4. Secondary education dropout rates.

The graph presented in Figure 4 provides insights into dropout rates in secondary education, specifically in qualifying studies. The peak occurred in the 2014-2015 academic year, with 126,288 dropouts, including 58,456 females. Subsequently, there was a decline in these numbers in the 2015-2016 academic year, with 102,664 dropouts in total and 43,976 among female students. In the following year, 2016-2017, the numbers further decreased to 85,608 in total, with 37,412 among girls. However, the phenomenon exhibited non-linear variations, as an increase in dropout numbers was recorded in the 2017-2018 academic year, reaching a total of 93,315 and an increase among female students, totaling 39,420. Conversely, in 2018-2019, there was a shift towards a decline in dropout numbers, resulting in 80,565 total, with 33,725 among girls (Figure 4).

However, what remains intriguing is the shift in the figures recorded during the academic year 2019-2020 (see Figure 4). Notably, this period marked the onset of the pandemic, accompanied by adopting a part-time study system involving three days of study per week with reduced hours. The total enrollment for this year stands at 67,134, including 27,271 girls. This data suggests the possibility that the introduction of the three-day study week, as opposed to the conventional six days, may have contributed to meeting the expectations of students, fostering a sense of reduced stress and increased comfort in their academic lives.

Nonetheless, dropout rates are most pronounced at the college level, as highlighted by some authors [4]. Early warning signs must be detected to prevent potential student dropouts. These signs often manifest during the college years when students must adapt to a significantly different educational format than that of elementary school. Among these precursors to dropout are sensations of boredom, loss of interest [3], frequent absences, and recurring academic difficulties, which should be identified as soon as they surface.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of dropout varies among students. While not formally leaving school, some experience demobilization due to disengagement from the educational process, classifying them as passive dropouts [5] and gradually moving away from active participation in their education.

The explanations for the dropout phenomenon reveal that it results from a disconnect and lack of alignment between the student's interactions and relationships within their school and family environments. Often, conflicting values and constraints between these two spheres create turmoil for the student. In this context, dropout becomes a consequence of the socialization difficulties experienced by the student, leading to the deterioration of the link between the young person, the school, and society [6]. In other cases, leaving the school system is the culmination of a gradual loss of interest in education, often compounded by untreated factors related to the student's personality [6,7].

This dichotomy highlights internal and external risk factors specific to the child and their immediate environment. However, the emphasis should be placed on the student's struggle to adapt independently to two contradictory environments.

The process of dropping out of school is characterized as a gradual progression [7], drawing attention to the stages that lead to this behavior. Consequently, before the actual act of leaving school occurs, the child may exhibit several discernible symptoms. In classifying dropout typologies, variables related to this behavior manifest at varying intensities from one student to another. These variables encompass antisocial behavior, deviance, and even the emergence of behavioral disorders [3,8], which may escalate to extreme violence, declining academic performance [8], and depression. While commonalities exist among potential dropouts, each case remains unique.

Furthermore, students from modest socioeconomic backgrounds or facing financial hardships [9], marked by precarious living conditions and underachievement in elementary school, are more likely to adopt this behavior. Additionally, students with disabilities [10] can be considered as hidden dropouts. In other instances, characterizing dropouts by psychological traits, including indicators from tests, correlates with the risk of dropping out [11]. These traits encompass aggressive behavior disorders (school violence), delinquency, and depressive states.

Recognition of these factors underscores the credibility of the process-oriented perspective on school dropout. This conceptual framework equips psycho-educators to promptly identify psychological reactions in learners and take timely intervention measures. Importantly, it acknowledges that violence and dropout issues can stem from within the school environment rather than solely originating from external sources such as family or acquaintances. Students exhibiting such behaviors typically share a common thread of experiencing difficulties. In cases where families exert minimal control and display weak cohesion, specialized psychological and educational support becomes crucial, particularly when students may exhibit elevated levels of depression [12].

However, even disciplined students with no apparent problems may encounter learning difficulties and fail examinations. Their academic underperformance may not necessarily be attributed to mental retardation or a movement disorder. Consequently, addressing their academic progress would require a pedagogical approach tailored to their pace and cognitive capacities. Failure to implement such measures ad hoc increases the risk of dropouts [3].

Therefore, boredom and a search for meaning within the school environment may persist even among students with commendable academic performance. For these students, the school may appear as an incoherent setting, marked by limited order and organization in the classroom. Notably, despite their academic success, these individuals exhibit an elevated rate of depression [3], underscoring the impact of the school environment on their mental well-being.

These students also tend to harbor a negative perception of parental and familial emotional support in general [3]. At school, their disappointment arises from the inability to find adequate psychological support, especially from teachers or a multidisciplinary team, to bridge the emotional gap they perceive on both fronts. Conversely, manifestations of violent behavior or aggressiveness [3] can serve as indicators of an impending dropout, with recurrent aggression exhibited at higher intensities than their peers. Educational psychology highlights the connection between violence and school dropout through aggressive behavior disorders, delinquent tendencies, and depressive states [3]. Failure to recognize and address these symptoms within the school environment increases the likelihood of dropout.

Unpunished school violence and slippage contribute to student dropout

The escalation of violence within educational institutions has drawn the attention of both sociologists and educational psychologists, who have identified various forms of violence [13]. At the elementary school level, micro-violence is often witnessed among children, where harm is typically unintentional due to their age. In contrast, middle and high school environments witness more intentional and premeditated forms of violence, encompassing physical, verbal, and

psychological aspects. Alarming, statistics indicate that approximately one in three children have experienced at least one of these forms and suffered its consequences. In 2017, the Moroccan Ministry of Education initiated collaboration with UNESCO on School Life and Violence, shedding light on the prevalence of physical and verbal violence, with boys being more frequent perpetrators. This trend is particularly pronounced in college-level education, which coincides with the sensitive period of adolescence. The primary causes attributed to school violence are predominantly social and often linked to family issues [14,15].

Sanctions for deviant behavior vary depending on each school's regulations and the severity of the transgressions committed. Child aggressors displaying antisocial behavior are typically subjected to temporary exclusion, lasting from a few days to several weeks. However, research on disengaged dropouts [3] has indicated that punitive measures such as suspension, expulsion, and other disciplinary actions are ineffective. In fact, these children often become more prone to violence and repeat their offenses. This approach to discipline not only exacerbates educational backwardness but also contributes to demotivation.

Moreover, these young individuals persist in their behaviors while enduring stigmatization, feeling a deep sense of shame that prevents them from confronting the often-contemptuous gaze of their peers. The prevailing punitive model [3] perpetuates this cycle of judgment and shame, raising a critical question: could this punitive approach alone be a significant factor in the decision to drop out of school?

In many instances, students are left to face school violence, whether psychological, physical, or verbal, on their own. Repeated attacks on students, coupled with their eventual resignation, contribute to an ongoing cycle of harassment. The entire class may align against the targeted student, creating an environment where the school atmosphere deteriorates, and the victim endures daily harassment, cyberbullying, and even sexual harassment [16].

To illustrate one of many scenarios within the school context, classmates may subject a student to relentless harassment. Additionally, violence endured by students may not always be reported to the administration by adults, resulting in no disciplinary actions taken against the perpetrators of mistreatment.

Beyond the school premises, students may become subjects of mockery and face the risk of collective aggression by their peers. Physical assaults may occur in various locations, including locker rooms, hallways, yards, transportation, or even in the school cafeteria. The student may endure pushing, beating, and mistreatment from others.

Harassers, recognizing the harm inflicted on their victims, often employ covert tactics to avoid the vigilance of adults. Therefore, it becomes imperative for schools to have an anti-bullying policy [17] in place, coupled with the quality of the policy's content [18], to effectively prevent victimization.

In most cases, victims of harassment choose to endure their suffering in silence rather than reporting it to their parents. They fear parental rejection, damage to their pride, and a potential blow to their self-esteem. However, clinical signs [17,19], such as sleep difficulties, bedwetting, headaches, stomachaches, neck or back pain, can alert parents or loved ones to potential harassment. In addition to physical signs like strangulation, bloodshot eyes, and bruises, children may display other indicators both at school and at home. At school, their academic performance may significantly decline. The child may cease to complete homework, arrive without necessary materials, and pretend to have forgotten them when, in reality, they are unusable due to aggression. These conditions greatly affect concentration levels, leading to a considerable drop in performance. Anxiety and psychosomatic problems [17] may poison the student's memory as they anticipate further bullying.

At home, the child may exhibit irritability and an excessive fixation on video games or their phone. Other anxiety-related somatic symptoms, such as sleep or eating disorders, episodes of crying, and depressive tendencies [20], may emerge in children. These signs should be regarded as warning signals. Consequently, many children attempt to escape these difficulties by avoiding the situation, resulting in accumulative delays and absences.

In the short term, the consequences of this violence can hinder a student's intellectual development and academic success. Over time, this discomfort can lead many children to drop out. In the long term, depressive tendencies [20] may manifest in some, along with an inability to engage socially and even suicidal tendencies [19,21]. When a child is placed in an institution that recognizes their symptoms and facilitates genuine communication and support between the teacher [16] and the psycho-pedagogical team, they can be salvaged.

A stigmatizing school environment and stereotypes surrounding school failure can constitute significant forms of violence against students

The deterioration of academic performance is frequently cited as a common characteristic of dropouts and one of the most potent predictors, mainly when it occurs early [3,11,22,23]. Students facing academic challenges often find themselves condemned both at school and at home, with little effort made to understand the underlying causes of their academic struggles.

Children with lower academic achievement can experience stigmatization [17], labeling, and relegation to the bottom ranks within the school setting. This often occurs when teachers prioritize their attention toward studious and disciplined students, who frequently occupy the front rows of the classroom.

At home, students at risk of dropping out often encounter judgment from parents and relatives who equate school failure with failure in life. For parents, their child's academic struggles can challenge their perception of being good parents, leading to heightened anxiety and exaggerated reactions. Instead of engaging constructively with the school and relevant stakeholders or providing encouragement, some parents exacerbate the situation by perpetuating conflicts and continually demeaning and blaming their children.

The combined impact of parental and school-related abuse can ultimately disorient the child. Consequently, for a young person who perceives themselves as socially insignificant or useless, dropping out may be seen as an act of rebellion or a quest for meaning and identity elsewhere, potentially leading to delinquency [3] and extremism. Psychologically, the uncertainty about the dropout's future can manifest as emotional distress, which some may attempt to cope with through avoidance or substance abuse [3] like drugs or alcohol.

A disruption in education or a lack of academic achievement can severely jeopardize a young person's prospects for professional integration, social status, identity, and future autonomy. As a result, dropouts face heightened challenges in striving for professional stability. Without strong qualifications or diplomas, they often find themselves in precarious employment situations, uncertain about their future. In Morocco, this contributes to the prolonged dependence of youth on their family structures, with a substantial 82% of young individuals still residing with at least one parent, even into adulthood.

In some cases, the label of "dropout" not only identifies the student as someone who left school prematurely but also as a problematic individual. This social representation, or stereotype, vividly illustrates the damaging impact of stigma within schools. Conversely, students perceived as problematic may receive social labels that push them towards a deviant path. Similarly, categorizing students based on cognitive performance becomes a significant risk factor for school dropout.

Frequently, students are classified as either academically strong or weak. These labels can persist, with children internalizing and identifying with the given label within the school environment. The degree of acceptance of these labels often depends on their frequency and the source's authority. Unintentionally, teachers may contribute to reinforcing these distinctions by consistently selecting only high-achieving students for various activities. Consequently, the public nature of labeling perpetuates its institutionalization, further increasing the dropout risk. Raising awareness among teachers about the necessity to avoid labeling, especially through training [20], is crucial.

For some girls, early pregnancies often result in dropping out [6,24]. This is why the government has implemented policies to facilitate their return to education and training. In Morocco, concrete and immediate emergency plans were initiated by the government in May 2018 to address the issue of school dropouts.

Regarding safety, the social consequences of dropping out can be substantial. On one hand, idleness resulting from leaving school may contribute to increased social violence and risky behavior. On the other hand, out-of-school students are twice as likely to face unemployment, engage in delinquent activities such as theft, resort to a life of crime, and use drugs [9]. In certain cases, dropping out is linked to an elevated risk of suicide [19,21], while in other instances, these young individuals may become victims of acts of extremism and radicalization [7].

The "Pygmalion Effect": Impact of teacher expectations on student progress

As elucidated by numerous authors [25], the Pygmalion effect elucidates the interplay between a teacher's expectations and students' academic performance. When a teacher maintains a positive outlook, particularly a positive a priori, students tend to be more motivated and achieve better results. Conversely, if a teacher holds negative preconceptions about a student or their class, it can harm academic performance, potentially decreasing their achievements. Often, this influence may go unnoticed by the teacher, making it imperative to be particularly attuned to the teacher's perception and its impact on a child's behavior within the educational realm.

Neuroscience advances support lifelong learning [26], contingent on the learner's self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation. The human brain exhibits plasticity, continuing to develop throughout one's life for learning [26]. It suggests that students inherently possess the potential for high academic performance, provided their environment, school, and education foster their development and enhance their latent capabilities.

In this context, examining factors contributing to disparities in social achievements and educational outcomes, particularly among children, has been a topic of interest in social psychology. Debates have revolved around the relative impact of heredity versus environment as determining factors for success. Studies have shown that the environment is crucial to real-world success [27]. Specifically, a child raised in a nurturing environment with balanced parental and familial support is more likely to succeed than a child whose parents have relinquished their involvement, especially when the school does not sufficiently assume the role of education and guidance. Similarly, exposing children to diverse leisure activities and fostering open, attentive communication can contribute to their success. Paradoxically, an educational deficit can hinder a child's development and cognitive abilities, even if they are intellectually gifted.

Teachers may ponder several questions: Beyond academic education, does the student experience a quality of life and opportunities for personal growth and educational enrichment through sports and other activities?

Dropout as an aggressive behavior stemming from student frustration

In summary, considering the elements discussed above, it is important to confirm the hypothesis that a young dropout is not solely responsible for their decision to leave school. Various factors, including subtle forms of violence such as harassment, criticism, and stigmatization related to educational difficulties, may gradually contribute to their choice to drop out. The act of dropping out can be seen as a manifestation of aggressive behavior, a consequence of the accumulated frustrations (Frustrations-Aggression Theory [1]) experienced by the student throughout their educational journey.

Numerous studies underscore a significant correlation between school dropout and experiences of violence [10,17]. This underscores a gap in the prevailing perception of the phenomenon, as some attribute the issue more to the student and their family.

The experience of dropping out may vary among students, with some being compelled by external factors while others actively and voluntarily choose to discontinue their education. For some, leaving school early is perceived as a rational decision, considering the cost-risk-benefit dynamics, especially when they do not find meaning in their academic pursuits.

However, regardless of the origins and sources of this phenomenon, it unfolds within the educational framework. Therefore, engaging students exhibiting risky behaviors or underlying, and apparent difficulties is crucial. On the other hand, a preventative and intervention system addressing violence and school dropout in Morocco can be implemented proactively before the actual act of dropping out occurs.

Implementing a comprehensive anti-dropout prevention strategy: Ecosystem-level school transformation

To address the pressing issue of school dropout, schools must regain their central role in education and student development. State-of-the-art teacher training and cultivating a caring attitude [28] toward students is paramount. These efforts are essential to rectify educational deficiencies through early detection and tailored guidance for each student.

Prevention strategies should encompass the involvement of the psychoeducational team and parents. Research on dropout rates [6] has confirmed that peer mentoring is one of the most cost-effective tools for dropout prevention. Additionally, implementing disciplinary measures to combat school harassment [17] and adjusting teaching hours to align with children's psychomotor abilities are fundamental norms that need integration into the Moroccan educational system to eradicate dropout rates.

However, these measures should not infringe upon the crucial role of teachers or diminish their authority and expectations. Teachers are indispensable linchpins in the educational chain within the school environment. Consequently, teacher motivation plays a pivotal role and is necessary for student learning in school [29].

To support these efforts, school principals must establish and enforce rules and procedures to manage the school environment effectively. Simultaneously, they should remain attentive to the needs of their staff, particularly teachers, and strive to improve staff management.

Prioritizing the well-being of teachers within educational settings is crucial. Enhancing their quality of life, including autonomy, attentive listening, and adequate compensation, would positively affect their performance. Teacher training [10,28] should be given priority and tailored to meet the specific needs of educators. A teacher who lacks knowledge of motivational pedagogy and child or adolescent psychology may struggle to effectively manage their classroom or address some students' learning or behavioral difficulties. Teacher training should be scheduled annually or at the beginning of each school year, guided by an analysis of the needs of educators. Sharing skills and expertise could draw inspiration from successful foreign educational models spanning preschool, primary, and secondary schools.

Educating teachers about adopting the appropriate attitude toward students at different stages of their academic journey, from their first day in school to adolescence, requires benevolence and social capital investments by teachers [6,30]. Studies have highlighted the significance of teacher support [31] during dropout and in achieving student success [32]. Positive relationships between students and their teachers [29,31] promote student well-being and learning. Conversely, a correlation exists between school dropout and antisocial behavior [12], particularly in a classroom climate with difficulty in teacher-student relationships [12].

Hence, a careful selection process for teachers becomes imperative. Recruiters should consider essential personality traits such as emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness [33], along with an awareness of the Big Five [34] personality traits when evaluating potential educators. However, it is equally crucial for students to show respect and courtesy toward their teachers. In cases of disciplinary issues within the classroom, administrators must apply appropriate disciplinary measures [10] to curtail misconduct within the institution, upholding the teacher's role. Regardless of the actor or sector involved, whether teacher or student, in the private or public sphere, impunity leads to victimization and fosters an environment unsuitable for teaching and the performance of individuals [35]. In the same vein, addressing school deficiencies and implementing an anti-bullying policy [17] would necessitate deploying human resources and tools to support students facing difficulties.

While well-informed teachers are responsible for identifying students facing challenges, it is crucial to acknowledge that the root cause of declining academic performance may lie elsewhere. In this regard, students' learning difficulties often

require teachers to reevaluate their pedagogical approach, their relationship with students [29], and the curriculum design while also considering the psychological component of the student. Other factors may be at play, necessitating an exploration of barriers to comprehension and knowledge acquisition. As risk factors can vary based on a student's personality and character, it falls upon the school community to identify early indicators and tailor interventions while recognizing the unique qualities of each student.

For this reason, a multidisciplinary team comprising teachers, school assistants, and school psychologists should investigate the primary sources of difficulties, including motor skills, information processing, memory, and attention. A thorough assessment is imperative, whether the challenges manifest as comprehension issues, attention deficits, concentration problems, memory lapses, or other difficulties. These difficulties may sometimes be exacerbated within the school environment due to noise, disruptions, or feelings of suffocation.

Furthermore, subject difficulty and an overloaded curriculum can genuinely impede understanding. In other cases, students may grapple with severe learning problems such as listening difficulties or dyslexia, aggressive behavior disorders (violence), delinquent tendencies, and depressive states. When detected within a school, these symptoms should be handled with care, as they can serve as precursors to school dropout [11]. Identifying the source of the problem, rather than resorting to false judgments or stigmatization, is crucial. In this regard, there is a correlation between low academic performance and school harassment, mistreatment of students [17], absenteeism, and concentration difficulties. Recent studies [28] underscore the significance of teachers' caring attitudes and quality of life in maintaining student engagement, influencing classroom performance, and shaping dropout decisions [36].

In addition to the challenges observed within the school environment, external factors related to students' socioeconomic background also play a significant role. The institution often accommodates students from disadvantaged backgrounds who face barriers to their educational journey due to recurring setbacks. Sociological research [9] has emphasized the link between socioeconomic background and academic outcomes. According to investigations [37], academic delays and premature school dropout tend to be more prevalent and pronounced among students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

In this context, some families [12] may struggle with dysfunction and fail to provide their children with economic and financial support, among other reasons. In most cases, the precariousness and instability of their circumstances can affect their children's academic progress.

The challenges a group of students faces, spanning all educational levels, have necessitated new requirements that schools must adapt to. Moreover, schools now require assistance and can no longer claim a monopoly on pedagogical and educational actions without enlisting the support of qualified professionals who can work with vulnerable or disadvantaged families.

CONCLUSIONS

The genuine solutions to combat school dropout must now shift their focus toward prevention within the school environment rather than dealing with the consequences of dropout. Elevating the quality of life within schools, eradicating all forms of violence that students may face, and establishing specialists in psychoeducation are the key remedies to engage students in their education and support them throughout their academic journey.

Acknowledging that a young dropout does not make this decision in isolation is crucial. The educational institution they attend may inadvertently play a role in their decision by subjecting them to subtle forms of violence over time. When schools fail to identify and promptly address their students' difficulties and shortcomings, they risk pathologizing these differences and outsourcing their management.

In many cases, dropping out represents a form of avoidance, a last resort, and an act of self-defense. Furthermore, a student labeled or perceived as weak may eventually choose to exit the school system. The new problematic student archetype becomes the dropout. Outside the school system, these individuals may revolt against the entire system, making them susceptible to various forms of deviance and often extremism.

The challenges a group of students faces across all educational levels necessitate adaptations within schools. The school must now seek assistance and can no longer claim a monopoly on educational action without implementing new measures. It must engage specialized actors, such as school psychologists and assistants, who can lay the groundwork and establish connections with vulnerable and fragmented families.

Education is no longer solely about imparting knowledge, such as reading and arithmetic; it also encompasses teaching children life skills, discipline, values, and morals. A student from an underprivileged family requires dignity, courage, and motivation to persevere in their studies despite difficulties. However, the problem arises when the child lacks support, and the void they encounter while transitioning between different environments (from school to home) makes them susceptible to various forms of deviance. This transition is often abrupt, particularly from primary to secondary school.

Students accustomed to close teacher-student relationships during primary school, where homework assignments were regularly given, may find themselves unprepared for the increased independence required in secondary school. This stage

demands greater maturity and a more benevolent approach from teachers. When students face indifference from educators, they may feel adrift, underscoring the need for consistent support within this demographic.

In situations where schools aim to reestablish connections with certain parents, particularly those from precarious or challenging backgrounds, the situation's complexity becomes apparent. This prompts the question: Who is the most qualified actor to effectively bridge and support the student, family, and school system?

Dealing with such demands, teachers alone cannot handle the numerous pedagogical, psychological, and cognitive requirements. Psychologists and school assistants can contribute significantly to managing students facing difficulties within the school environment. Their intervention can prevent sudden interruptions in schooling or placements in specialized schools.

Adapting the current educational system to meet these overarching requirements is not just a theoretical concept but an urgent necessity. The diverse range of difficulties and challenges encountered in schools involves parameters encompassing the psychological, relational, cognitive, and emotional domains. As a result, successful interventions necessitate different and specialized profiles. When the school becomes a place that children genuinely appreciate, it will undoubtedly excel in minimizing the toll of violence suffered by students within its walls. Establishing an innovative educational system that prioritizes the quality of life and personalized support for the educational community in addressing issues of violence harassment, and remedying school deficiencies would greatly enhance the school's ability to retain its students.

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