Effects of school, family, social interactions on dropout rate among secondary school students

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Abstract

A qualitative study was conducted to evaluate major factors affecting male students' dropout through interviews conducted on a selected sample of 360 respondents in Saudi Arabia. Results showed that school-related factors and social interactions had significant relationships with dropout rate, recording a P-value of less than 5% level of significance. The coefficient for availability of school facilities of -0.355 suggests a decrease in dropout rate. A 1% increase tended to decrease the rate by 0.355%. In conclusion, the availability of jobs and social discrimination can further increase school enrolment and reduce dropout rates which the government and stakeholders should undertake.

Keywords: School, Dropout, Multivariate, Logistic, Analysis.

Efectos de las interacciones escolares, familiares y sociales en la tasa de abandono escolar entre los estudiantes

Resumen

Se realizó un estudio cualitativo para evaluar los principales factores que afectan el abandono de los estudiantes varones a través de entrevistas realizadas a una muestra seleccionada de 360 encuestados en Arabia Saudita. Los resultados mostraron que los factores relacionados con la escuela y las interacciones sociales tenían relaciones significativas con la tasa de deserción, registrando un valor P de menos del 5% de nivel de significación. El coeficiente de disponibilidad de instalaciones escolares de -0.355 sugiere una disminución en la tasa de abandono escolar. Un aumento del 1% tendió a disminuir la tasa en un 0.355%. En conclusión, la disponibilidad de empleos y la discriminación social pueden aumentar aún más la matrícula escolar y reducir las tasas de abandono escolar que el gobierno y las partes interesadas deberían emprender.

Palabras clave: Escuela, Deserción, Multivariante, Logística, Análisis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the world over, high school dropout rates have gone contrary to the aspirations of governments and international organizations. Human capital development has been seen as a means through which countries can promote economic growth and development. Dropping out of school can hamper sustainable economic growth and push people into situations of undue hardship in the future. It affects both the individual involved and the governments (DUSTMANN & VANSOEST, 2008). Several efforts have been made to reduce the rates of dropout across Europe and America. These efforts include the

promulgation of the No Child Left Behind Act 2001, and the Lisbon 2000 as well as the Europe 2020 goals. In the Middle East, the problem of dropout continues to increase although more attention on the part of the governments has been evident. Several factors have been identified as part of the factors that cause dropout; these factors still contribute a little proportion of the variance associated with school dropout. A summary of the factors that cause dropout across countries across various locations was reviewed by (AHMAD & AHMAD, 2019; ADAMS & BECKER, 1990).

In recent times, the Saudi Arabian government has introduced a number of measures to ensure that the dropout rate is reduced to the barest minimum. The major issue behind dropout in Saudi Arabia is more about the availability of current data on the number of dropouts (BRIDGELAND, DILULIO & MORISON, 2006). The factors that cause dropout in Saudi Arabia are summarized in three parts in this study and examined empirically to reveal the major contributor to dropout in Saudi Arabia. This study investigates to understand the phenomenon of middle-class school dropout among boys in the Riyadh province of Saudi Arabia to fill the gap in empirical literature with regard to Saudi Arabia. To achieve this objective, the study is divided into five sections (FERGUSSON, HORWOOD & BEAUTRAIS, 2003). Section One presents the introduction, Section Two is the review of the literature, and Section Three presents the research methodology. Section Four shows the results and discussion and Section Five is the conclusion (ALLENSWORTH, 2004)

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative research approach to ascertain the effects of school, family and community-related factors on dropouts in Saudi Arabia. The quantitative approach is deemed as apt because it allows for the collection of data using questionnaires and analysis based on information provided by the respondents. This approach is widely used as it involves processing the raw data and presenting the outcome in an empirical form which has wide acceptability in the world today. The target population for this study included dropouts from a total of 55-night schools in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia (DALTON, GENNIE & INGELS, 2009). These schools are operated based on three class levels - levels 1, 2 and 3. However, the size of the population of the students in these schools warrants a sample to be drawn. From a total of 55 schools, the cluster sampling technique was applied because the sample involved three categories of students at three different levels in the night school (COOPER & CHAVIRA, 2005).

This type of sampling is usually designed to select a sample that best describes the characteristics and complexity of the phenomenon under investigation. The three levels are designated as three cohorts from grades 1, 2, and 3 selected on the assumption that the students in different grades would have varying reasons for quitting school. If a typical student in each cohort had never repeated a grade, cohort 1 students should move to cohort 2 and cohort 2 to cohort 3 (EKSTROM, GOERTZ, POLLACK & ROCK, 1986). On the other

hand, as repetition was common, a number of students in these cohorts were likely to have entered the school and completed school earlier than now. This study selected 20% of each of the night schools both government and private. This resulted in the selection of a total of five government-sponsored night schools and six privately- sponsored night schools (AHMAD & AHMAD, 2018; BALL & LAMB, 2001).

As concluded in the empirical literature, there is no rule of thumb regarding an actual sample size to be selected but it is recommended for a manageable sample to be used, based on the research objective. Further, the size of a sample does not necessarily guarantee the representativeness of a population, but a sample size of 11-night schools was deemed adequate in the case of this study. In selecting the sample, various factors like purpose of study, time allocated for the study and availability of required information for the study were considered (BLUE & COOK, 2004; ENTWISLE, ALEXANDER & STEFFEL-OLSON, 2004). For this study, the sample included 11-night schools randomly selected. The decision to involve these schools was influenced by factors such as economic activities, economic status of the communities and accessibility of transport. The researcher was fortunate to have a number of had respondents who provided reliable information for the study. The sample size of this study was 360 respondents, who were drawn randomly from each of the 11-night secondary schools. To examine the effects of these factors on dropout, the following model is developed:

$$DO = f(SCH, FAM, SOCIE) \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots. (1)$$

From equation (1), a model is derived to present the model in a statistical form as:

$$DO_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SCH_i + \beta_2 FAM_i + \beta_3 SOCIE + \mu_i \text{ ----- (2)}$$

Where: β_0 - β_3 are coefficients

DO = Dropout rate which is proxied by completion rate

SCH = School-related factors

FAM = Family-related factors

SOCIE = Societal-related factors

μ = Stochastic error term

To analyze this model, a multivariate regression model is used. This method was chosen owing to the nominal nature of the dependent variable. This method would ensure that each of these factors affecting school completion is explained individually to determine which is the most effective (BALFANZ & LEGTERS, 2005).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to investigate the family, school and community-related factors that affect the school completion rate among secondary school students. Having collected and analyzed the data, this section shows the impact of these factors on the school completion rate in the study area. Despite not retrieving all the questionnaires distributed, the questionnaires returned were adequate to perform a valid analysis leading to discussions and allowing conclusions to be drawn (DEWITTE & ROGGE, 2013). The ages of the respondents were shown to explain the composition of the respondents. Thereafter, the factors were treated separately in the regression model to ascertain the effects of each on the rate of completion of school.

Table 1

Age in years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-20	73	26.2
21-26	110	39.4
27-32	22	7.9
33+	74	26.5
Total	279	100.0

The age groups of the respondents used for this study are presented in table 4.1. The table shows that most of the respondents are between the ages of 21-26 years with   39.4% followed by those between the ages of 33 years and above and those between 15 and 20

years with almost the same percentage of 26.2% and 26.5% respectively. Only a handful of the respondents are between the ages of 21 and 32 years who make up 7.9% of the respondents. It can be concluded therefore that, the majority of the respondents in this study are mostly youths aged between 15 and 266years who make 65.6% of the total responses. Since the night secondary schools are used in this study, the respondents are mostly dropouts either at the early stage of their academic pursuits or after completing primary and before completing secondary school.

Table 2. Regression results: Dependent variable: Completion rate

Variable		Coefficients	P-value
Threshold	[class = 1]	-8.426	.000
	[class = 2]	-6.101	.000
Location	School facilities	-.355	.000
	Society influence	-.086	.024
	Family influence	.028	.536

In Table 4.2, the regression results show the effects of school-related, family-related and societal-related effects on the dropout rate in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The dependent variable used is the rate of dropout while the independent variables are the school facilities, social influence, and family influence. The effect of school facilities as presented in the table has a negative and significant effect

on the dropout rate. The result is significant because the P-value is less than 5% level of significance. Also, the coefficient for school facilities on the dropout rate of -0.355 suggests the rate at which the dropout rate decreases. That is, a 1% increase in the available school facilities leads to a decrease of 0.355% in the rate of dropout. Similarly, societal influence affects the rate of dropout. This is because the P-value of 0.024 is less than the conventional 5% level of significance.

Also, the negative coefficient of -0.86 implies the rate of change between dropout and society influence. This means that if societal influence increases by 1%, the rate of dropout will decrease by -0.86%. The effect of family on dropout rate is positive but not significantly related to school dropout. This suggests that the family does not influence the dropout rate in KSA. The school facilities in this study are summarized from factors such as academic ability, grade retention, educational expectations, and school employment. The findings, therefore, suggest that these factors play a role in determining the rate of dropout in KSA. Also, societal factors are summarized as comprising employment opportunities, social discrimination and high achieving friends which are central to dropout in Saudi Arabia.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examines the effects of school, family and societal-related factors on the dropout rate in Saudi Arabia. The government of Saudi Arabia has made concerted efforts to encourage education by

offering a number of incentives ranging from free education to scholarships both at home and abroad. Yet, the dropout rate still persists. This study investigated male secondary school students to determine the major reasons for dropping out of school. To achieve this, a sample of 360 respondents was examined. A regression simple multivariate logistic analysis was used for the analysis. The regression results show that school-related factors and societal factors have a significant relationship with the dropout rate. However, family factors such as socioeconomic status, family structure as well as financial capital do not have a significant relationship with the school dropout rate in KSA.

With these findings, efforts must be concentrated on the school and society to fight the threat of increasing dropout rates in Saudi Arabia despite the increase in enrolment over the years. In particular, students should be encouraged to improve academically and aim to obtain and maintain high grades. Measures that will promote love for education and improve aspirations should be encouraged to keep students in school. Again, the government should pursue a national policy that is aimed at education for all in society. This will further reduce the dropout rate since a high achieving society has a way of encouraging students from such an environment to achieve high education. The availability of jobs in the environment and social discrimination can drive school enrolment and reduce the dropout rate in society. The government and stakeholders should promote awareness of these benefits to students to keep them in school. Hopefully, all these efforts will bear fruit over time.

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