

Understanding the Factors Behind Dropout Decisions: A Study of Primary School Students in Red Sea State, Sudan

Amro Hassan Ibrahim Alhassan, Zainudin Bin Hassan

School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.803373S>

Received: 17 October 2024; Accepted: 24 October 2024; Published: 22 November 2024

ABSTRACT

This study employed the Pull/Push Out Theoretical Framework to investigate the in-school and out-of-school factors that influenced primary school students' decisions to drop out in Red Sea State, Sudan. In-school factors were related to the school environment that pushed students to leave, while out-of-school factors were connected to the surrounding environment, closely linked to the student's life outside of school, which pulled them away from education. Using a qualitative methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 21 informants including dropout students, their parents, and their teachers, providing insights into the factors that either pulled or pushed students to drop out. The findings revealed that a range of in-school and out-of-school factors contributed to the high dropout rates in Red Sea State. These factors included relationships with peers, school refusal driven by negative reinforcement, student-teacher relationships, the condition of educational and extracurricular facilities, water and sanitation issues, teacher shortages, curriculum relevance, unqualified teachers, removal from classes, grade retention, and school discipline, as well as, socio-economic factors, child labor, lack of scholarships or financial aid, family disruption, family structure, single-parent, absenteeism reinforced by positive factors, parent involvement, and the education level of parents also played significant roles.

Keywords: Primary School Dropouts, Red Sea State, Sudan, Pull/Push Out Theoretical Framework, In-School Factors, Out-of-School Factors.

INTRODUCTION

School dropout is a global challenge with significant consequences for individuals, communities, and society as a whole [12]. In Sudan, particularly in rural regions, dropout rates are alarmingly high [12], posing a threat to the nation's development [35]. Dropout refers to students leaving school without completing their education ([24], [4]). According to UNESCO [31], millions of students worldwide do not return to school, with a large proportion in basic and secondary education, and girls being disproportionately affected ([31], [33]). This issue is most prevalent in areas like South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa [31]. Contributing factors include poverty, violence, and limited access to quality education ([36], [33]).

In Sudan, around 6.9 million children are out of school, while 12 million experience disruptions in their education due to various challenges[33]. According to the Federal Ministry of Education [11], about 3 million Sudanese children are out of school, with more than half never having attended. Barriers to schooling include the lack of gender-specific schools, long distances, disabilities, child labor, and early marriage [11]. Additionally, poor infrastructure and insufficient facilities further limit educational access, especially in disadvantaged rural areas ([36], [11]). Red Sea State is particularly affected by these challenges, contributing to higher dropout rates, especially among girls [11].

UNICEF [32] defines school dropouts as children of school age who either do not enroll or leave school before completing their education, whether due to personal reasons or external pressures. A school dropout is

typically understood as a student who leaves an educational institution with no intention of returning [29]. Education plays a vital role in socio-economic transformation [13]. Various studies highlight the importance of education for national development ([1], [10], [22]). However, in countries like Sudan, students drop out for numerous reasons, which hinders their ability to make meaningful contributions to society [3]. This problem is especially pronounced in rural and remote areas [3]. Dropping out not only denies children their right to education but also leads to long-term negative impacts, such as lower wages, unemployment, and future health problems ([38], [2]).

In Sudan, nearly one million students are at risk of dropping out due to incomplete grade offerings, affecting 16% of total enrollment [11]. The country's efforts to provide universal basic education are hindered by low retention rates and high dropout rates, particularly among boys [37]. Despite progress in expanding access to education, dropout rates remain high, particularly in rural areas [39]. Dropout rates in primary schools continue to be a critical issue in Sudan, particularly in Red Sea State, where almost 50% of students do not complete their primary education [34]. Contributing factors include insufficient teacher support, poverty, child labor, cultural norms, and political instability [11]. However, much of the existing data is outdated [11]. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to address dropout rates, yet research on this topic, especially in Red Sea State, remains limited [23]. To address this issue effectively, it is crucial to gain a better understanding of these factors. This research seeks to fill this gap through a qualitative study, offering deeper insights into the causes of primary school dropout in Red Sea State, guiding the development of targeted interventions.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are as follow:

1. To investigate the in-school factors that affect primary schools' student's dropout decision in Red Sea State, Sudan.
2. To investigate the out-of-school factors that affect primary schools' student's dropout decision in Red Sea State, Sudan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the in-school factors that affect primary school students' dropout decision in Red Sea State, Sudan?
2. What are the out-of-school factors that affect primary school students' dropout decision in Red Sea State, Sudan?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In qualitative research, a conceptual framework serves as a foundational structure that guides the research process. It provides a coherent set of concepts and ideas relevant to the study, helping clarify how different variables, themes, or ideas relate to each other [15]. It offers a broad orientation for framing concepts based on collected data and the researcher's understanding [25]. The conceptual framework of this study, based on the Push/Pull Out theoretical framework ([26], [36]), aims to understand in-school and out-of-school factors influencing dropout decisions in Red Sea State, Sudan.

Jordan et al. (1994) and Watt and Roessingh (1994) as cited in [36], establish the Push/Pull Out theoretical framework, which distinguishes between "push-out," and "pull-out," factors leading to dropout. The primary distinction between push-out, and pull-out factors is "agency." With push-out factors, the school is responsible for expelling students. While in case of pull-out factors, the students and their immediate surroundings outside school act as agents, as they are lured away by external attractions.

Adapting the Push/Pull Out theoretical framework, the conceptual framework of this study consists of two factors: in-school factors, and out-of-school factors. In-school factors include hostile school environments that lead to alienation and dropout. Out-of-school factors encompass needs and life events that pull students away. As shown in the diagram below, the framework's “inputs” stage involves collecting data from dropout students, their parents, and their teachers about their experiences with dropout factors. The “processes” stage analyzes this data in light of the Push/Pull Out theoretical framework to develop a comprehensive understanding about the factors student’s dropout.

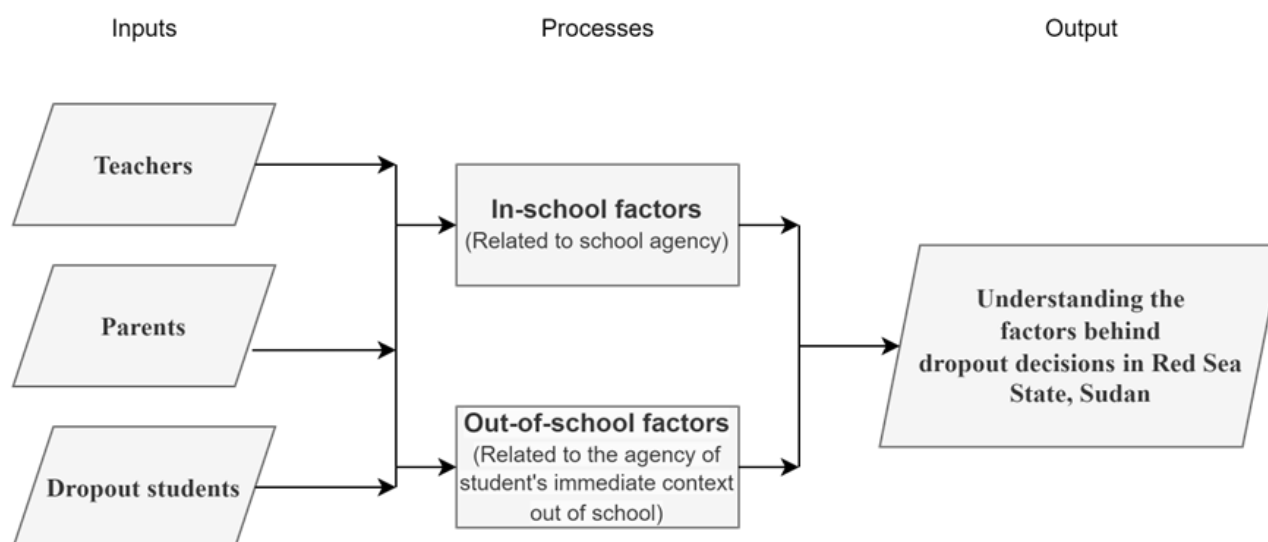


Figure 1: The conceptual framework guided the research objectives to understand dropout decisions among primary school students in Red Sea State, Sudan

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this study and the nature of the participants necessitated a qualitative research approach in order to explore the in-depth meanings, experiences, and interpretations of dropped-out students, their parents, and their teachers regarding the factors of dropout among primary school students in Red Sea State, in Sudan. Through semi-structured interviews, the researchers captured rich and nuanced data, providing a deeper understanding of the factors that influenced dropout decisions. Qualitative research complemented this deductive reasoning by allowing for an iterative process, where theory and data-informed each other, leading to the development of a more robust and contextually rooted conceptual framework [20].

Therefore, in this study, the qualitative research approach was chosen with the expectation that it would aid in the gathering, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative data for gaining a better knowledge of the issue [7]. Aspers, et al. [6], defined the qualitative method as a circumstance in which a researcher employs approaches for qualitative data collection in order to answer a specific question or many questions.

In this study, the researchers employed a qualitative methodology and in-depth semi-structured interviews to investigate the topic of primary school dropouts in the Red Sea State, Sudan. The research investigated the in-school and out-of-school factors that influence the decision of primary school pupils in Red Sea State, Sudan to drop out of their school. The researchers considered that a qualitative study would result in a projection of many perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of the participants [20]. Consequently, a qualitative approach to the study yields more pertinent insights and allowed the researchers to identify, investigate, and characterize the issue under examination in greater depth.

To conduct this study, the researchers employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research design is a qualitative research approach used to explore and understand the

experiences, perspectives, and meanings of individuals or groups regarding a particular phenomenon or event ([31], [30]). According to Creswell, et al. [8], The term “phenomenology” comes from philosophy and refers to the study of phenomena as they appear in consciousness. In the context of research, phenomenology seeks to understand the essence or nature of a phenomenon from the participants' subjective viewpoints [31]. In this case, the focus would be on understanding the perspectives of dropped-out students, their parents, and their teachers in Red Sea State, Sudan, concerning their decision-making dynamics of students leaving their primary school. Using a phenomenological research design in this study allows the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the dropout decision-making dynamics from the perspectives ([30], [35]). Through phenomenological research design, the researchers ensures that the findings remain grounded in the participants' own words [30], making the study highly valuable for informing educational policies and interventions to address the dropout issue in Red Sea State, Sudan. According to Umanailo, et al. [31], and Sohn, et al. [30], a qualitative phenomenological research design permits the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective aspects of a phenomenon and provides valuable insights into the complexities of that phenomenon. It offers a powerful design for exploring the rich tapestry of experiences and meanings attributed to various aspects of phenomena.

Sampling technique

For this given study purposive sampling is employed. purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, involves selecting specific individuals or groups who meet certain predetermined criteria relevant to the research question [28]. As the study's focus is on understanding the in-school and out-of-school factors influencing decisions of primary school student dropouts, purposive sampling allows the researchers to deliberately select participants who have experienced the phenomenon of (dropout) and those who have relevant insights into the in-school and out-of-school factors contributing to this occurrence. On the other hand, qualitative research aims to understand phenomena in-depth, using narratives and descriptions rather than numerical data.

Sample size

According to Gill, S. L. [14], in qualitative research, the sample size is not determined through statistical calculations, as the focus is not on generalizing findings to a larger population. Instead, qualitative research seeks data saturation, which is the point at which gathering additional data does not yield new insights or themes [16]. As a result, sample sizes can vary depending on when researchers feel they have achieved data saturation, and further data collection is unlikely to provide new or valuable information. In qualitative research, researchers focus on the depth and richness of the data rather than the size of the sample. Smaller sample sizes are common in qualitative studies, as the emphasis is on understanding the experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of the participants in great detail [14]. In this research study, a total of 30 informants agreed to participate in this research study. However, the researchers reached data saturation, after interviewing 21 informants including 8 dropped-out students (5 males, and 3 females), 6 guardians of the dropped-out students (3 Mothers, and 3 caregivers “1 Maternal aunt, and 2 Maternal uncles”), and 7 teachers of the dropped-out students (4 males, and 3 females).

Research instrument

In qualitative research, personal face-to-face interviews enable researcher to engage in in-depth talks with participants and, as a consequence, gained a wealth of information. This research collected information using semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face interviews. On this basis, open-ended interview questions were developed. This allowed interviewers to obtain as much information as participants wanted to provide regarding dropout. According to Kiger, et al. [17], open-ended interviews are the most common type of interview employed in qualitative research because they allow respondents to express their ideas and experiences in depth. The semi-structured interview style allows for adaptability in responding to new questions based on the participant's responses, facilitating a conversational flow during the interview [9].

According to Creswell et al. [7], interviews are considered the most important method for acquiring qualitative data, with the majority of qualitative data based on spoken “narratives,” often obtained through in-depth interviews or focus group interviews between the researcher and participant (or participants). Below is a figure that shows the flow of pre-interview, interview, and post-interview stages of this research.

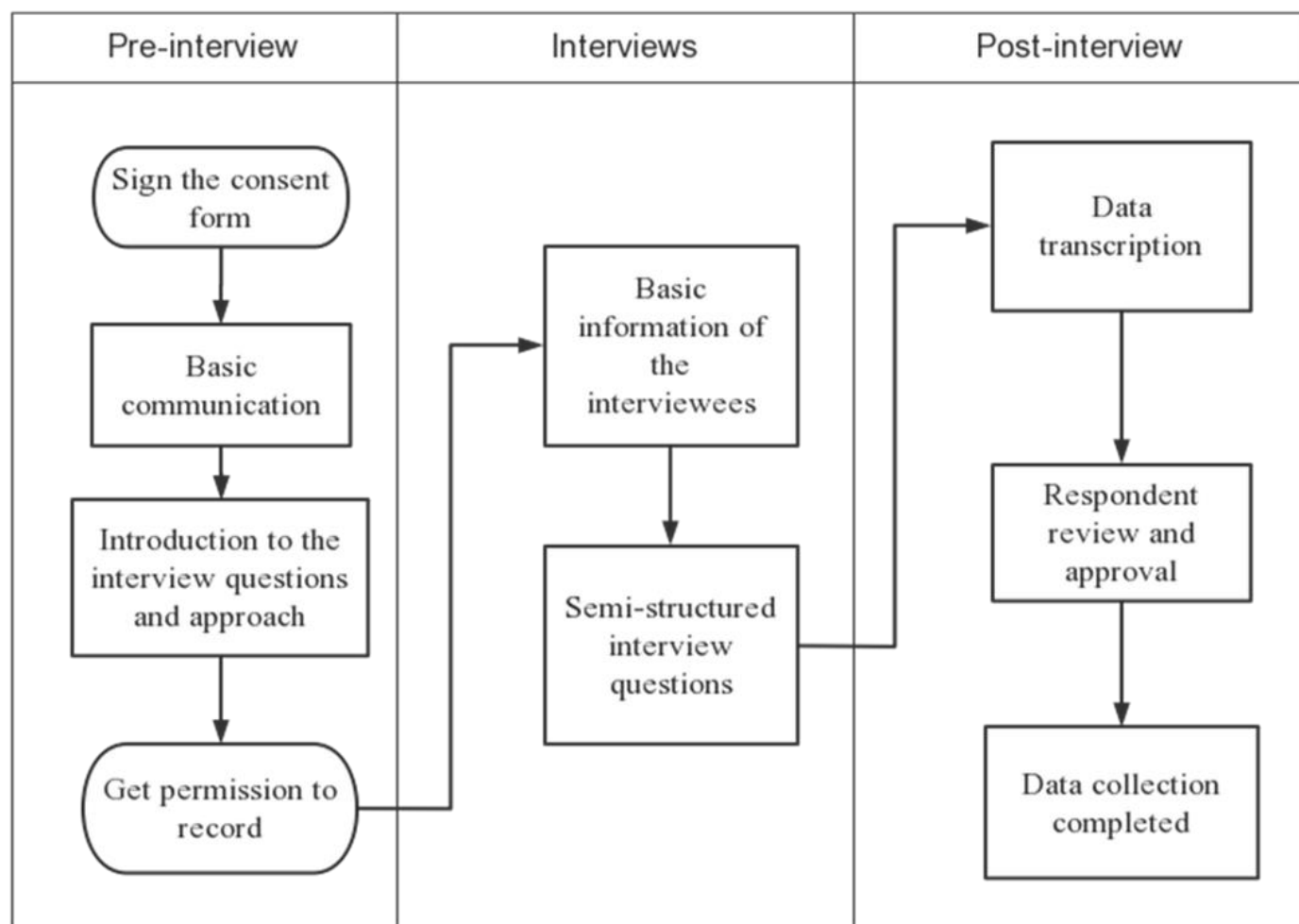


Figure 2: The flow of pre-interview, Interview, and post-interview stages

Data Analysis

NVivo software was utilized to conduct the qualitative analysis of the current study's research. This enabled the researchers to conduct a rigorous and systematic study of interview data using a thematic analysis technique. The thematic technique permitted the analysis to be presented in themes, and sub-themes through which the perspectives and actual words of the participants were presented scientifically.

Kiger, et al. [17] and King, et al. [18], argue that thematic analysis is a valuable tool for comparing and contrasting the perspectives of different informants, identifying similarities and differences, generating unanticipated insights, and producing clear, organized work documents [27]. In this study, the collected and transcribed data then were proceeded to several phases of thematic analysis that consist of familiarization with data, generating initial codes, and searching for themes. The researchers employed a coding approach in accordance with Saldaña's techniques [27]. This enabled the researchers to collect the perspectives of dropped-out pupils, their parents, and their teachers regarding the in-school and out-of-school factors that lead primary school students to drop out, and then to uncover the relevant themes and patterns.

As Creswell et al. [7] propose, in order to eliminate any biases, the researchers should demonstrate the procedure of data analysis, which in return, ensures coherence and smooth flow in all research stages.

Demonstrating the procedure contributes to reducing biases and boosting the veracity of the researcher's proposition regarding the phenomenon. Analysis can be performed in a variety of ways according to the type of research study and the purpose of the investigation [9].

Since this study is qualitative research, the data are collected and analyzed qualitatively. The data are inductively explored to recognize themes, patterns, or concepts that reappear over time, and then these categories are described and interpreted as Saldaña [27] proposes. Transcription is the first part of qualitative data analysis, followed by initiating preliminary themes based on the responses provided by the informants. Developing coding categories, identifying the theme characteristics that relate to the coding categories, and interpreting the data based on the identified themes are the sequenced processes in data analysis. These steps are used in this study after the interview sessions are completed, where the procedures flow as shown in figure 3 below starts from data collection to data analysis, data transcription, data triangulation, and proceeding through the thematic analysis stages.

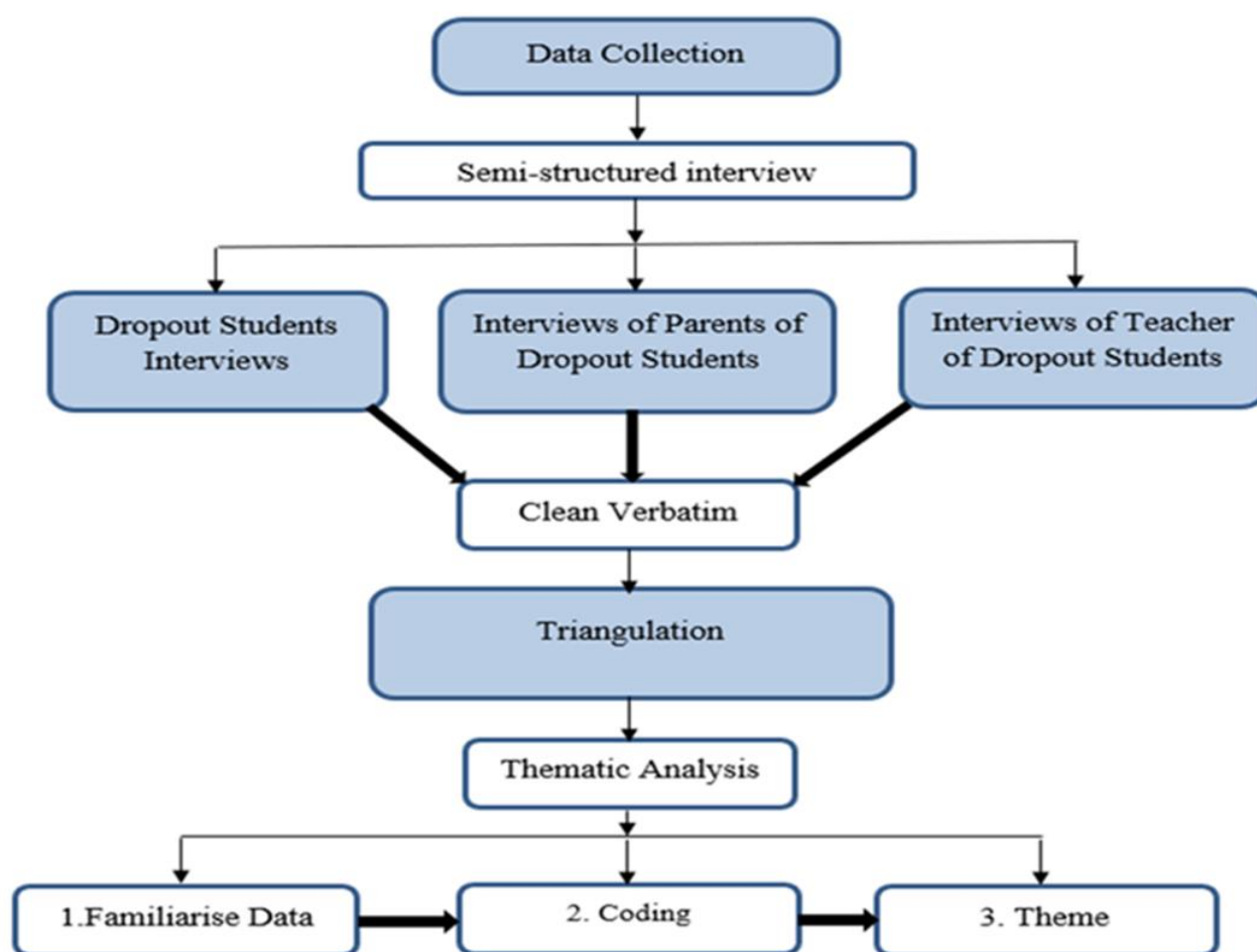


Figure 3: the flow of data collection & data analysis processes

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research focuses on investigating two main categories of in-school and out-of-school factors that influence primary school student dropout decisions in Red Sea State, Sudan. These factors encompass a range of context-specific factors referring to region-specific circumstances of the Red Sea State of Sudan.

Posteriori reviewing and analyzing the informants' responses which are collected employing semi-structured interviews in the quest to answer the previously-mentioned research questions, the following mind-map displayed in Figure 4 represents the results of the in-school factors, as well as the out-of-school factors investigated by the researches.

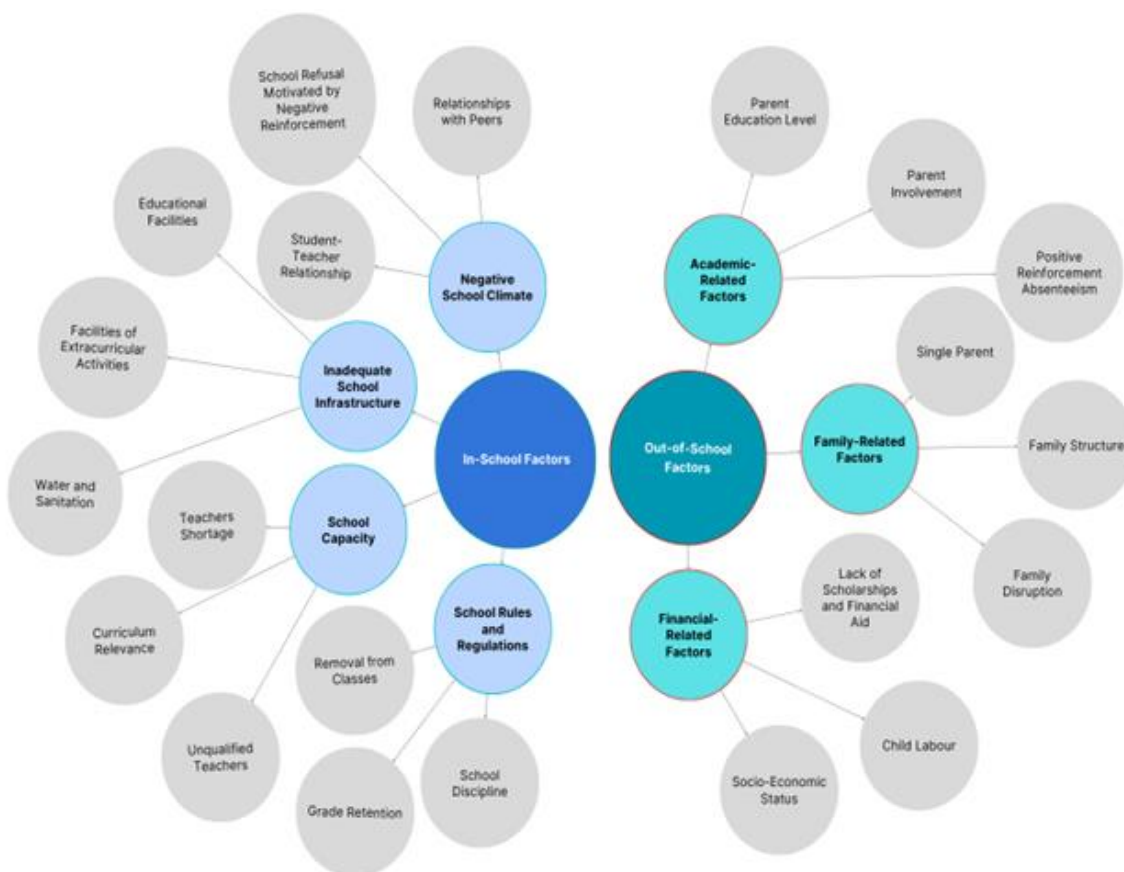


Figure 4: Mind-map represents in-school and out-of-school factors behind dropout decisions among primary school students in Red Sea State, Sudan.

The results of the study, as shown in Figure 4 above, indicate that primary school dropout decisions in Red Sea State, Sudan, are influenced by a range of in-school, and out-of-school factors.

The in-school factors are as follows:

1) Negative school climate, including relationships with peers, school refusal motivated by negative reinforcement, and student-teacher relationship.

On the one hand, poor relationships with peers, persistent teasing, bullying, and exclusion made everyday life a daunting and emotionally draining experience for students. As a result, many were pushed to leave the school environment. On the other hand, school refusal, driven by negative reinforcement such as fear of reprimands and an overall negative atmosphere, led many students to see leaving school as the only way to escape their distressing situations.

Furthermore, strained student-teacher relationships made it difficult for students to engage in the learning process. Instead of feeling supported and encouraged, they often felt belittled and criticized, to the point where attending school became an anxiety-inducing experience, which ultimately caused them to drop out.

2) Inadequate school infrastructure, including educational facilities, facilities of extracurricular activities, and water and sanitation.

The lack of proper educational resources, such as chalk, textbooks, and teaching materials, limited teachers' ability to present lessons effectively. Additionally, leaking roofs during the rainy season, inadequate ventilation during the summer, and insufficient desks and seats made classrooms uncomfortable and unsuitable for effective teaching and learning. These obstacles hindered student participation and led some to discontinue their education.

Moreover, insufficient water and sanitation facilities had a detrimental impact on both students and teachers. Unclean and poorly maintained toilets posed health risks, while the lack of access to drinking water led to increased absenteeism, especially during drought seasons.

Additionally, poor extracurricular infrastructure and the absence of activities that nurture students' talents and personal development made the school environment unattractive, which ultimately led to dropouts.

3) School capacity, including teacher shortages, curriculum relevance, and unqualified teachers.

Teacher shortages caused overcrowded classrooms, leaving insufficient attention for individual students. Students reported frustration over unanswered questions, which affected their motivation to continue their learning journey.

The lack of curriculum relevance for students from rural areas, particularly those involved in farming and herding, played a role in their dropout decisions. The curriculum was focused on urban lifestyles and neglected the knowledge and skills needed by farmers and nomadic groups. This disconnect made it difficult for rural students to relate to the subjects. Additionally, the curriculum failed to recognize the linguistic and cultural diversity of Red Sea State. It was delivered entirely in Arabic, which posed significant challenges for students whose first language was not Arabic. It's worth mentioning that this curriculum is not designed locally, so neither the Ministry of Education in Red Sea nor the school assumes responsibility for it.

The presence of unqualified teachers is a concerning issue that negatively affects students' educational experience and their decision to leave school. However, it's important to note that these teachers do not prefer to remain unqualified. Due to various reasons, the Ministry's teacher training programs have been halted, leaving teacher development to personal resources.

4) School rules and regulations, including removal from classes, grade retention, and school discipline.

Constant removal from classes for non-payment of fees or unfinished assignments was a recurring cause of student dropout. This practice created a sense of shame and embarrassment among students. Exclusion from school for financial or academic reasons made students feel isolated and demotivated, ultimately leading to their decisions to drop out.

Additionally, the practice of grade retention, without comprehensive intervention strategies, negatively impacted students' motivation, self-esteem, and overall engagement with education, leading them to leave school.

Harsh and inconsistent disciplinary measures also created frustration and disillusionment among students. Instead of fostering responsibility and growth, these disciplinary methods fueled a negative school atmosphere, contributing to students' decisions to leave.

These factors reflect the internal dynamics and conditions within the school environment that influence dropout decisions. In-school factors, such as negative school climate, inadequate infrastructure, and strict rules and regulations, have consistently been identified as key contributors to dropout rates. These findings align with the results of the present study ([37]; [14]), reinforcing the significance of addressing these internal factors to prevent dropout. The findings emphasize the importance of a supportive and conducive school climate, well-maintained infrastructure, and effective school policies in promoting student retention.

The out-of-school factors are as follows:

1) Financial-related factors, including socio-economic status, child labor, and lack of scholarships and financial aid.

Socio-economic status plays a significant role in dropout decisions. The school fees alone were a significant burden, but it didn't end there. The costs of uniforms, textbooks, stationery, and other learning materials were out of reach for families with low socio-economic status. Moreover, the daily transportation expenses to and from school added further strain. This applies particularly to those families involved in traditional seasonal farming and herding; fluctuations in income due to factors such as rainfall and dry seasons significantly impact their ability to sustain their children's enrollment. It is crucial for society and educational institutions to address these financial challenges and ensure equitable access to education for all.

Furthermore, many students in Red Sea State may be forced into child labor to support their families, which prevents them from attending school regularly or at all. Child labor is a prevalent factor leading to school dropout, especially in rural areas. Many students are compelled to assist their families with income-generating activities, particularly among families involved in traditional seasonal farming and herding, who need to work during harvest or grazing periods, both of which are seasonal. They play a significant role in assisting their families, which takes them away from school.

What's more, the lack of scholarships or financial aid further exacerbates the issue, as education becomes a financial burden rather than an opportunity. The 'Food for Education' initiative, which was once a vital support system throughout the Red Sea State, has been stagnant for several years. This initiative provided crucial support to families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, ensuring they received proper annual nutrition, which ensured that their children attended school and focused solely on their studies. The absence of any alternative financial assistance has made it increasingly challenging for those families to meet the expenses associated with their children's education. As a result, they have no choice but to withdraw their children from school. The revival and expansion of scholarship programs, including initiatives like 'Food for Education,' are crucial to ensure equitable access to education and alleviate the financial burden on families.

2) Family-related factors, including family disruption, family structure, and single parent.

Family disruption appears to occur due to parental divorce, the death of one of the parents, or chronic and complex health issues within families. It causes emotional distress, impacting students' focus, attendance, and overall academic performance, which leads them to leave school. Family instability can profoundly impact students' ability to thrive academically, and we notice some cases of students leaving school as a result of this.

The large magnitude of some families, coupled with their persistent economic struggles, places immense pressure on parents of those families, forcing them to make difficult decisions about which child's education to prioritize. Sometimes families support the education of the child with the best academic performance, while at other times, preference is consistently given to boys over girls. Additionally, the crowded living conditions of those large families make it challenging for students to find a quiet space to study and concentrate on schoolwork.

Furthermore, students from single-parent households face significant obstacles in their educational attainment. The lack of consistent parental involvement, financial constraints, and the burden of juggling multiple responsibilities by a single parent affect the students' ability to thrive academically. These factors contribute to some students' decisions to drop out of school, underscoring the need for additional support and resources for single-parent families, especially those in which the single parent is the mother, with more than one child.

3) Academic-related factors, including positive reinforcement absenteeism, parent involvement, and parent education level.

Absenteeism reinforced by rewards or advantages contributes to dropout rates. Students may perceive positive reinforcement outside of school as more appealing than the rewards or recognition they receive within the classroom. This can be influenced by various factors, including social interactions, attention from

family or friends, or tangible benefits that they can obtain outside of school. These interactions outside of school make the prospect of attending classes less appealing and eventually lead to dropping out.

Additionally, the lack of parental involvement reveals that home environments fail to encourage educational continuity. Most students often feel neglected because their parents rarely attend school events, parent-teacher meetings, and other aspects related to their academic development. This neglect makes them question their parents' interest in their education, causing them to lose motivation, and eventually, they decide to leave school.

Furthermore, students coming from families with lower educational attainment face numerous obstacles in their educational journey. Their parents' limited education means that they cannot provide the necessary academic support. Most students encounter difficulties in understanding subjects, particularly mathematics and Arabic language, and struggle to complete assignments without guidance. As a result, they feel disconnected and unsupported, which plays a significant role in their choice to drop out.

These factors encompass the circumstances that students face in their immediate context outside the school environment, such as financial difficulties, family responsibilities, and lack of academic support. The impact of out-of-school factors, including financial constraints, family dynamics, and academic difficulties, has been well-documented in the literature [5]; [21]). The findings suggest that addressing these surrounding factors is crucial in mitigating dropout rates and supporting students in their educational journey.

CONCLUSION

This study has illuminated the multifaceted factors influencing primary school dropout decisions among students in Red Sea State, Sudan. The findings reveal a complex interplay of in-school and out-of-school dynamics that significantly impact student retention.

In-school factors such as negative school climate, inadequate infrastructure, and strict school regulations emerge as critical barriers to educational continuity. The emotional distress stemming from bullying and poor student-teacher relationships creates an environment where many students feel unsupported and disengaged. Moreover, insufficient educational resources and facilities contribute to an uncomfortable and ineffective learning experience, further discouraging students from attending school. Strict disciplinary measures and practices like grade retention exacerbate feelings of shame and demotivation, reinforcing the notion that school is a hostile environment rather than a place of growth.

Out-of-school factors also play a significant role in dropout decisions. Financial challenges, particularly among families engaged in seasonal farming and herding, hinder students' ability to sustain their education. The burden of school-related expenses, coupled with the pressures of child labor, compels many to prioritize immediate economic contributions over long-term educational benefits. Additionally, family dynamics, including disruptions and single-parent households, contribute to emotional and logistical challenges that impede students' academic performance. Finally, a lack of parental involvement and educational support leads to feelings of neglect, further distancing students from their educational aspirations.

The interplay between these factors underscores the necessity for comprehensive strategies to enhance student retention. Initiatives aimed at improving school climate, ensuring adequate resources, and reforming school policies are essential. Furthermore, addressing out-of-school challenges—such as providing financial aid and support for families—will create a more conducive environment for learning. By tackling both in-school and out-of-school factors, educational stakeholders can help reduce dropout rates and foster a more inclusive educational landscape for all students in Red Sea State.

Future research endeavors should focus on investigating the extraneous factors which involve circumstances beyond control of either the school agency, or the students and their family's agency, and causing students to fall out of the educational system.

REFERENCES

1. Adams, D. K. (2002). *Education and national development: Priorities, policies, and planning* (Vol. 1). Manila Philippine: Asian Development Bank.
2. Ahmad K, Najeemah, M. Y, &Jamalsafri, S. (2017). Relationship between parental economic factors, and students' dropouts from government secondary schools of Zamfara, Nigeria. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 32, 29–43.
3. Aja, M. & Okorie, S. (2017). strategies to help solve our dropout problem. New York: Eye on Education.
4. Aliero, H. S. (2020). Factors responsible for rising dropout in primary school pupils in Nigeria: implications for national development. 19(1),37–49. <https://doi.org/10.35386/ser.v19i1.78>
5. Ali, K., Yaseen, M. R., Makhdum, M. S. A., Quddoos, A., & Sardar, A. (2021). Socioeconomic determinants of primary school children dropout: a case study of Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(6), 1221-1230.
6. Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research. *Qualitative sociology*, 42, 139-160.
7. Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* ((4th Editi). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
8. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
9. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
10. Fägerlind, I., & Saha, L. J. (2016). *Education and national development: A comparative perspective*. Elsevier.
11. Federal Ministry of Education. (2019). *General Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018/19 – 2022/23*. Global Partnership for Education. <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/2019-01-sudan-general-education-sector-strategic-plan-2018-2023.pdf>
12. Fincham, K. (2019). Gender and primary school dropout in Sudan: Girls' education and retention in Red Sea State. *Prospects*, 47, 361-376.
13. GAPSALAMOV, A. R., MERZON, E. E., KUZNETSOV, M. S., VASILEV, V. L., & BOCHKAREVA, T. N. (2020). THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS. *Periodico Tche Quimica*, 17(34).
14. González-Rodríguez, D., Vieira, M. J., & Vidal, J. (2019). Factors that influence early school leaving: a comprehensive model. *Educational Research*, 61(2), 214-230.
15. Gill, S. L. (2020). Qualitative sampling methods. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 36(4), 579-581.
16. Guntur, G. (2019). A conceptual framework for qualitative research: A literature studies. *Capture: Jurnal Seni Media Rekam*, 10(2), 91-106.
17. Hennink, M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social science & medicine*, 292, 114523.
18. Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical teacher*, 42(8), 846-854.
19. King, N., & Brooks, J. (2018). Thematic analysis in organisational research. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative business and management research methods: Methods and challenges*, 219-236.
20. Kohnert, D. (2023). On the impact of the 2023 Sudanese war on Africa and beyond. Available at SSRN 4473724.
21. Kostere, S., & Kostere, K. (2021). *The generic qualitative approach to a dissertation in the social sciences: A step by step guide*. Routledge.
22. Láng, A. (2018). Family structure, family functioning, and well-being in adolescence: A multidimensional approach. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8(2), 24-31.

23. Laurie, R., Nonoyama-Tarumi, Y., Mckeown, R., & Hopkins, C. (2016). Contributions of education for sustainable development (ESD) to quality education: A synthesis of research. *Journal of Education for Sustainable development*, 10(2), 226-242.
24. Marope, P. T. M. (2019). Education: The key to development. *Prospects*, 47(4), 305-307.
25. Ndidi P.I (2019) Cause and Remedies of students Drop out of Secondary School in Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences (MJBAS)*.
26. Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2019). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.
27. Rouse, M. R. (2019). Pull and Push Factors That Influence a Student's Decision to Drop Out of School (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).
28. Saldaña, J. (2021). The coding manual for qualitative researchers.
29. Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International journal of applied research*, 3(7), 749-752.
30. Smith, G. W., Classen, A. I., Bishop, S. K., & Stogner, S. (2017). Factors That Influence School Dropout: A Global Concern. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, 7(3), 104.
31. Sohn, B. K., Thomas, S. P., Greenberg, K. H., & Pollio, H. R. (2017). Hearing the voices of students and teachers: A phenomenological approach to educational research. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 6(2), 121-148.
32. Umanailo, M. C. B. (2019). Overview of phenomenological research. *Frenxiv Papers*, 1-6.
33. UNESCO (2020). How many students are at risk of not returning to school? *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. Paris: France (<http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).
34. UNICEF, A. (1992). The state of the world's children 1998.
35. (2021). *UNICEF Sudan-Education- Report (2021)*. UNICEF SUDAN. [https://www.unicef.org/sudan/media/8546/file/UNICEF%20Sudan-Education-%20Report%20\(2021\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/sudan/media/8546/file/UNICEF%20Sudan-Education-%20Report%20(2021).pdf)
36. Valentine, K. D., Kopcha, T. J., & Vagle, M. D. (2018). Phenomenological methodologies in the field of educational communications and technology. *TechTrends*, 62, 462-472.
37. Wangmo, S., & Tshewang, S. (2021). Push, pull and falling out: Determinant factors of drop-out in technical training institutes in Bhutan. *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, 44.
38. Wang, M. T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review*, 28(2), 315-352.
39. World Bank. (2020). SUDAN BASIC EDUCATION EMERGENCY SUPPORT PROJECT May 1, 2020.
40. Zira, K. M., & Zumo, A. M. (2020). Perceived Factors Responsible for Students' Drop Out of School in Zumo Development Area Song Local Government of Adamawa State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Current Aspects*, 4(1), 22-32.