Preventive Ways to Deal with Study Abandonment Phenomenon: What Data, And What Experience?

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التكفل الوقائي بظاهرة التخلي عن الدراسة: أية معطيات، وأية تجارب؟

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Abstract : This study aims to answer the problem of dealing with the phenomenon of study abandonment, as it reviews a set of preventive measures. And aims too, at revealing the countries experiences in this matter. Studies and statistics from international organizations, such as investigations carried out by UNESCO, Institute of Statistics, the European Economic and Social Cooperation Organization have been used in this research. The study concluded that the Early detection of students who are targeted to drop out of school is achieved through indicators: Learning difficulties, school and academic tardiness, low achievement, negative students' attitudes toward school. Second, adopting training guidance programs on academic habits and skills, such as preventive programs from academic and school failure, and thus not to reach the school drop-out stage. Also, adopting support measures through "new opportunity" programs. And support deprived and disadvantaged families by Governments. In the end, the researcher presents recommendations in the light of these global experiences.

KEYWORDS: Study Abandonment; Country Experiences; Preventive Measures; School Drop-out; School Expulsion.

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ملخص : تندرج هذه الدراسة في إطار الدراسات الاستقرائية التي تجيب عن إشكالية التكفل بظاهرة التخلي عن الدراسة، حيث تستعرض جملة من الإجراءات الوقائية للظاهرة، وتهدف للكشف عن تجارب الدول في هذا الشأن. ويتم فيها اعتماد دراسات وإحصائيات لمنظمات مثل اليونسكو ومنظمة التعاون الاقتصادي والاجتماعي الأوربية.

وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن تجارب الدول حول الظاهرة أفضت إلى أن الكشف المبكر عن الطلاب المستهدفين بالتخلي عن الدراسة يتم من خلال مؤشرات مثل: صعوبات التعلم، حالات التأخر الدراسي، والاتجاهات السلبية للتلاميذ نحو المدرسة. كذلك اعتماد برامج إرشادية تدريبية حول العادات والمهارات الدراسية، واعتماد برامج "الفرصة الجديدة"، ومساندة الأسر المحرومة من قبل الحكومات. وفي الأخير تقدم الباحثة بعض التوصيات على ضوء هذه التجارب العالمية.

كلمات مفتاحية: التخلي عن الدراسة؛ تجارب الدول؛ الإجراءات الوقائية؛ الانقطاع عن الدراسة؛ الطرد من المدرسة.

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1-Introduction:

"Education is for all". Thus, one of the six UNESCO goals of Education for All is to achieve universal primary education by confronting the phenomenon of non-enrollment or school dropout. A significant aspect of this challenge is "Le Decrochage Silencieux" (Bautier, 2002; Blaya, 2012) or silent dropout, a term that describes the unnoticed disengagement of students from the education system before they physically drop out. When children reach the third grade, those who have not enrolled at the appropriate age are four times more likely to experience late entry into school, affecting their educational trajectory significantly (UNESCO, 2012, p. 9).

Globally, students are obligated to receive education; for instance, in Finland, education begins at seven and ends at sixteen, while it starts at six and ends at sixteen in Algeria, and is mandatory in the Netherlands from five to eighteen (OECD, 2019, p. 504). The purpose of these age ranges is to provide students with foundational educational and life skills. To achieve this goal, students are expected to spend a minimum number of hours in the classroom, which varies by country. In member countries of the European Economic and Social Cooperation Organization (ECOSOC), the standard is 799 hours per year for primary education and 919 hours for the initial stage of secondary education, an increase of approximately 120 hours from the primary level (OECD, 2019, p. 388).

However, the reality often differs, as many students do not meet these basic hourly requirements, which affects the level of skills and knowledge they possess when they drop out of school. Poverty further exacerbates the likelihood of early school dropouts. For example, in Uganda in 2006, there was a significant disparity between rich and poor regions, with 80% of children from affluent areas completing primary education compared to only 49% from poorer regions.

"The barriers that hinder children from disadvantaged groups from attending school in a timely manner and from advancing in the education system require system-wide reforms," the report states. In many countries, the cost is the primary reason parents do not enroll their children in schools or opt to drop them out (UNESCO, 2012, p. 9). School fees, even if not official, often include informal fees such as private or additional lessons, which wealthier families are more inclined to afford, and the cost of educational materials.

The problem lies in the fact that education aims to promote learning and the acquisition of life skills for young people, but if early abandonment of school occurs, i.e., before enrolling in upper secondary education, these young people will face life without the basic skills needed for a decent living. Unfortunately, 71% of the world's adolescents who were enrolled in lower secondary education, dropped out at that school stage in 2010. According to UNESCO statistics in 2012, approximately 120 million children worldwide had dropped out of school before reaching the fourth grade of primary school out of 650 million children.

Journal of Human Studies and Social. University Oran2. Vol: 13 .N: 02.

ISSN: 2253-0592 EISSN: 2588-199X / Prefix: 10.46315

The school experience can be negative for a student when they cannot position themselves in a balanced way within school activities, do not engage in the educational act, or feel excluded or marginalized.

In this preliminary context, the same problem arises; does the process of dealing with the abandonment phenomenon correspond to the degree of its occurrence? Did the educational systems think of preventive ways that start from first signs of psychological discontinuity from school activity?

2- Methodology:

2.1- FRAMEWORK AND APPROACH:

This study uses a multi-methods approach, and integrates quantities and qualitative data to address the school dropping out and abandonment phenomenon. By looking through the data and the different case studies from various countries; the research identifies effective preventative strategies and understands the causes of this phenomenon.

2.2- DATA COLLECTION

The source of the quantitative data in this study was from international organizations, including UNESCO and the OECD; it focuses on the dropout rates, educational attainment and socioeconomic factors. The qualitative data was from interviews with educators and analysis of educational policies in different regions.

2.3- ANALYSIS

The statistical methods that were used in this study were to quantify the nature of school dropouts and give a clear and extent picture on the rates and patterns of the dropouts. On the other hand, thematic analysis was applied to interpret qualitative data and offer a deeper insight to the reasons and contexts of school dropouts. This combined approach helped to give a full and better understanding of all the factors driving students to drop out of their schools.

2.4- OBJECTIVES:

The current study aims at the following:

  o   Analyzing the phenomenon of school abandonment and determining where it falls in the school drop-out process.

  o   Highlighting its effects and implications on the psychological level of the student.

  o   Determining the ways and means to ensure the prevention of this phenomenon by investigating the experience of other countries.

2.5- IMPORTANCE

The importance of this study is determined by the importance of the topic in hand;

  o   Abandoning school is a major event in the student's life.

    o   The act of abandonment changes the life course of the child/teenager, especially when it occurs at an early age.

    o   Dropping out reflects on the child's psychology and on his future personal project.

    o   Abandonment creates a rupture between a bright past and an unknown future.

3- PROCEDURAL DEFINITIONS OF STUDY TERMS

3.1- Abandonment

It is the act of leaving, in this current study; it is explained in two situations

3.1.1. Quantitative situation

Indicative of the student's leaving his regular schooling course, and takes a break whether for personal, social, economic or school reasons.

3.1.2. Qualitative situation

It indicates the self-exclusion that the pupil makes when he fails to achieve his school presence, which is the manifestations of non-participation in academic activities and the rejection of everything that is school.

3.2- Methods of Dealing with It

In the context of the current study, the focus is on exploring the methods employed by various countries to address the issue of school abandonment, with a particular emphasis on preventive strategies.

4- THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS OF STUDY CONCEPTS

4.1- First: School Abandonment

The idiomatic concept expresses the act of dropping out of school and abandoning regular schooling, which results in not completing the educational stages, and not obtaining various educational certificates that qualify them to either pursue higher education or enter the workforce, which is also a form of school dropout. This type of abandonment can be quantified and measured through statistics and descriptive statistical studies.

Additionally, there is the second type of abandonment and discontinuity; its qualitative indicators are defined in disorders such as learning difficulties, which can be associated to mental obstacles related to the student's initial negative perceptions of the school environment as mentioned by studies of a psychosocial orientation.

Furthermore, psycho-pedagogical research indicates that affected students lose the meaning of learning, resign from active participation in educational activities, and struggle to maintain a balanced engagement in school activities, often referred to by researchers as silent discontinuity.

(Silent interruption according to the research by Bautier (2002) and Blaya (2012))

The student, therefore, lives in a state with of self-exclusion, and the tragedy of their inability to assert their presence inside of the school. Especially, if this is accompanied by the educational

Journal of Human Studies and Social. University Oran2. Vol: 13 .N: 02.

ISNN: 2253-0592 EISSN: 2588-199X / Prefix: 10.46315

authority's judgment, as they deem them weak academically, which forces the student to abandon the position of "partner" in the school activity. Consequently, their educational path will be set with repeated absences, a rebellion against school's rules, alliances with peers in similar situations or adopting a 'present-absent' to show their disengagement.

The discontinuity here is the result of a socio- cognitive misunderstanding.

The dropout is identified by UNESCO as a student who left school before the last year of their school cycle. The report (Unesco, 2010, P. 23) draws attention to the hidden reality caused by the phenomenon stating that: "recent learning assessments, whether local, national or international indicate that in many countries, children leave school with only the most basic of skills". It adds:" it is the countries on the road to growth that have the lowest levels of education"

- **Students school-Oriented Perceptions:**

Negative perceptions are reflected in the student's attachment to their school, and when the student fail to understand the value of learning and the importance of science in their lives, they are more likely to will soon leave school, as evidenced by the studies of Zarouali.L (2010), Yacine.A (2011) and Achouri.S (2017).

- **Families' situation and Their Income Level:**

The factor of poverty and the situation of deprived families that are unable to provide to their children's educational needs, Research across various countries has unanimously agreed that children of deprived families are the most vulnerable to dropping out of school (Yacine, 2014, P . 138). Also, according to the study by Heidi Marie Hastrel in 2003, many cases of deprived families, are directly responsible for their children abandoning their studies, due to income factors (such as the inability to pay school fees, provide school necessities, or transport children to their schools), or due to cultural and social factors like a death in the family or a change in residence.

4.2- Manifestations of School Abandonment

Abandonment takes many forms and manifestations before the actual act of leaving school. Initially, in the form of learning difficulties, followed by a decrease in the student's achievement performance score. Moreover, when it is combined with some personal or social factors, the student may face failure and the need to repeat the school year, causing the school administration to take drastic measures, such as force the student to dropout (i.e. expulsion). or the student choses to give up voluntarily once realizing that they have no role in the educational institution. In addition, these scenarios are types of school dropouts, and it can be explained through the following diagram:

Diagram 01 Drop-Out Appearances

In addition to that, we find some characteristics and behaviors that can be monitored by the
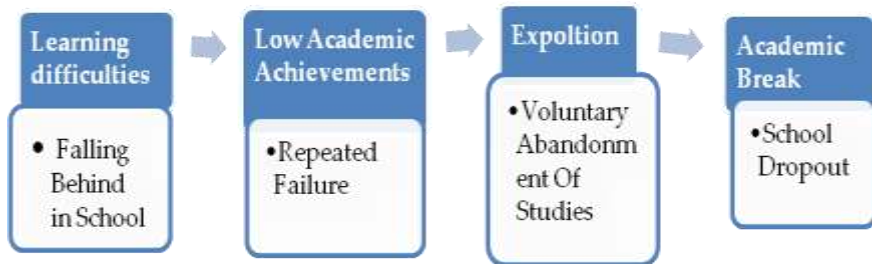
targeted student with the problem of abandoning studying, and this inside the school campus:

Researcher Adel Ali Seddik (2013, P. 88) pointed out the following characteristics:

A. Students targeted for leaving school often shows a rejection to the school's regulations, which leads gradually to excessive tardiness, and unjustified absences that negatively affect the regular follow-up of their lessons.

B. Paying less attention to school activity and homework.

C. It is frequently observed that students who are likely to drop out have repeated a grade more than once.

D. There is a deterioration in how these students perceive school, and more ambition to enter the workforce, where they view school more of a choice and a path imposed by the family.

E. They suffer from various problems (psychological, social or financial).

Kifah and Maasami (2016), Al-Dhahabi (2015), Boularass (2014), Karroum (2018), Bouzid (2015) and Adel (2013) agreed that a student willing to drop out of school exhibit signs of distraction, a lack of focus, and diminished participation in school activities, along with frequent tardiness and absences. Generally, they have poor communication with their teachers and most of their academic history is characterized by repeated failures.

In addition, advancements in technology offers new methods for predicting school dropout risks. Mnyawami et al. (2022) developed an automated machine-learning model in Tanzania that significantly enhances the accuracy of predicting which students are most likely to drop out, therefor enabling early interventions tailored to student needs.

4.3- Prevention, According To Some Specialists

Several researchers in the field of school dropouts and its different types have provided ideas and strategies for its prevention.

Journal of Human Studies and Social. University Oran2. Vol: 13 .N: 02.

ISNN: 2253-0592 EISSN: 2588-199X / Prefix: 10.46315

Researcher Benoit gland (2006) emphasizes on a key factor for academic success, and preventing failure, which is "self-confidence" or students' confidence in their abilities to learn. Most of the current motivational concepts share the idea that confidence in our abilities to act effectively plays a decisive role in our commitment and in our competence. Therefore, a suggested preventative action is "a sense of self-efficacy", and implanting confidence in the pupils targeted by the phenomenon, about their abilities to learn.

In 2016, researcher Fodil M. F. demonstrated the effectiveness of a counseling technique designed to prevent students at risk of dropping out from abandoning their studies. This approach involved a training program focused on enhancing cognitive skills, employing methods such as the rational persuasion technique. According to Ellis and MacLaren (1998), rational persuasion involves a behavioral cognitive intervention aimed at helping individuals correct their irrational or illogical thoughts and beliefs, which are often accompanied by emotional dysfunctions or behavioral disorders. The goal is to replace these with logical ideas and beliefs that are supported by emotional restraint and appropriate behavior.

FODIL also incorporated group discussions and the "circle of participation" method to adjust these tendencies. The results indicated that the program was highly effective. These techniques are particularly valuable due to their focus on reshaping the individual's adopted ideas and beliefs. They prepare participants to operate within a scientific and cognitive framework that emphasizes logic and rationality, moving away from illusions, irrational ideas, and misconceptions. This cognitive system helps safeguard individuals against potential future life challenges, thereby promoting their physical, psychological, mental, environmental, and social well-being (Fodil, 2016, pp. 110-125).

Achouri's 2017 study highlights the importance of children's perceptions of school, which she identifies as the number one cause for their abandonment of their studies, and their orientation toward the labor market. Following her findings through a field study of 192 Algerian children, both those who had dropped out and those still enrolled. These children carry negative perceptions regarding school and its utility. According to them, school is a lengthy and uncertain path, with excessive hours, which contributes significantly to their disinterest with the educational system (Achouri, 2017, p. 234).

An evaluation study, led by the Canadian Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Research on School Success (CRIRES), assessed preventive programs for dropout's students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and their effectiveness. The results of these programs have unanimously agreed that priority should be given to intervention strategies that closely accompany students. These strategies include fostering a better student-teacher relationship, creating a more stable and familiar

student groups, focusing on basic materials, adapting teaching methods to match the students' learning paces (CRIRES, 2001).

The study conducted by Ghanim (2005) in Jordan showed the effectiveness of a training monitoring program in improving the level of motivational and academic achievement, and academic skills of the experimental group members. Such programs can be important in preventing students from reaching the stages of dropping out of school, particularly when the underlying factors are academic

Yacine's study in Algeria (2011) showed the effectiveness of guidance programs aimed to train end-of-educational-level students in proper study skills and habits, on order to prevent the manifestations of drop outs. In Addition. The study emphasizes the importance of raising students' awareness about the benefits of studying and learning in their daily lives, and the importance of building self-confidence and positive self-esteem.

The study of Ben Ziada & .Lmerzaka (2019), confirmed the great importance of the teacher's role in preventing students from neglecting their studies. The more he is able to help the student in the formation of cognitive, and social skills necessary for the 21st century such as problem analysis, and information utilization, the more effective he is at creating a positive scientific attitude towards educational issues, phenomena, or problems. He also recommended utilizing media as platforms, for raising awareness and sensitizing families, parents, and public opinion. In addition, the study's results and seminars are presented on the implications and effects of school dropping out problem, and a reminder of the usefulness of communication between students 'homes and schools (2019, P. 6). As well as facilitating the process student access to schools, such as providing transportation or building schools in consideration of neighborhood population densities, distance and balance (Ben Ziada & Lmerzaka, 2019, pp. 5-6).

Julien Bonnet & Fabrice Murtin's 2023 study investigates all the reasons why would students drop out of school prematurely in OECD countries, while highlighting the influence of labor markets and educational policies.

Their research provides correlation between local employment opportunities and the specific educational strategies implemented; they both can significantly affect school dropout rates. The study shows that regions with labor markets that offer employment opportunities even for less-educated individuals might see higher dropout rates, as students chose work over continued education. On the other hand, strong and supportive school policies to different student needs, and comprehensive educational pathways are shown to reduce dropout rates effectively.

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5- **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

5.1- Results Findings from Quantitative Analysis

The statistical analysis revealed significant disparities in dropout rates across different regions and socioeconomic backgrounds. In 2010, approximately 71% of the world's adolescents who were enrolled in school dropped out at various stages, with the highest rates observed in economically disadvantaged areas. The study further identified early indicators of dropout risks, such as poor academic performance, low engagement in school activities, and socioeconomic hardships.

5.2- Insights from Qualitative Data

Interviews and policy reviews showed several factors influencing dropout rates, including inadequate school systems, lack of parental involvement, and insufficient government support. Educators mentioned a gap in the educational practices because of the absence of intervention for the at-risk student.

5.3- Discussion Implications of Findings

The results show the necessity for strategies that address both the educational and socio-economic factors contributing of the school dropouts. The preventive measures, include early identification systems, personalized learning plans, and support for disadvantaged families, are important in reducing dropout rates.

5.4- Comparison with Global Practices

Proactive and multidimensional preventative approaches are effective in the face of school dropouts, these findings align with the global trends. Per example, the program that combine academic support with social services have shown results in an international level.

6- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This survey indicates that the approach of dealing with school abandonment phenomenon, does not match to the degree of its occurrence, varying significantly from one country to another. The educational systems have sought to adopt preventive methods that start from the earliest signs of psychological disengagement from school activity. These interventions are diverse and can be categorized as follows:

- Early detection of students who are targeted to drop-out of school through indicators: learning difficulties, academic tardiness, and low achievement level, negative students' attitudes towards school.

- Providing specialized assistance through counseling technology (group counseling, skills training, counseling programs, rational persuasion...) that serve this purpose and activate the role of school counselor.

- Adopting counseling programs based on counseling theories such as the Aron Beck's theory of cognitive behavioral therapy, or Albert Ellis's theory of rational emotional therapy to modify negative attitudes towards school.

- Adopting training extension programs on study habits and skills as preventive programs against academic failure, and thus not reaching the stage of school drop-out.

- The development of support devices outside the classroom such as an individual pedagogical accompaniment, to help the student get rid of his school isolation.

- The necessity to adopt programs to develop life skills (psychological skills, interpersonal skills) that address sensitive issues in ways that allow students to participate, in order to complete curricular topics related to health education (Unesco, 2012, P:10)

- Pay more attention to the application of differential pedagogy.

- Adopting personal projects for academic success, by adjusting the educational approaches to individual student needs. It aims to prevent feelings of inferiority, and emphasizes continuous communication between teachers and between teachers and parents, to study the difficulties faced by students, which makes them feel genuinely supervised and supported, and establish a relationship of trust with teachers.

- Approving support measures through teaching hours, targeted research, or "new opportunity" programs.

- Establishing educational evaluation entities independent of the Ministries of Education in order to correct the course.

- Finding new strategies based on the idea that school is an attractive environment, not a repulsive one.

- Activating the quality standards in the educational institution.

- Fight students' absenteeism.

Journal of Human Studies and Social. University Oran2. Vol: 13 .N: 02.

ISSN: 2253-0592 EISSN: 2588-199X / Prefix: 10.46315

- The greater the sense of belonging to the school space is, the more the student won't be tempted by the idea of leaving school, as the pedagogical model adopted by the teacher has a strong impact on academic success.

- The role of the pedagogical approaches associated with the school institution in confronting the factors of early discontinuity, through building participatory relationships between the educational school team that is between professionals and also between the educational staff and the family.

- Activating the role of cultural and sports activities in creating motivation for learning and in achieving a sense of belonging to the school space and reducing anxiety feelings and monotony.

- Eliminate school fees, providing financial support to specific groups (Unesco, 2012, P:42).

- Providing subsidies to schools so that they do not impose fees on parents and activating social protection measures such as providing families with cash transfers (UNESCO recommendations). Such a procedure is in place in Algeria (3000 DA grant), and it is applicable in France as well, which is the provision of family grants according to the number of children, and the grant of school tools on the eve of the school entry. In the sense of supporting deprived families by governments.

- Activating the law on compulsory education in the primary stage and setting-up mechanisms for follow-up and implementation at the school level.

- Return to the internal system to enable students living in remote areas to follow a stable educational path (Takek, 2011).

- Activating contact and communication between family and school to follow up on the development of their children, to identify the problems they face both inside and outside school, and to help solving them (Ministry of Education, 2005).

- Encouraging the families' participation in non-class activities organized by the school.

- Reconsidering the pattern of institutions functioning, and strengthening the relationship between the administrative and the educational staff and between students and their parents.

- Improving the quality of education provided by the educational systems.

7- CONCLUSION:

It is evident from the previous discussion that the problem of school dropout requires serious help and dedicated efforts from educational authorities. Among the most important preventive initiatives is counseling through various techniques, it is particularly suited for students at risk of leaving school. This also proves that addressing school-related problems at their earliest is most effective, thus helping students complete their academic path to prepare them for the workforce, due to the skills and competencies essential for the job performance.

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