

Narrative of school dropouts in rural areas: A systematic review



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Abstract Dropout is a problem that has been observed in all developed and underdeveloped countries and has been researched by many researchers. Referring to the UNICEF Annual Report 2023, it shows that one of the problems experienced by children is dropping out of school or not continuing school. This article aims to explore the narrative of children dropping out of school in villages that occur in various regions. This article will also identify the factors that cause children to drop out of school and the impact that occurs when children drop out of school. This study uses a systematic review method with the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) approach. This approach is used to collect, assess, and critically synthesize relevant research results regarding the narrative of school dropouts in villages. The results obtained were categorized into three levels, namely, micro, meso, and macro. At the micro level, factors such as family condition and peer influence play an important role. At the meso level, the surrounding environment also makes a significant contribution. For example, a community that does not attach importance to education or the absence of supporting facilities. At the macro level, structural problems such as the lack of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure are the main barriers. Then, the impact of school dropouts is very broad and profound. At the individual level, children who do not complete primary education have a smaller chance of getting a decent job in the future, which ultimately perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

Keywords: school, child, family, culture

1. Introduction

Education serves as a fundamental pillar for nurturing individuals, communities, and nations, thereby playing a crucial role in socioeconomic development and human capital formation. Despite global efforts to promote inclusive and equitable quality education, the issue of school dropout remains a significant challenge worldwide. Dropping out is commonly defined as exiting the formal education system without completing secondary education, which can have profound implications for affected individuals and society at large, including limited job prospects, social exclusion, and the perpetuation of poverty Garcia et al. (2021). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), various socioeconomic and systemic factors contribute to the dropout phenomenon, revealing the need for targeted interventions and comprehensive policy strategies Garcia et al. (2021).

Globally, both developed and developing nations have high dropout rates, illustrating the complexity of the issue. UNICEF Annual Report (2023) highlights that a considerable number of children are still discontinuing their education or failing to progress to higher educational levels, especially in rural areas where accessibility and resource allocation are often inequitable Akinyemi et al. (2016). Numerous studies have consistently identified family-related factors such as low parental education, economic hardship, and limited literacy within the household as primary determinants of dropout rates (Zegeye et al., 2024). Furthermore, sociocultural dynamics in many rural contexts—where children are compelled to work to support their families—reinforce cycles of early school leaving, as discussed by Murphy-Graham et al. (2021) and Akinyemi et al. (2016). Such dynamics often exacerbate existing disparities and perpetuate the cycle of poverty, especially among marginalized populations.

While school-level dropout rates have received substantial attention, it is essential to recognize the trend of students exiting higher education as well, particularly among rural populations facing similar structural barriers Zegeye et al. (2024). Guzmán et al. (2022) highlighted the nuanced interplay of socioeconomic and geographic factors in determining dropout rates at this level, highlighting that rural students frequently encounter systemic obstacles that their urban counterparts do not face. In response to these complex and multifaceted challenges, various governments and organizations have aligned their educational policies with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes ensuring inclusive, equitable, and high quality education for all. Nevertheless, the persistence of dropout rates indicates that there are still critical gaps in understanding and addressing the underlying causes of this problem effectively.

To contribute to a nuanced understanding of the dropout phenomenon, this study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) focused on school dropout narratives, specifically in rural contexts. The SLR approach is selected for its rigorous



and transparent methodology, which facilitates the synthesis of existing evidence to identify patterns, gaps, and key factors influencing dropout behavior. The objectives of this review include (1) exploring how school dropout is experienced and narrated in rural communities, (2) identifying prevalent causes and contributing factors, and (3) examining both short- and long-term impacts associated with dropping out.

Through a systematic analysis of peer-reviewed literature and relevant reports, this article provides a synthesized overview of the dropout phenomenon, particularly in underrepresented rural settings. It aims to inform policy development, intervention strategies, and future research initiatives aimed at enhancing educational retention and equity. By delving into the lived experiences of school dropouts and examining prevailing educational frameworks, this study seeks to illuminate the multifaceted nature of educational access and the critical barriers that hinder sustainable educational engagement in rural communities.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a systematic review methodology utilizing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. The PRISMA approach is instrumental in collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing pertinent research findings regarding the narratives surrounding school dropouts in rural villages. This study employs a systematic review methodology utilizing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. The PRISMA approach is instrumental in collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing pertinent research findings regarding the narratives surrounding school dropouts in rural villages. This systematic review aligns with the objectives of promoting transparency, replicability, and comprehensiveness in the review process, as discussed by Reith-Hall (2022) (Akinoyemi et al., 2016). The systematic process outlined in the PRISMA framework helps address the complexities tied to educational outcomes, particularly in the context of rural populations facing distinctive challenges.

The systematic review process began with a comprehensive literature search across various academic databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. The search was structured around key terms such as “dropout”, “children”, “school”, “education”, “communication” and “village”. With the aim of gathering a diverse range of studies on the dropout phenomenon in these contexts (Zulaika et al., 2022). The inclusion and exclusion criteria were meticulously defined: only studies focusing on school dropout in rural areas, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and published in English or Indonesian were included. Studies that were not relevant to the main themes or lacked full-text availability were excluded from consideration.

After these criteria were established, the author conducted a systematic screening process. Initially, titles and abstracts were filtered to determine their relevance to the objectives of the study. Research that did not align with the inclusion parameters was excluded at this stage. Following the preliminary screening, the author engaged in a comprehensive examination of the full texts to further ascertain compliance with the defined criteria. This step involved an in-depth review of the research flow, which encompassed methods of data collection and the reliability of analyses presented in those studies (Guzmán et al., 2021).

In a thorough thematic analysis, the author extracted and synthesized relevant data from each selected study, including core research objectives, methodologies, participant demographics, principal findings, and conclusions. This thematic extraction aimed to reveal overarching trends and patterns in the narratives of school dropout experiences in rural contexts. By employing meticulous data synthesis strategies, the review highlighted significant themes that emerged consistently across various studies concerning the dropout phenomenon, particularly causal factors and implications for educational policy. Findings from the thematic analysis were presented in line with PRISMA guidelines, featuring a detailed flow diagram that outlines the processes of screening and selecting studies. Additionally, the narrative description of school dropouts, including factors leading to their discontinuation of education and the consequent impacts, was constructed based on the basis of collective insights derived from the analyzed literature. Previous research has shown that issues such as socioeconomic factors, parental education levels, and community support significantly influence dropout rates in rural settings (Zulaika et al., 2022), (Garcia et al., 2021)

In these contexts, numerous studies indicate that family dynamics and economic challenges play pivotal roles in influencing students' educational trajectories. For example Akinoyemi et al. (2016), highlighted how greater economic pressures correlate with higher dropout rates in rural Nigeria, reinforcing the idea that immediate household circumstances can profoundly affect educational engagement (Zulaika et al., 2022). Moreover, studies in various regions have emphasized the importance of community-driven educational policies that can better meet the needs of rural students and mitigate the effects of systemic dropout factors, which are exacerbated by social and economic inequities (Akinoyemi et al., 2016; Zegeye et al., 2024).

The PRISMA framework structured approach facilitates the understanding of dropout narratives across diverse geographical contexts, revealing insights into the factors that underpin educational disengagement among rural children. Aligning research findings within the PRISMA structure also aids in establishing relevant recommendations for policy implementation and educational interventions aimed at improving retention rates in vulnerable populations (Guzmán et al.,

2021). By focusing on recent literature (within the last five years), this study considers contemporary challenges to educational equity, thereby ensuring its relevance and contextual applicability (Garcia et al., 2021; Zegeye et al., 2024).

Researchers have noted that the far-reaching implications of school dropout extend beyond individual educational failures, fundamentally impacting community structures and long-term socioeconomic development. For example, Zegeye et al., (2024) reported that children who experience school dropout are often at increased risk of socioeconomic marginalization, which engenders a cycle of poverty in which it is difficult to break Zegeye et al., (2024). In addition, limited availability of quality educational opportunities in rural contexts reinforces existing disparities in educational outcomes, necessitating targeted interventions that consider local socioeconomic dynamics (Guzmán et al., 2021; Zegeye et al., 2024).

In conclusion, this systematic review, guided by the PRISMA approach, underscores the importance of interrogating dropout narratives through a comprehensive lens that encompasses varying socioeconomic, educational, and familial factors. This finding highlights the urgent need for localized policy responses that are sensitive to the unique challenges facing students in rural areas. Through this review, the study aims to contribute significant insights that inform educational practices and policy formation aimed at reducing dropout rates and promoting equitable access to quality education for all children.

The study selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA diagram (Figure 1). The PRISMA diagram below illustrates the systematic steps undertaken by the researcher in the process of identifying, screening, selecting, and including articles relevant to the topic of school dropouts. In the initial stage, a total of 255 articles were identified through electronic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using keywords such as "school dropout," "educational exclusion," "girls education," and "access to education." After the removal of duplicates, 98 articles remained and underwent an initial screening based on titles and abstracts. During this stage, 33 articles were excluded because they were either irrelevant to the topic or did not meet the inclusion criteria. A total of 65 articles proceeded to the full-text review stage, where the researcher assessed the content in relation to the study's focus namely, the determinants, consequences, and intervention strategies concerning school dropouts. In the end, 35 articles were selected for further analysis and used in the narrative synthesis and thematic discussion of this research.

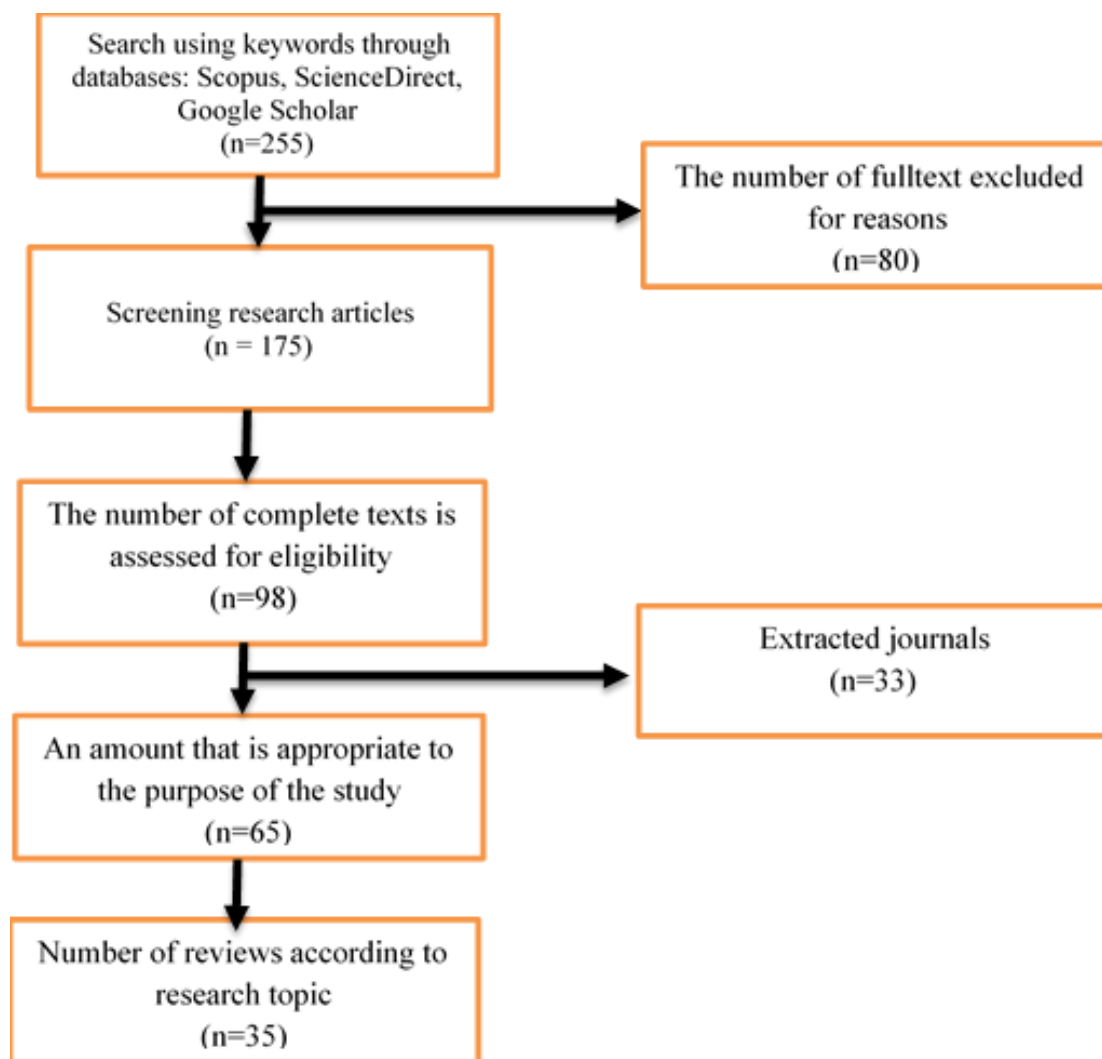


Figure 1 PRISMA diagram.



3. Results and Discussion

Education is an important foundation for individual development and societal progress. However, in reality, many children in various villages are forced to drop out of school. Children dropping out of school is a complex and profound social issue that has a long-term impact on individuals, families, and society. In many villages, especially in developing countries, obstacles including economic hardship, inadequate educational opportunities, and insufficient social support are often the main causes of children leaving school before completing their primary education. This research aims to explore and understand the narratives of school dropouts in villages, focusing on their experiences, causes, motivations, and impacts.

Research on education, mental health, and student well-being continues to be a central concern across multiple disciplines, especially in the aftermath of global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. A review of the most highly cited academic articles provides insight into the most influential and relevant issues in the current discourse of education and psychology. By identifying the top ten most cited publications, it becomes evident that key areas of focus include college student mental health, academic stress, school belonging, and long-term impacts on student engagement and retention.

Table 1 Scopus database research top 10 articles.

No.	Document Title	Authors	Source	Year	Citations
1	Mental disorders among college students in the World Health Organization World Mental Health Surveys	Auerbach, R.P., Alonso, J., Axinn, W.G., ... Zarkov, Z., Bruffaerts, R.	Psychological Medicine, 46(14), 2955–2970	2016	949
2	The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education	Pascoe, M.C., Hetrick, S.E., Parker, A.G.	International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 25(1), 104–112	2020	578
3	Longitudinal and Contextual Associations Between Teacher–Student Relationships and Student Engagement: A Systematic Review	Quin, D.	Review of Educational Research, 87(2), 345–387	2017	353
4	The relationships between school belonging and students' motivational, social-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes in secondary education: a meta-analytic review	Korpershoek, H., Canrinus, E.T., Fokkens-Bruinsma, M., de Boer, H.	Research Papers in Education, 35(6), 641–680	2020	261
5	Early dropout prediction using data mining: A case study with high school students	Márquez-Vera, C., Cano, A., Romero, C., ... Fardoun, H.M., Ventura, S.	Expert Systems, 33(1), 107–124	2016	229
6	Quantifying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality on health, social, and economic indicators: a comprehensive review of data from March, 2020, to September, 2021	Flor, L.S., Friedman, J., Spencer, C.N., ... Pigott, D.M., Gakidou, E.	The Lancet, 399(10344), 2381–2397	2022	197
7	The gender gap in student engagement: The role of teachers' autonomy support, structure, and involvement	Lietaert, S., Roorda, D., Laevers, F., Verschueren, K., De Fraine, B.	British Journal of Educational Psychology, 85(4), 498–518	2015	197
8	Beyond COVID-19 supernova. Is another education coming?	Azorín, C.	Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 5(3–4), 381–390	2020	191
9	The relationships between violence in childhood and educational outcomes: A global systematic review and meta-analysis	Fry, D., Fang, X., Elliott, S., ... Florian, L., McCluskey, G.	Child Abuse and Neglect, 75, 6–28	2018	187
10	A longitudinal study of the association of adolescent polydrug use, alcohol use and high school noncompletion	Kelly, A.B., Evans-Whipp, T.J., Smith, R., ... Hall, W.D., Catalano, R.F.	Addiction, 110(4), 627–635	2015	158

The table presents the ten most cited scholarly articles in the fields of education and student psychology. The leader of the list is Auerbach et al. (2016) study titled *Mental Disorders among College Students in the World Health Organization World Mental Health Surveys*, published in *Psychological Medicine*, which has garnered 949 citations. This study highlights the prevalence of mental disorders among university students and serves as a foundational reference in the discussion of student mental health in higher education.

Pascoe et al. (2020) focused on the impact of stress on secondary and higher education students, with 578 citations. The third most cited article, by Quin (2017), presents a systematic review that explores the connection between teacher–student interactions and student engagement, which received 353 citations—emphasizing the importance of interpersonal dynamics in educational success.

Korpershoek et al. (2020) contributed a meta-analytic review of school belonging and its association with motivational, socioemotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes (261 citations), highlighting the psychological dimensions of student performance. Márquez-Vera et al. (2016) address the role of technology in predicting early school dropout through data mining techniques (229 citations), reflecting an intersection of education and computational methods. Two articles reflect a postpandemic research focus: Flor et al. (2022) analyze the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on health, social, and economic indicators (197 citations), whereas Azorín (2020) speculates on the future of education beyond the pandemic (191 citations), both pointing to a broader, systemic shift in global educational priorities. Overall, these highly cited publications demonstrate a diversity of pressing themes—from mental health and academic stress to school connectedness and global crises. Their citation impact indicates their substantial contribution to shaping academic discourse and informing policy in education and psychological research.

Narratives of education, especially school dropouts, are found in various regions and are caused by various factors. Among them are boys dropping out of school to work, whereas girls drop out of school due to marriage or pregnancy (Murphy-Graham et al., 2021); in Melawai, girls drop out of school due to early pregnancy factors (Nash et al., 2019), similar to what happens in rural Honduras, where children drop out of school due to early pregnancy, lack access to education, and boys have to work to help meet the needs of parents/families (Murphy-Graham et al., 2021). Early school dropout as a profound effect on the rest of life (Bayón-Calvo et al., 2020). In addition, the main factors for children dropping out of school in Beni Mellal are early marriage, agricultural activities (helping agricultural parents), economic factors (poverty), and a lack of educational infrastructure (Alaoui et al., 2021). In fact, not only at the school level but also at the university level, several students do not continue their education. For example, students who come from rural areas do not continue their education because their parents' education level is low, and the obligation to work is due to the economic pressure of the family (Guzmán et al., 2022). Thus, several previous studies have shown that the most dominant factor for children dropping out of school or not continuing school is family (Guzmán et al., 2022; Antunes and Lúcio, 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2018).

Figure 2 shows that over the past decade, scholarly interest in the narrative of school dropouts has steadily and significantly increased, as reflected in the number of Scopus-indexed publications from 2015 to 2024. Beginning with fewer than 150 documents in 2015, the volume of research gradually rose each year, reaching approximately 240 documents by 2019 and maintaining that level through 2020. This upward trend continued with a modest increase in 2021 and 2022, peaking sharply in 2024 with more than 350 publications—the highest in the ten-year span. This surge in 2024 may reflect intensified global attention to education equity, postpandemic learning disruptions, and systemic educational reforms. However, a sharp decline is observed in 2025, which is likely due to the partial data availability for the current year, as the year is still ongoing. Overall, the data indicate a growing academic focus on school dropout issues, highlighting its importance in educational and social research landscapes.

Figure 3 illustrates the most prolific authors contributing to the narrative of school dropouts in Scopus-indexed publications. At the top of the list are Ashida, A. and Rozelle, S., each with 9 documents, indicating their strong and consistent scholarly engagement with issues surrounding school dropout. Close behind are De Witte, K. and Shi, Y., both with 7 publications, followed by Chu, J. and Loyalka, P., who each authored 6 documents. Several other researchers—including Molontay, R., Yi, H., and Zhang, L.—have each contributed 5 documents, whereas Andersen, S. completes the list with 4. This distribution highlights a small but active group of scholars whose work has significantly shaped current discourse, particularly through cross-national and policy-oriented research. The presence of multiple authors from East Asia and Europe suggests a global perspective in addressing school dropout phenomena.

Figure 4 displays the top contributing institutions in the field of the Narrative of School Dropouts, highlighting the global distribution of research activity. Universidade de São Paulo leads with the highest number of publications (over 23 documents), reflecting Brazil's strong academic interest in addressing educational inequalities and dropout issues. Following closely are Universiteit Maastricht and Universidade do Minho, both European institutions, each contributing significantly, with approximately 21 and 20 documents, respectively. Other major contributors include KU Leuven and universitetet i Bergen, indicating active research engagement in Belgium and Norway.

Notably, several institutions, such as Universidad de Murcia, Columbia University, and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, also appear in the top ranks, reflecting a blend of interest from both the social sciences and public health perspectives. Scandinavian universities such as OsloMet – Storbyuniversitetet and UiT Norges Arktiske Universitet round out the list, underlining Northern Europe's commitment to inclusive education research. This diverse institutional representation points to widespread concern over school dropout narratives and underscores a collaborative global effort in exploring solutions.

The author searched various research articles to determine the underlying reasons behind children's school dropout there levels, namely, the micro level, the meso level, and the macro level, that cause children to drop out of school. Research

on how children's education has been carried out has focused on various factors, including family factors, the surrounding environment, and the government. In other words, the author noted that the factors that cause children to drop out of school are at three levels, namely, the micro, meso, and macro levels, accompanied by the results of research that results in children dropping out of school. In general, the author concludes that research on school dropout has been widely conducted from the perspective of the social sciences by researchers and academics. The following section describes some research on school dropout based on several factors that have been carried out both domestically and internationally.

The phenomenon of school dropout at the micro level can be divided into several factors, including economic factors, lack of family support, and lack of supervision from parents that cause early pregnancy. Research conducted by Brown et al. (2023), entitled Local Food Price Volatility and School Dropout in Sub-Saharan Africa, shows that there is a correlation between food prices and school dropout rates; families that experience an increase in food prices prefer to allocate funds for food needs rather than children's education. This causes the dropout rate to increase, especially for boys who choose to work to meet their families' needs. In addition, this study highlights the vulnerability of educational attainment to economic shocks, especially in regions where food security is unstable. Financial support from the government is needed for economic stability (Brown et al., 2023). Furthermore, Vargas Valle, Eunice D. (2023) entitled The School Incorporation of International Migrants in Mexico, 2020, to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by migrant children in the school integration process, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and programs. The results of the study revealed various challenges faced by migrant children, including language barriers; namely, many migrant children have difficulty understanding Spanish, which is the language of instruction in Mexican schools. In addition, migrant children often face discrimination and stigma from classmates and teachers, which can affect their psychological well-being and motivation to learn. Continuous efforts from governments, schools, and communities are needed to ensure that migrant children can adapt to and succeed in the new educational environment. More effective policies and consistent implementation are essential for supporting this integration process (Vargas Valle, 2023).

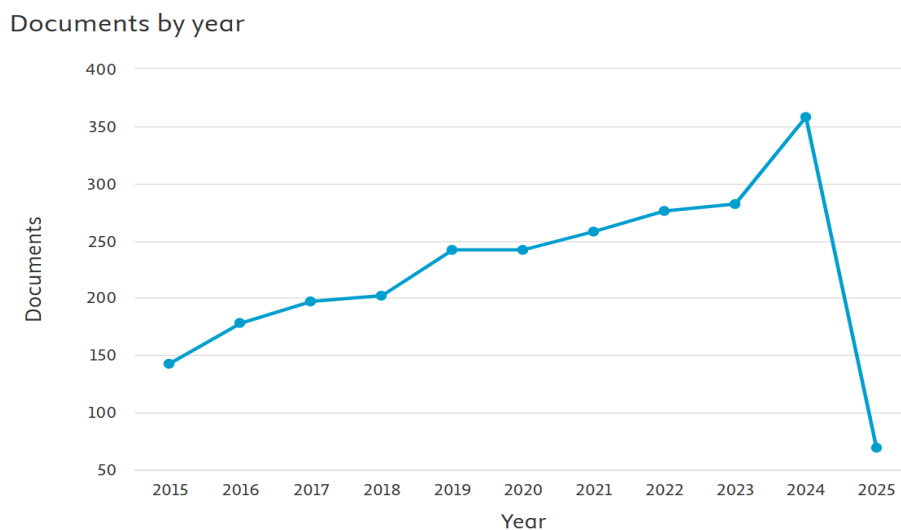


Figure 2 Document- article school dropouts.

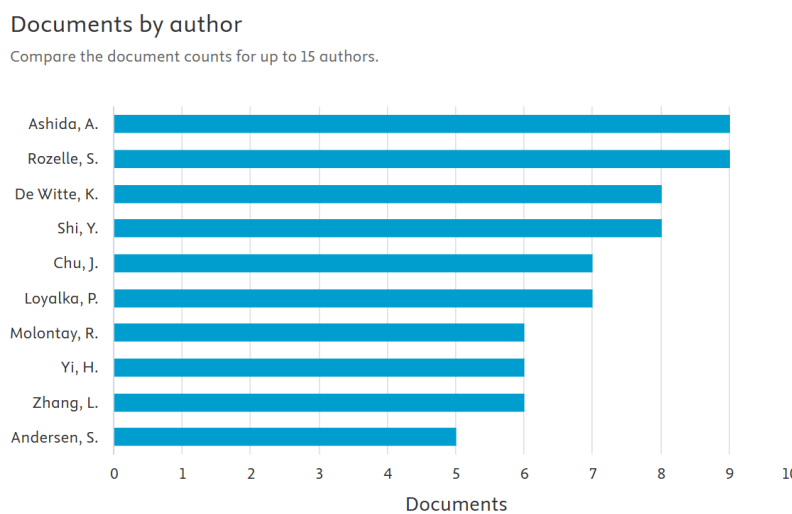


Figure 3 Most prolific authors.



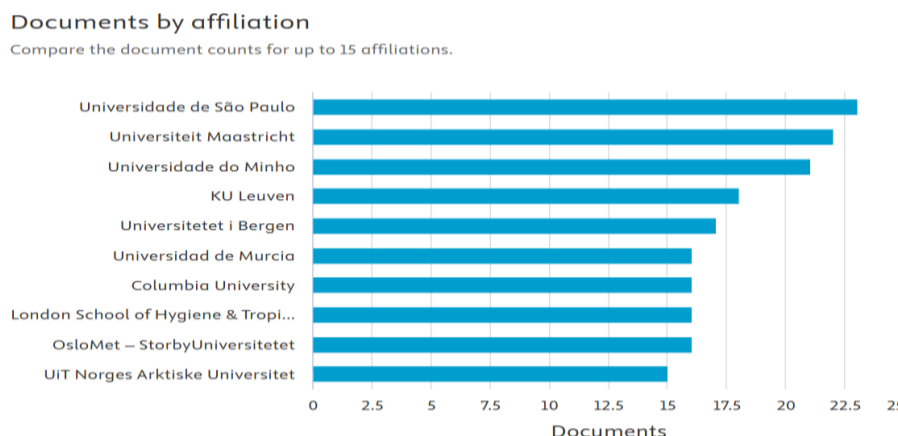


Figure 4 Top contributing institutions.

Furthermore, research conducted by Khan (2024) entitled Female education and marriage in Pakistan the focused on the: role of financial shocks and marital customs. This study aims to determine the relationship among women's education, financial shocks, and marriage customs in Pakistan. The results show that women's education rates in Pakistan remain low, especially in rural areas. Factors such as a lack of access to schools, patriarchal culture, and social pressures hinder women's education, which has a significant positive effect on delays in marriage and increased participation in the workforce. In addition, job loss and a decrease in family income have a negative effect on women's education. This causes families to tend to reduce education spending during times of economic hardship, which often impacts girls more than boys do (Khan, 2024). this study was titled “perceived” parental alcohol problems and later dropout and grade point average in high school: a register-based follow-up study” The study highlighted how students' perceptions of alcohol problems in their parents affect their likelihood of dropping out of school and their average academic grades in high school. The results revealed that students who reported alcohol problems in their parents were more likely to drop out of school than students who did not report the problem. In addition, Parent of students with perceptions of alcohol problems tend to have lower academic averages in high school (Pisinger et al., 2023).

Second, there is a lack of support from families, especially parents. Family economic limitations have an impact on parents' inability to finance their children's education. Social and cultural norms also affect the rate of school dropout in Pakistan. Early marriage also hinders girls' education. In addition, the low quality of education, including the lack of adequate school facilities, qualified teaching staff, and ineffective teaching methods, makes children less motivated to continue their education (Abid et al., 2021). furthermore, household chaos, such as disorderly and unstable environments, was found to have a significant negative effect on student engagement in school. Children who live in homes with high levels of chaos tend to have difficulty focusing on and participating in school activities. In addition, supportive and responsive foster care contributes positively to student engagement. Children who received consistent emotional and structural support from their parents showed greater engagement in school. Thus, domestic chaos, parenting, and self-regulation skills are important factors that affect student engagement at an early age (Garrett-Peters et al., 2017).

Several studies have also sought to reveal the experiences of children who drop out of school. For example, a study conducted by Sharpe (2019) entitled "Mine is an Atypical Case" : analysis of stories about the Experience of Higher Education Drop-Out – revealed that the factors that cause individuals to leave school due to mental stress, such as depression and anxiety, financial difficulties and a lack of economic support, ultimately motivate them to work (Sharpe, 2019). The promiscuity factor causes pregnancy at an early age. This information was obtained through a study conducted by Morgan et al. (2022) entitle "We were girls but suddenly became mothers" This study evaluated the effects of teenage motherhood on girls' educational attainment in the Volta Region, which revealed that teenage pregnancy causes children to drop out of school due to poverty factors. This study then provides recommendations on the need to improve the development policy of the informal agricultural sector to improve the community economy (Morgan et al., 2022). Similar findings were obtained through research conducted by Mokoena & Breda (2021) who reported school dropout among female learners in rural Mpumalanga, South Africa. The findings indicated that a contributing factor to dropping out of school among female students in the rural area of Mpumalanga, South Africa, was the first pregnancy reported by 7 out of 12 participants. Some of the impacts of pregnancy that cause them to drop out of school include discrimination from teachers, school policies that prohibit pregnant students from attending school, pregnancy symptoms that interfere with the learning process, and difficulty in arranging postpartum care (Mokoena & Breda, 2021).

Another factor at the micro level that causes children to drop out of school is peer relationships. The experience of peer violence by children is one of the causes of the high dropout rate. The findings also reveal large differences between adolescent girls and boys, as well as between adolescents in urban and rural areas (Woldehanna et al., 2021). In Africa, in other words, the term "gift giving" is used to describe adolescents in relationships. Third, the same is true for Ghana. Girls experience



dropping out of school because of pregnancy at this age (Pike and Grant, 2022). Dropouts result from the accumulation of motivating and pulling factors that cause students to question whether they are worthy of school because they do not have the opportunity to transform their education into valuable outcomes (Murphy-Graham et al., 2021), family economic conditions, or parents' knowledge of the importance of education as internal obstacles experienced by school dropouts (Nita et al., 2021). Moreover in Saudi Arabia, the majority of school dropouts are between the ages of 15 and 32, especially boys (Guzmán et al., 2022).

Children who drop out of school are caused not only by the family, but also by the environment and culture, which also affects how children do not pursue education. In many communities in Morocco, early marriage remains a common practice. Girls often face pressure from family and society to marry at a young age, often soon after puberty. Early marriage is considered a way to ensure women's financial and social security. Women's education is considered less important than that of men. Men are often encouraged to continue their education because they are expected to be the main breadwinners of the family, whereas women are expected to focus on their domestic roles (EL Alaoui et al., 2021). The dimension of school dropout is due to the lack of institutional support for the continuity of the motivation process for students, because the ease of access to credit is greater than the scholarships provided (Valencia-Arias et al., 2023). In addition, early pregnancy often occurs which results in girls dropping out of school. The involvement of parents, especially mothers, is essential to encourage SRH education from an early age and gain acceptance of adolescents' access to SRH services (Nash et al., 2019).

This study examines the level of educational achievement in three different social groups, namely, scheduled caste (SC), scheduled caste (ST), and other unreserved castes, at the school level. The analysis of this study reveals that disadvantaged social groups- SC and ST -are marginalized classes that are depressed and experience high rates of educational deprivation compared with other communities. Another finding was that the main factors for dropping out of school were financial constraints, domestic employment, and early marriage (Maji & Sarkar, 2018). In Pakistan, financial conditions, the impact of lockdowns, ways of learning, government policies, fear of death, parents' psyche sociocultural impacts, the role of teachers and administrators, the most affected rates, and some of the contributing factors among the main factors (Shuja et al., 2022), and the impact of parental job loss is one of the factors affecting school dropout (Maio and Nisticò, 2019; Kidman et al., 2022).

Finally, at the macro level inadequate infrastructure facilities cause children to drop out of school. The emergence of nursing institutions offering educational programs for children who drop out of school is one of the government's efforts to reduce the dropout rate (Veen et al., 2023). Furthermore, schools play a central role in families' expectations of their children's future. Children's educational failure has severe consequences for working-class families (Millet and Thin, 2021). Including low test scores for students (Bau et al., 2021) One of them is a study by Orgill-Meyer J. (2020) on the interaction effect of villages and school latrines on educational outcomes in India which revealed that the presence of adequate infrastructure within the school setting is one of the benchmarks for students, especially girls, who continue schooling. This occurred in India, which tried to analyze how the availability of infrastructure in villages and schools affects the sustainability of children's education (Orgill-Meyer, 2020). In the same year, research conducted by Mendieta (2020) entitled virtual classrooms pedagogical mediation for inclusion and disabilities. This research departs from the phenomenon of children with disabilities dropping out of school. Therefore, a platform that can be used by both teachers and children with disabilities during the learning process is needed (Mendieta et al., 2020) Furthermore, the author identified the impact of school dropout. Various studies have shown how children drop out of school. One of them is a study conducted by Etongwe (2018), entitled Encouraging girl-child education in my village, which shows that the lack of awareness of village communities about the importance of education for girls is lacking. Many parents did not send their daughters to school. Thus there is the assumption that women's role is only in the kitchen and that they give birth to children; thus education for women is considered unimportant. This forms the fundamental basis of gender disparity. Another finding of this study was that the participation and support of village elders and community leaders are very important improving education for girls in villages. However, many still have a patriarchal mindset (Etongwe, 2018). Even children who drop out of school are three times more likely to experience acute stress, which independent coders have recently rated as severe stress. These stressors occur in various domains (Dupéré et al., 2018). In addition, the experience of reintegration and support for refugee children returning in the short and medium term in Kosovo shows an unstable economic situation, unsupportive social networks, abandoned children from school due to cost problems, aggressive behavior of peers, language, and difficulty building emotional attachments with other children (Zevulun et al., 2021).

The VOSviewer visualizations provide a comprehensive overview of the key thematic clusters and keyword relationships in the scholarly discourse on the narrative of school dropouts. The heatmap highlights dominant terms such as "human," "adolescent," "student," "students," "student dropouts," and "psychology," indicating that the research heavily focuses on individual and psychological dimensions of dropout phenomena. Supporting terms such as "secondary education," "poverty," "pregnancy," "educational attainment," and "decision making" suggest a multidimensional analysis that incorporates educational, social, and health-related factors.

The network visualization further identified four major thematic clusters. The red cluster emphasizes systemic and policy-related aspects, including education policy, teacher training, and forecasting student dropouts. The green cluster highlights social and health risks such as adolescent pregnancy, HIV infection, poverty, and early marriage. The blue cluster

captures psychological and behavioral concerns such as drug dependence, life events, and ethnicity. Moreover the yellow cluster is centered on methodological approaches such as surveys, educational measurement, and nursing education.

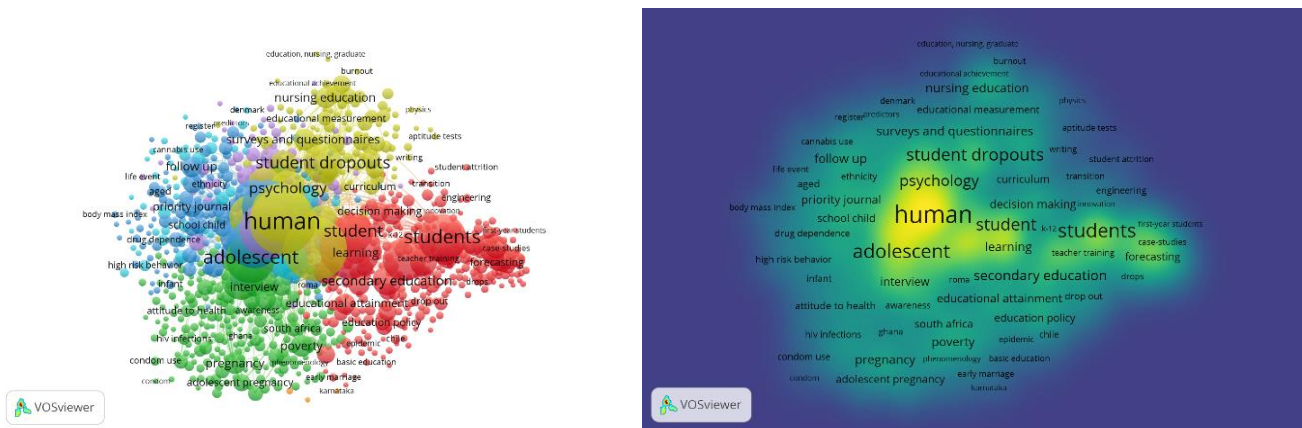


Figure 5 Thematic clustering of keywords in school dropout discourse.

Overall, the keyword network reveals a multidisciplinary engagement with the school dropout issue—connecting individual behavior, institutional frameworks, and broader socioeconomic contexts. This finding indicates that dropout is not only an educational challenge but also a complex social phenomenon shaped by multiple intersecting factors.

3.1. School dropouts

3.1.1. Inventory of determinants

3.1.1.1. Micro level

- The economic instability of the family (Brown et al., 2023; Khan, 2024)
- Low parental support (Abid et al., 2021; Garrett-Peters et al., 2017; Pisinger et al., 2023)
- Meaning of School for Students (Bembich, 2023; Sharpe, 2021)
- The phenomenon of school dropout among girls (Alabdulrazzaq et al., 2019)
- Early pregnancy (Morgan et al., 2022; Mokoena and van Breda, 2021)
- School Dropout Patterns (Murphy-Graham et al., 2021)
- Their relationships with their peers (Woldehanna et al., 2021; Pike and Grant, 2022)

3.1.1.2. Meso level

- The typology of School Dropouts (Valencia-Arias et al., 2023; Fortin et al., 2006; Lázaro et al., 2020)
- The impact of the pandemic, parental layoffs (Shuja et al., 2022; Di Maio and Nisticò, 2019)
- Influence of the surrounding environment (Maji and Sarkar, 2018)
- An unfavorable environment (drug abuse) (El Alaoui et al., 2021; Fortin et al., 2006)
- A lack of adolescent health and reproductive health literacy (Fortin et al., 2006; Nash et al., 2019)

3.1.1.3. Macro level

- School Dropout Assistance Programs (Veen et al., 2023)
- School and family approach (Millet and Thin, 2021); (Bayón-Calvo et al., 2020)
- The implementation of fragile learning in low-income areas (Bau et al., 2021)
- Availability of school facilities (Orgill-Meyer, 2020)

3.1.1.4. Inventory of results

- Family involvement in school decision-making (Carrión et al., 2018)
- The adjustment of educational policies (Wagnsson et al., 2021; Antunez et al., 2020)
- Young Women's psychology (Yadav et al. 2022; Dupéré et al., 2018; Berria et al., 2018)
- Dominant Social and Cultural Barriers (Kidman et al., 2022; Etongwe, 2018)
- Digital technology can help children with disabilities (Mendieta et al., 2020)

Thus, various factors affect school dropout, including internal (family) factors such as low parental educational literacy and family poverty. At the meso level, the surrounding environment also makes a significant contribution. This is also the case

at the macro level, such as access to schools, which is difficult for children, and the availability of inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, multiple approaches are needed, at the family, community, and government levels, to motivate children to continue school. In particular, parents' literacy about the importance of children's education needs to be strengthened again along with facilities and infrastructure that need to be improved.

4. Conclusion

At the micro level, factors such as family conditions and peer influence play important roles. Family economic limitations often force children to work to help make ends meet, thus sacrificing their education. In addition, a lack of support from peers or the presence of negative pressure can reduce children's motivation to continue attending school. At the meso level, the surrounding environment also makes a significant contribution. For example, a community that does not attach importance to education or the absence of supportive facilities such as libraries or learning centers can prevent children from staying in school. Less conducive environments, including those with low security levels, can also reduce children's access to education. At the macro level, structural problems, such as the insufficient availability of proper educational facilities and infrastructure, are the main barriers. Many villages lack schools with appropriate facilities, qualified teachers, and adequate access to transportation. This makes education difficult for children in remote areas.

The impact of school dropout is broad and deep. At the individual level, children who do not complete primary education have a lower chance of obtaining a decent job in the future, which ultimately perpetuates the cycle of poverty. In addition, they are more vulnerable to social problems, such as criminality and early marriage. In the community, a high number of children dropping out of school can reduce the overall quality of human resources, thereby hindering economic and social development. A lack of education can also reduce people's participation in democratic processes and decision-making, which can affect their lives.

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Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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