

FACTORS AND CHALLENGES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT IN KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Education is no doubt a significant endeavour that affects the life of people and empowers them to be useful to themselves and society in general. As a result of this, the Federal Government of Nigeria has introduced numerous educational policies to enable access, participation, and benefit in secondary school education. Despite these efforts, there is still a worrying trend of school dropout among students in secondary schools. The issue of dropping out of secondary school has become multifaceted, and one in every five of the world's dropout school children is in Nigeria. Given this, the study sets out to explore the experiences, factors and challenges of secondary school dropouts in the Kebbi state of Kola Kebbi State, Nigeria. Therefore, in-depth interviews with dropped-out students, the parents and teachers selected purposely, were carried out. The interview data were analyzed thematically using NVivo software. The study's findings shed light on the diverse factors, challenges, experiences, and subsequent paths taken by secondary school dropouts. Notably, several key themes emerged, encompassing family socio-economic status, peer bullying, academic struggles, teachers' and school policies, aspirations for financial independence, parental literacy limitations, school absenteeism, family separation, and the subsequent trajectories of both male and female dropouts. The study enriches our understanding of the dropout phenomenon and provides fresh insights into its dynamics. In light of the findings, it can be concluded that influences such as peer pressure, substance abuse, peer harassment, economic hardships, and early marriages play a pivotal role in driving students to leave Government Day Secondary School, Kola. To alleviate dropout rates, this study puts forth practical strategies for identifying warning signs indicating students at risk of leaving school. This research contributes to a more comprehensive comprehension of dropout trends and offers valuable recommendations to foster student retention.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

School dropout is the withdrawal from school before graduation (Ndidi, 2019). Similarly, according to Aliero (2020), student is considered a dropout when he or she withdraws from school before completing a course of instruction. Therefore, dropping out concerns the number of students who leave school or college early or leave a course or other activity before they finish it. The children who withdraw from school before graduating may not get evidence of graduation or a certificate. The rate at which children are dropping out of secondary school has become a global problem (Ajaja, 2012; Buhari, 2022). In relation to Nigeria, the issue of school dropout has become a serious problem. According to UNICEF (2022) Nigeria has 18.5 million students who have dropped out of secondary school, with girls accounting for more than half of the numbers. Confirming this challenge, the Minister of State for Education recently noted that school dropout has become a national crisis and that every part of the country has its share of the disaster (Media Team, 2022).

According to UNICEF (2018), a six-year-old in some Sub-Saharan African nations can expect less than three years of education, compared to an average of almost 16 years for children in North America. Based on a survey by the print and electronic media, youngsters who dropped out of secondary school are responsible for more than 85% of the criminal activity committed in Nigeria. (Adesina, November 2021). This development has become a cause of serious concern to all well-meaning Nigerians. Therefore, Omodero and Nwangwa (2020) opined that Nigerian Education System is in trouble and thus needs very serious attention in refocusing it and restructuring it for the attainment of national goals, because the attention now is on technology and knowledge economy. The impact of this advancement on economic competitiveness is significant. Nigeria, a country with a vision and mission, must make a determined effort to improve the educational attainment of all of its young people, who will be the future leaders (Okolie, Igwe, Nwosu, Eneje, & Mlanga, 2020).

Table 1.1

Number of students at risk of not returning to education institutions: projection results (180 countries and territories)

Education level	Female		Male		Total	
	# at-risk students ('000)	% increase of at-risk students	# at-risk students ('000)	% increase of at-risk students	# at-risk students ('000)	% increase of at-risk students
Pre-primary	2,440	2.84%	2,573	2.75%	5,013	2.79%
Primary	976	0.27%	1,074	0.28%	2,050	0.27%
Lower secondary	2,106	1.30%	2,326	1.32%	4,431	1.31%
Upper secondary	2,114	1.73%	2,306	1.71%	4,420	1.72%
Tertiary	3,626	3.06%	4,242	3.91%	7,868	3.47%
Total	11,261	1.32%	12,521	1.39%	23,782	1.36%

However, according to the UNESCO (2020), from these categories, the highest number of drop out are students from the poor, marginalised, and who experienced migration or violence.

1.2 Problem Statement

UNESCO estimates that close to 24 million students are at risk of not returning to school in 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis (UNESCO, 2020). Prior to Covid-19 across the world, in Nigeria the delivery of primary, post primary education in Nigeria has been facing many challenges for a long period (Adesina, 2021). It is imperative to note that dropout pattern as observed by Daminabo

(2019) in most Nigerian schools is very multifaceted in nature and may be ascribed to social factors and organization problems connected with learning such as lack of parental care, socio-economic standing of parents, undesirable peer group influence, adolescent pregnancy, ill health, boredom, academic failures, poor financial conditions, school distance from home, and high student- teacher ratio. Corroborating these claims, Igwela, Amie-Ogan, and Osuji (2022) noted that there are cases where more than 14.3% of young adults dropped out before finishing the course each year, yet public secondary schools' fees are at the minimal level.

Meanwhile, student withdrawal is the result of a long decision-making process and some factors. According to Behr, Giese, TegumKamdjou and Theune (2020), the national education system, and Nigeria's financing policy are some of the factors. However, to Aldowah, Al-Samarraie, Alzahrani and Alalwan (2020), the factors can be linked to individual reasons such as academic challenges and students' abilities to cope with the demands of schools. From another perspectives, disclosed that the factors for drop out in secondary schools are due to early marriage, meager socio-economic standing, and absence of parent inspiration. As a measure to limit drop out cases, the government of Kebbi State, Nigeria has made several efforts to improve access and participation in secondary education through numerous policies and programs. Still, school dropout in continues to persist, especially in senior secondary schools' levels (Effiong & Edet, 2020).

1.3 Research Objectives

1. Explore factors that influence secondary school children dropout in kebbi state .
2. Investigate the challenges among Secondary School Children dropouts in Kebbi state
3. Develop suggestions for solution to dropout among secondary school children in Kebbi state .

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the challenges among Secondary School Children dropouts in Kebbi state ?
2. What are the factors that influence secondary school dropout in Kebbi state ?
3. What is the suggestion for solution to dropout among secondary school children in Kebbi state ?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study on the secondary school dropout in Kebbi State, Nigeria examines the seemingly disadvantaged position of the dropout students in Kebbi State. It is hoped that this research, will help complement existing research and or literature on the reasons and prevalence of dropout syndrome in Secondary Schools in Kebbi State, and Nigeria in general.

Additionally, by presenting the research findings at educational conferences and seminars, educational planners and administrators will inform the public about the policies and strategies that will help lower the dropout rate for secondary school students, while parents will be educated and inspired to provide their children with more positive support.

This project will also provide teachers in public schools with information on how to recognise children who are at danger of dropping out of school and engage them in their lessons, increasing the effectiveness of our educational system by lowering dropout rates.

Furthermore, it will assist the government in determining the best corrective programme that will help the dropouts help themselves, their parents, and society at large.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the related works on experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout in the development of human capital in Kebbi state of Kebbi state, Nigeria. The chapter consists of concepts and literature that relate to the focus of the study. Therefore, the chapter offers an in-depth understanding of the matters of experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

This study employs the Academic Mediation, Family Socialization, and Institutional Departure Theories to underpin this research. The philosophy behind choosing these theories to underpin this research lies in the nature of the study itself. As eluded in previous chapter, that is, chapter one, it is the duty of this research to empirically investigate the experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout in the development of human capital in Kebbi state of Kebbi state, Nigeria.

2.2.1 Academic Mediation Theory

The Academic Mediation Theory offers a framework to analyze the relationship to academic success and educational institution dropout in society. Its central idea is that education, when they are used, help to shape the relations between human beings and the world. Therefore, academic mediation hypothesis focuses on illuminating the relationship between academic accomplishment and educational institution dropout. Meaning that a weak academic performance, typically measured by standardized tests or grade point average, is the best indicator of a student's likelihood of dropping out of school (Alhadabi, & Karpinski, 2020).

Based on the previous research, Rump, Esdar, and Wild (2017) challenged the assumption of a single global relationship between academic motivation and the intention to drop out and hypothesized there would be at least two groups or subpopulations, each of them with a unique group-specific academic motivation-intention to drop out relationship. However, Shogren, Garnier Villarreal, Lang, and Seo (2017) noted that early understandings of success have extensive consequences for student positive development in educational and social realms. Therefore, starting from elementary school, student achievement is closely tied to underlying motivation.

Battin-Pearson used other studies when formulating theories. In this specific theory, he uses studies written by Harichi, Abbot, Catalonia (1996), Maguin, Loebar (1996), and Hawking Catalano and Millar (1992). School bonding was the key takeaway from these findings, which was included into this theory. The school presentations that the pupils give are related to this community building. Academic performance is greater and dropout rates are lower among students who are involved and driven to succeed in school. This means those who have low academic achievement, and probably a low bonding to School is more likely to drop out of a current educational level (Battin-pearson, 2000).

In general, this theory explained the dropout behavior of students in secondary, therefore, this theory and others complement, so, none of them individually can describe the drop out phenomena (Yu, Huang, Han, He, & Li, 2020). Though, most of them highlight the role of background features of the students on the school dropout. In view of this, this study has also examined all the factors.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives detailed explanation of the research methodology which comprises all sections which focus on different and distinct methodologies concerns. In this method, collection of data, analysis as well as ensuring the theory remains in close link to each other. In actuality, this chapter relates with initial decisions, methodological distinctions and processes for data collection as well as analysis. Generally, this chapter contains the research procedure for the intended research on secondary school dropouts in Kebbi State, Nigeria.

3.2 Research Philosophical Foundation

Qualitative research can be understood as a method for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals attribute to a social problem (Creswell, 2014). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further confirmed that the aims of qualitative research is to make known the meaning of an incidence for people who are involved in it. In conducting a study qualitatively, researchers are interested in identifying how people describe their own experiences, how they conceptualised their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Providing another clarification, Braun and Clarke (2013) noted that qualitative research uses words as data collected and analysed in different ways.

Research paradigms, to some, are viewed as logical frameworks for controlling research activities however, others regarded it as worldviews through supportive assumptions that are essential in every research (Morgan, 2007). An understanding of the philosophical assumptions behind qualitative research begins with assessing where it fits within the overall process of research, noting its importance as a component of research, and considering how to actively connects to a study (Bleiker, Morgan-Trimmer, Knapp, & Hopkins, 2019).

The philosophical assumptions are rooted within interpretive backgrounds that qualitative researchers use when they conduct a study. Thus, Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2019) consider the philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology) as key locations that are folded into interpretive frameworks used in qualitative research. Social constructivism is another worldview. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2015), in social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social construction) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. Rather than starting with a theory (as in post positivism), inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning.

The practice of using social justice interpretive frameworks in a qualitative study varies, and it depends on the framework being used and the particular researcher's approach. However, some common elements can be identified:

The problems and the research questions explored aim to allow the researcher an understanding of specific issues or topics—the conditions that serve to disadvantage and exclude individuals or cultures, such as hierarchy, hegemony, racism, sexism, unequal power relations, identity, or inequities in our society.

The procedures of research, such as data collection, data analysis, representing the material to audiences, and standards of evaluation and ethics, emphasize an interpretive stance.

During data collection, the researcher does not further marginalize the participants, but respects the participants and the sites for research. Further, researchers provide reciprocity by giving or paying back those who participate in research, and they focus on the multiple perspective stories of individuals and who tells the stories. Researchers are also sensitive to power imbalances during all facets of the research process. They respect individual differences rather than employing the traditional aggregation of categories such as men and women, or Hispanics or African Americans.

Table 3.1

Some criteria for appraising the quality of quantitative research

Criterion (quantitative equivalent in brackets)	Key features
Credibility (Internal Validity)	The research should have answered the original question, with enough data to substantiate the findings and conclusions. Analysis should be systematic, logical and with adequate evidence for claims made.
Transferability (External validity)	Instead of providing indicators that the measures of a concept are doing what they claim, the aim in transferability is to utilise the rich detail produced in qualitative research so that others can evaluate its potential for application of the findings in other spheres. Lincoln & Guba refer to this as a 'database' ¹⁷
Dependability (Reliability)	Since measures are not a feature in qualitative research, the question of whether the outcome of the research is stable and consistent is best addressed by providing records of such features of the research process as participant selection, field notes, anonymised transcripts, and reflective notes at each stage as evidence. This forms an audit trail for those assessing the research
Respondent Validation	Returning the analysis and/or findings to the participants who generated the data for their opinions as to whether they feel it represents what they wanted to communicate
Originality	The categories resulting from the coding process should offer new ways of looking at the topic; there should be something about them that is significant to the reader such that they stand out from existing ideas concepts and practices.
Resonance	Theories or concepts resulting from the analysis should make sense to those involved in their generation and uncover insights previously hidden.
Usefulness	The findings should offer something of practical use

3.4 Sampling and Sample Size

A sample is a subsection of the populace. The researcher uses samples to represent the population. This is mostly because fatigue can be reduced and fewer errors can be avoided during data collection process, especially when a large number of elements are involved (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The participants for this study were selected in line with the objective of the study, which aimed at exploring the experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout.

Purposive sampling was adopted for this study. Purposive sampling is a technique commonly used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich

informants (Bryman, 2016). For this study, purposive involved identifying and selecting dropout students, the teachers as well as parents of the students (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). In addition to familiarity and experience, this study also used purposive sampling to select samples based on accessibility and disposition to participate in the study. Therefore, the sampling was the purposive selection of the informants due to the possibility of yielding most relevant data through the appropriate informants.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

In-depth interview was the primary methods of this study data collection. Based on this, the interview questions were designed as open-ended. The open-endedness permitted the interviewees to give as much detailed information as they desire about their lived experience on drop out. It also allowed the interviewer to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up. The attached appendix B presents the interview guide that was followed throughout the fieldwork. The interview guide questions were flexible for adjustment to accommodate responses during and after the interviews. According to Keyton (2015) an interview guide comprises the topic, questions, and issues that the researcher wants to cover during the interview which should be clear and unambiguous. While, open-ended interviews as noted by Bryman (2016) are probably the most common form of interviewing employed in research for the reason that they allow the interviewees to fully express their viewpoints and experiences.

3.6 Interview Protocol

In qualitative research, interview protocol is regarded as a framework that provides explanation to the approaches and procedure for the conducting the interview. The researcher framed some flexible questions prior to interview session. These questions were subjected to amendments. The questions were subjected to amendment but with cognizance of credibility and relevant information during the process of interview and discussion.

The choice of question is premised on its ability to provide richer data. Meanwhile, the interview guide was derived from the research objectives set out for the study.

3.7 Research Validity and Reliability

Bryman (2016) highlights that validity is the accuracy or credibility of a description, explanation, interpretation, or another form of statement or report. Creswell (2012) viewed validity as the accuracy statement or explanation that represents the reality of participants on certain social phenomena. The informants were individually and face-to-face interviewed for this study, in order to give it more credibility. Additionally, as indicated by Bryman (2016) participants in qualitative research serve as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation, making their trustworthiness all the more crucial. Therefore, teachers, families, and dropout students in public secondary schools in Kebbi State will be used as the respondents.

Transferability is one of the four requirements listed by Bryman (2016) When it comes to how much the results of one study can be extended to other circumstances, it is the external entity that is concerned. Based on this, this research can be said to be transferable because this research investigates students' dropout in public secondary schools in Kebbi State, Nigeria. Since the importance given to secondary school education, thus this research could be a reference for secondary school teachers, secondary school administrators, government, family, and community to have a basic understanding of factors, causes, challenges, and consequences of children dropping out of secondary school.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data analysis requires systematic and in-depth description and presentation of

subjective phenomenon of non-construct concepts like main ideas, theme and sub-themes. To carry out the qualitative analysis of the research questions of the current study, NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software will used. This allows the researcher to carry out a systematic and rigorous analysis of interview data, applying thematic analysis approach. The thematic approach allows the analysis to be presented in themes, sub-themes as well as in graphical framework s through which the perspectives and the actual words of the informants will be scientifically presented. The software will be employed due to its suitability in organizing the identified theme and sub-theme and linking interview sources appropriately with themes as well its usefulness' in exploring the graphic representation of thematic output.

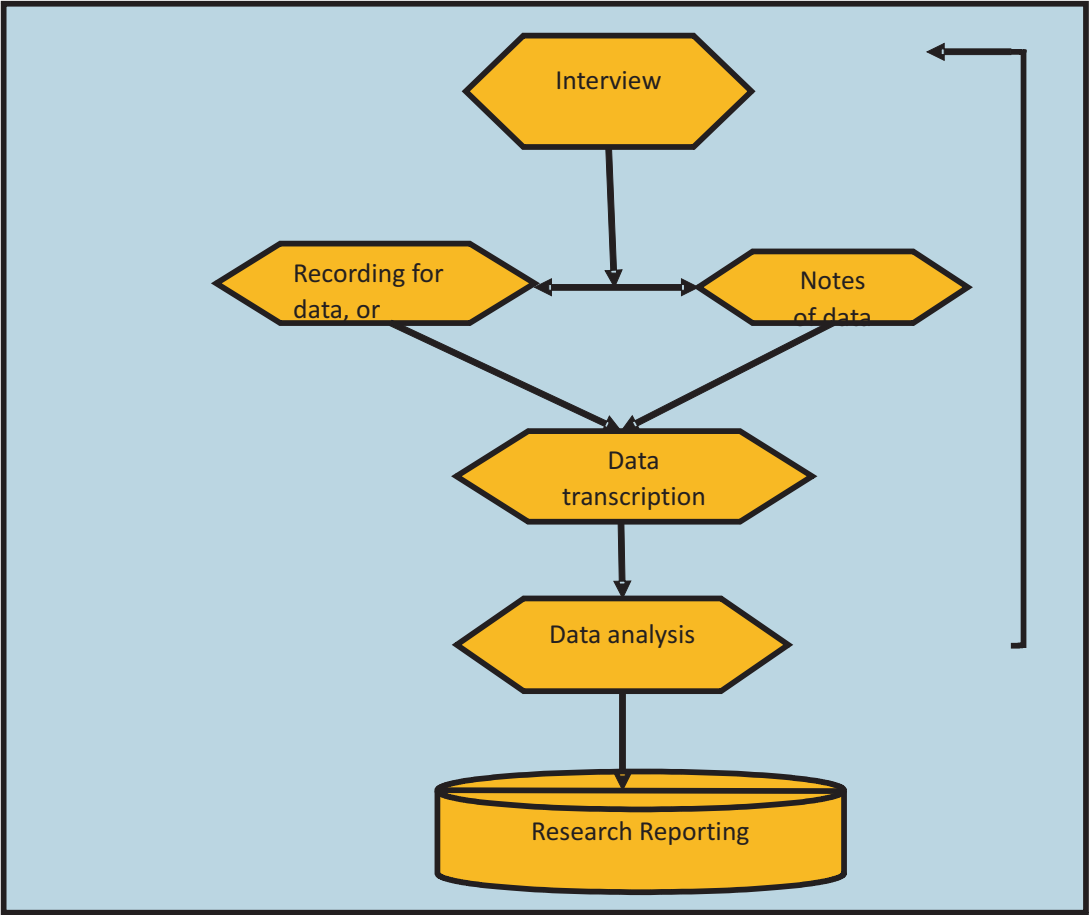


Figure 3.2 Interview and Data Management stages

Sources: Adapted from Cassell, Catherine and Gillian (2004) and Creswell and Creswell (2017)

The Figure 3.2 illustrates the methodology and data management process for this study as adapted from (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It shows the numerous stages involved in how data collected, managed as well as how it will be reported. In carrying out the analysis, the interview transcripts will be entered into the NVivo data management program, and a comprehensive process of data coding and identification of themes, sub-themes and sub sub-themes will be undertaken. The process involves coding, making nodes and then, later on, combined and grouped the nodes into related categories. Nvivo allows the researcher to gather all the perceptions on experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout and then identified all themes patterns. The emerged themes will however be described in a systematic and step-by-step process alongside appropriate frameworks.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis And Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis which is based on the data collected from the in-depth interviews conducted with informants drawn from students who were dropped out from school, the parents of the dropped students and the teachers of Kola Government Secondary School, Kebbi state, Nigeria. Therefore, the analysis presents answer to the following research objectives which are to:

explore factors that influence secondary school children dropout in Kebbi state .

investigate the challenges among Secondary School Children dropouts in Kebbi state

explore the experiences of secondary school children dropout in Kebbi state

investigate the subsequent activities engaged in by secondary school children dropout in Kebbi state .

4.2 Respondents' Background

The menace of dropout in Secondary School has become a phenomenon because it takes various forms and affecting the lives of our young stars in society. This has over the years created great concern for all who are concerned with the administration and management of Secondary Schools.

In view of this, the importance of any research is tied to finding out solutions to the various problems that face mankind in the society. Therefore, to explore and probe the factors, challenges and consequences of secondary school children dropout, it requires the perspectives of those who experienced it, involved in it and connected to it. The reason why this study interviewed the students who were dropped out from school, the parents of the dropped-out students and the teachers of Kola Government Secondary School, Kebbi state, Nigeria.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information of Respondents

S/N	Code of informants	Name of informants	Gender	Age (Years)	Status of informants	Experience (Years)	School and residence
1	Inf. SAlpha		Male	14	Student	SS1	GDSS Kola
2	Inf. SBeta		Male	12	Student	JSS2	GSS Kola
3	Inf. SChalley		Female	14	Student	JSS3	GDSS Kola
4	Inf. SDelta		Female	13	Student	SS1	GDSS Kola
5	Inf. PPapa		Male	55	Father	-	Resident of Kola
6	Inf.PMama		Female	38	Mother	-	Resident of Kola
7	Inf. PElder		Male	42	Father		Resident of Kola
8	Inf. PThema		Female	68	Grandmother		Resident of Kola
9	Inf. PChief		Male	62	Father		Resident of Kola
10	Inf. TTheta		Male	35	Teacher	11	GDSS Kola
11	Inf. TSigma		Male	45	Teacher	21	GDSS Kola
12	Inf. TOmega		Female	30	Teacher	5	GDSS Kola

Note: SE = Science Education; GDSS = Government Day Secondary School Source: Developed from the study's data

Experiences and Challenges of Secondary School Dropout

Education is a key component of economic growth and development. It has a direct influence on the entrepreneurship, productivity, growth which increases employment opportunities and women empowerment. However, Nigeria country still faces numerous challenges among which is high rate of students' dropout. This act of dropping out among students has affected the country socially, economically and educationally.

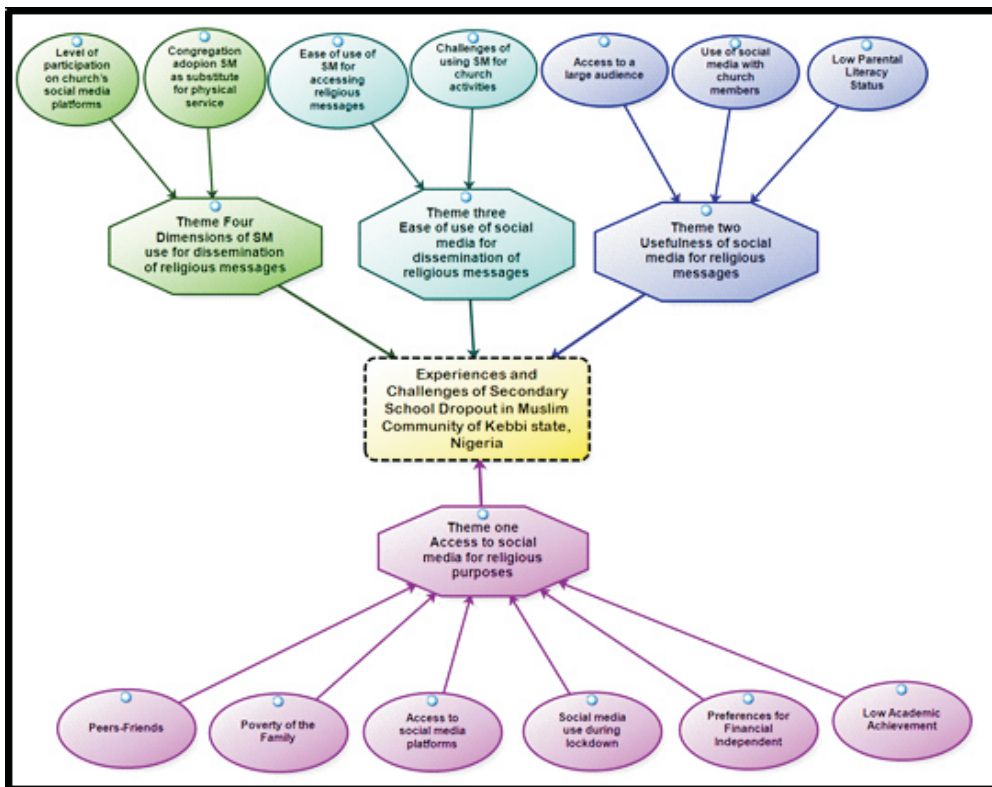


Figure 4.2: Main Themes and Sub-themes of experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout

Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion, Implications And Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study sets out to explore the experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout in the development of human capital in Kebbi state of Kebbi State, Nigeria. The research also sets out to develop a framework of solution to dropout among secondary school children in Kebbi state . This chapter is therefore, comprises of summary of the research gaps, the detail discussion of the findings, the theoretical implications of the study, the practical implications, the conclusions, the study limitation and the suggestions for future studies respectively.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings

The main aim of this study was to establish experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout in Kebbi state of Kebbi State, Nigeria, in order to develop strategies that would help in minimizing dropouts among senior secondary school students. To achieve this, the following aims were set as targets for this study:

1. Explore factors that influence secondary school children dropout in Kebbi state .
2. Investigate the challenges among Secondary School Children dropouts in Kebbi state
3. Develop the framework of solution to dropout among secondary school children in Kebbi state .

Therefore, this section strengthens the findings and interpretation explained in details in the chapter four. Also, this section discussion patterns are in order of the research questions set out at the beginning of the work as well as the gaps set out to fill. In another words, each objective was provided answered for, based on the perceptions of the dropped-out students, parents of the dropped-out students and teachers of Government Day Secondary School, Kola.

In order to achieve the set objectives, qualitative method with in-depth interview approach was applied and the dropped-out students, parents and teachers were interviewed in the Kebbi state of Kebbi state, Nigeria. The data from the interview was analyzed applying thematic analysis approach. The thematic approach allows the analysis to be presented in themes, sub-themes and sub sub-themes as well as in graphical framework s with NVivo through which the perspectives and the actual words of the informants were systematically presented.

The focus of this study becomes necessary because of the very limited attention given to the examination of the experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout in the development of human capital. In addition, the perspectives of the parents and teachers of the dropped-out students are usually not given attention towards finding solution to the menace of drop outs.

5.2.1 Proposed Framework Of Solution To Students' Dropout

This study has proposed a model which is a significant theoretical contribution that was based on empirical findings from the application of systematic method used and the lived experience of dropped out students, parents and teachers. The general aim of this model is to establish the connection and distinguish between the experiences and challenges of secondary school dropout, while the specific aim is to develop the framework of solution to dropout among secondary school children in Kebbi state for development of human capital. The Academic Mediation Theory offers a framework to analyze the relationship to academic success and educational institution dropout in society. Its central idea is that education, when they are used, help to shape the relations between human beings and the world. Therefore, academic mediation hypothesis focuses on illuminating the relationship between academic accomplishment and educational institution dropout.

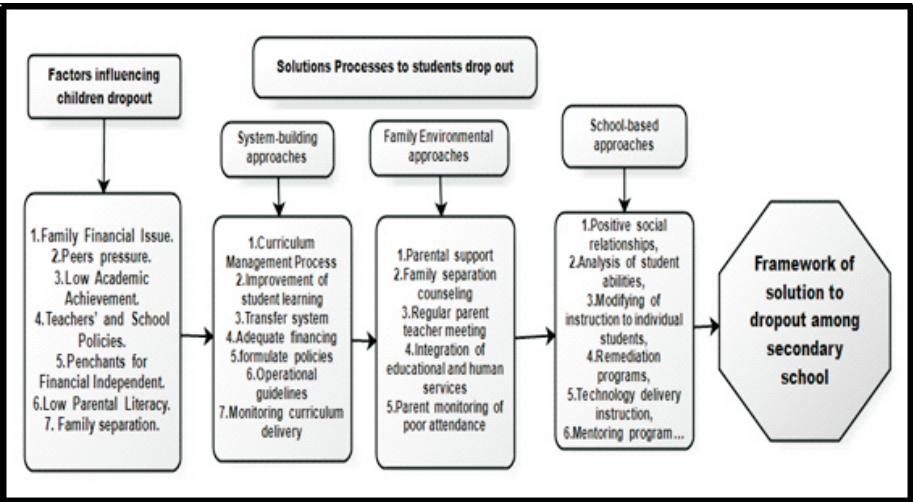


Figure 5.1. Proposed framework of solution to dropout among secondary school children in Kebbi state .

The outcome of this model has provided theoretical solution to students drop out syndrome in secondary school. The framework has used the knowledge of the factors associated with dropping out to develop interventions that will increase the chances that students will remain in school until graduation. The prevention strategies identified by this study's findings fall into three major categories: school-based approaches, environmental approaches, and system-building approaches.

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