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Who Never Attended School and Who Dropped Out: A Comparative Study of the Voices?

Abstract

The rate of out of school children and dropouts is alarming in Pakistan. There are many factors that are prevalent. This study did the comparison of voices of out of school children from the five dimensions of exclusion related to different age group and levels of education. Analysis of video recorded interviews, 324 from children and 178 from their parents with NVivo 11 plus reflected the similarities and differences of reasons for being out of school. Out of school children and their parents explored many reasons that limit the access to education, but both samples led to the conclusion that house chores, disability, sexual harassment, instructional language, school expenditures, lesson preparation, family attitude, social injustice, disaster area, parents' attitude, and area are the major reasons for being out of school.

Key words:

Out of school children, Dropped out, Qualitative research, Comparison

Introduction

Education changes the life of an individual. It brings prosperity, wealth, knowledge, advancements, technology, and stability. It improves the lifestyles of people by maintaining their health, wealth, and knowledge. Societies grow fast with their educated people as they know how to live in society and how to improve their country's progress. It yields strong families, communities, and countries. Today's an educated child can become tomorrow's a great leader. If you want success in your country you should educate your generation to achieve ultimate success in life. These people respect their elders, their neighbours, their colleagues, and their partners.

The addition of Article 25 A of the 18th Constitutional Amendment in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) showed the importance of education as education is the fundamental right of every person. The said Article reads as under: "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law".

UNESCO (2012 c) explored some worst education indicators in Pakistan, which became the cause of the huge skills deficit in Pakistan. 12 million young people of Pakistan, over 1 in 3 have not basic skills for work due to the incompleteness of primary education. Pakistan is the second country with the most unskilled people in developing countries. In Pakistan, the completion ratio of lower secondary

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education is 70% richest young men and women, 16% poorest young men, and 11% poorest young women. 50% of rural young women as compared to 14% of urban young women never go to school. If the same situation will prevail a long time, then progress would be frozen, and fatalities of future disasters would be increased by 20% after 10 years.

In 2014, UNICEF wrote a report of Eastern and Southern Africa on a global initiative. This report shows a relationship between 5DE and 6Zones of Exclusion (CREATE Model). It tells us that both exclusion models gave a clear picture of children at the same points. At the same time, both models differentiate children into two categories, i.e. those who are studying and the children who are not studying. On the other hand, both models tell that even during school participation, some of the children are at a higher risk of dropping out.

Several factors can become the push and pull factors for children to push out of school or to pull into the school. These are the rights of entry to primary school; anticipated to enroll in school on time; grade repetition; enough spaces in lower secondary schools after primary education; and so on. So, both models have an association between the dimensions of exclusion and the qualities of an educational system.

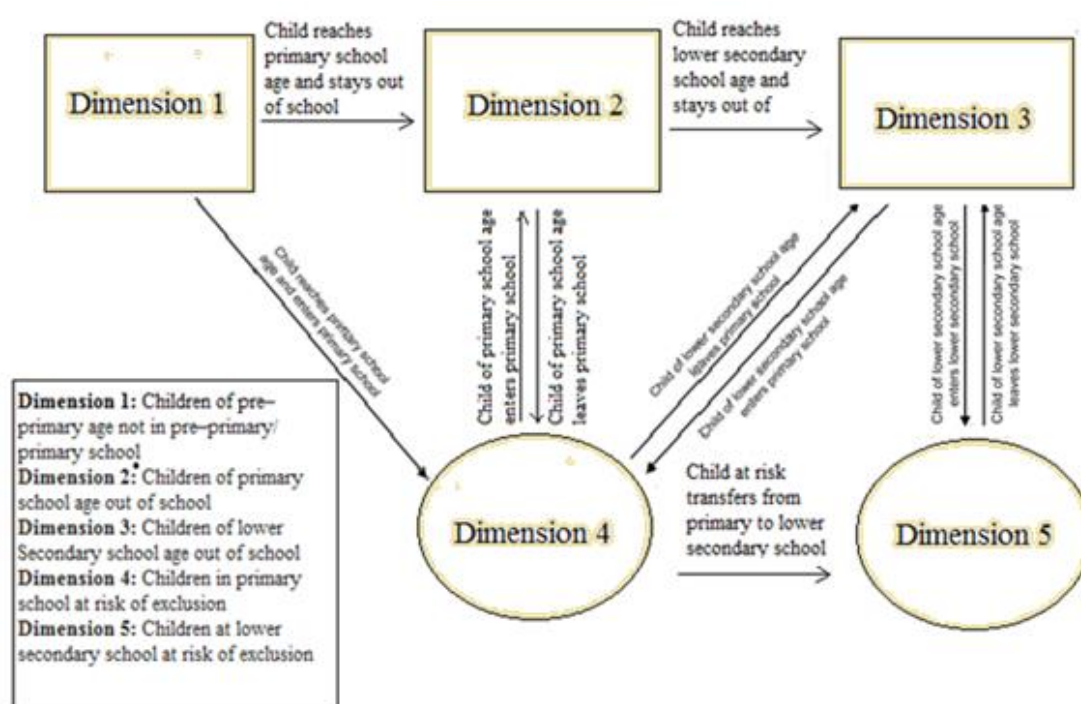


Figure 1: Flow between the Five Dimensions of Exclusion

Source: UNICEF & UIS, 2011

Factors that affect the education of a child also divided on the base of five dimensions of exclusion just as UNICEF (2012c) had written some reasons for being out of school in the Kyrgyzstan Country Study. These are categorized by a dimension of exclusion. In dimension 1 the reasons behind out of school children are geographic location, poverty, living without one or both parents and children in new settlements with poor infrastructure. In dimension 2 the reasons are rural areas, poor families, non-Kyrgyz speaking families, street children, children without registration documents, disable children, migrants, and children with ethnic conflicts. In dimension 4 and 5 risk of dropping out increased due to lack of pre-primary experience, late entry, overage, frequent absenteeism, and poor performance. While in Kyrgyzstan children of Lyuli ethnic minority community are being out of school due to poverty, stigma and discrimination, marginalization, cultural attitudes towards education, lack of job opportunities, and child labour.

Literature showed many reasons for out of school; they may be either why children have never attended school or what are the reasons for dropout?

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In Liberia's country study, UNICEF (2012b) employed a 5DE conceptual and methodological framework. This study represented 5 target groups according to five dimensions of exclusion. These groups fall in three educational levels, i.e. First level was Kindergarten (Pre-primary level), Second was Primary (Primary level), and third was Junior high school (Lower secondary level). Furthermore, within these levels, two groups of children fall and these are the first group of children (those who were actually out of school), and another group of children (those who were at risk of dropping out of school).

Ababa (2012) also used the 5DE Model to study the condition of OOSC (Out of School Children) in Ethiopia.

MDG Achievement Fund (2011) described causes for non-attendance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These are economic situation, limited access to school, lack of awareness and information, disable children, language, overage, and Roma children of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another research showed that school, children and governance are the main causes of the production of out of school children e.g. in Eastern and Southern Africa regional report on a global initiative on out of school children, UNICEF (2014) explained some reasons of accessing, completing, transitioning and dropping out of school.

UNICEF (2013a) used 5DE model in Sri Lanka Country Study, to examine the problems faced by children who were not in school. For this purpose, two types of studies were conducted. First type used to determine the number of OOSC and at risk of dropping out children. This was a macro-level study. While, the other was the micro-level study, whose purpose was to explain the profiles of Out of School Children and barrier and bottlenecks which were responsible for exclusion and drop out. The result of this study explored that percentage of Sri Lankan Tamil children in out of school children was relatively high due to the armed conflict in that area.

Objectives of Study

This research explored and compared the attributes and experiences of out of school children and their parents that limit the access and completion of their education.

Methodology

This study was designed to compare the experiences of children and their parents to find out similar and different factors that stop their schooling. A qualitative approach is helpful in this study as this approach sees the social world and the events that take place in it through the eyes of the research participant.

Qualitative research is exploratory in nature and in the exploratory study; researchers need to listen to participants to construct an understanding based on their ideas (Creswell, 2003).

Therefore researcher designed this study as a case study as this research work has an intensive and detailed analysis of a single case that is the phenomenon of out of school in Pakistan and at the same time used multiple cases means semi- structures interviews of 324 children and their 178 parents. The reason to use multiple cases is that these allowed comparative analyses (Bryman, 2004) and in-depth inquiry into the out of school phenomenon. Multiple cases help in a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and its contextual dimensions. Ethnographic methods used in this study helped the researcher to find out culture sharing behavior of both individuals and groups in a natural setting over a while and also to see things through the eyes of research participants. This helped the researcher to capture the holistic picture of the voices of out of school children and their parents.

Two types of interview schedules were conducted that sought information related to being out of school; one for out of school children and the other for their parents in which questions for out of school and dropped out were included and these had two types of statements: one for those children who never went to school and one for those who ever went to school.

Results

Literature showed many reasons for out of school; they may be either why children have never attended school or what are the reasons for dropout? Most of the literature explored barriers to

education as demand-side socio-cultural barriers, demand side economic barriers, supply side barriers, and political barriers (UNICEF, 2012; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d; 2013; 2014; Ababa, 2012; Assessment Capacities Project, 2012).

Comparisons of Voices

Comparison of Interviews of Out of School Children vs. Out of School Children's Parents

In order to find out the similarities and differences in the voices of out of school children and parent, the figure 2 below was developed by NVivo 11 plus.

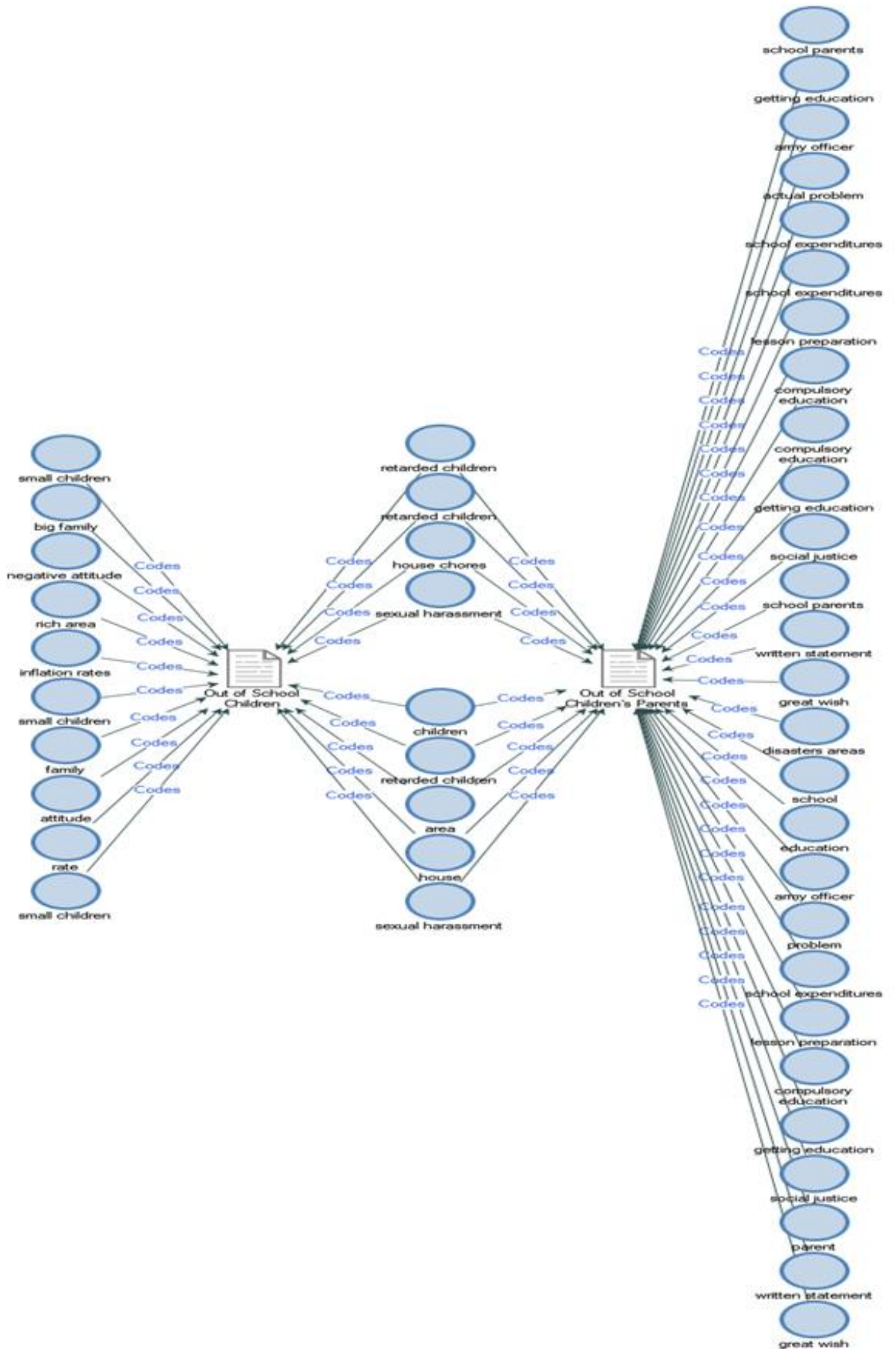


Figure 2: Hierarchy of Identified Comparison of Sub Themes Map of Thematic Analysis in NVivo11 for interviews of Out of School Children and their Parents.

Above figure 2 highlighted the similarities and differences in the voices of out of school children and parents in their interviews by using an auto coding process in NVivo 11 plus. Both were agreed upon the reasons for being out of school were house chores, retarded children, sexual harassment, children, area, and house. While the attributes which were highlighted by out of school children's parents are school parents, getting education, army officer, actual problem, school expenditure, lesson preparation, compulsory education, social justice, written statement, great wish, disaster area, school, education, problem, Parents.

The attributes which were identified only by out of school children are small children, big family, negative attitude, rich area, family, attitude, and rate (Literacy rate).

Comparison of Interviews of Dropout Children vs. Dropout Children's Parents

The figure 3 below identified the similarities and differences of attributes in the voices of dropout children and parent, this figure was developed by NVivo 11 plus by auto coding process.

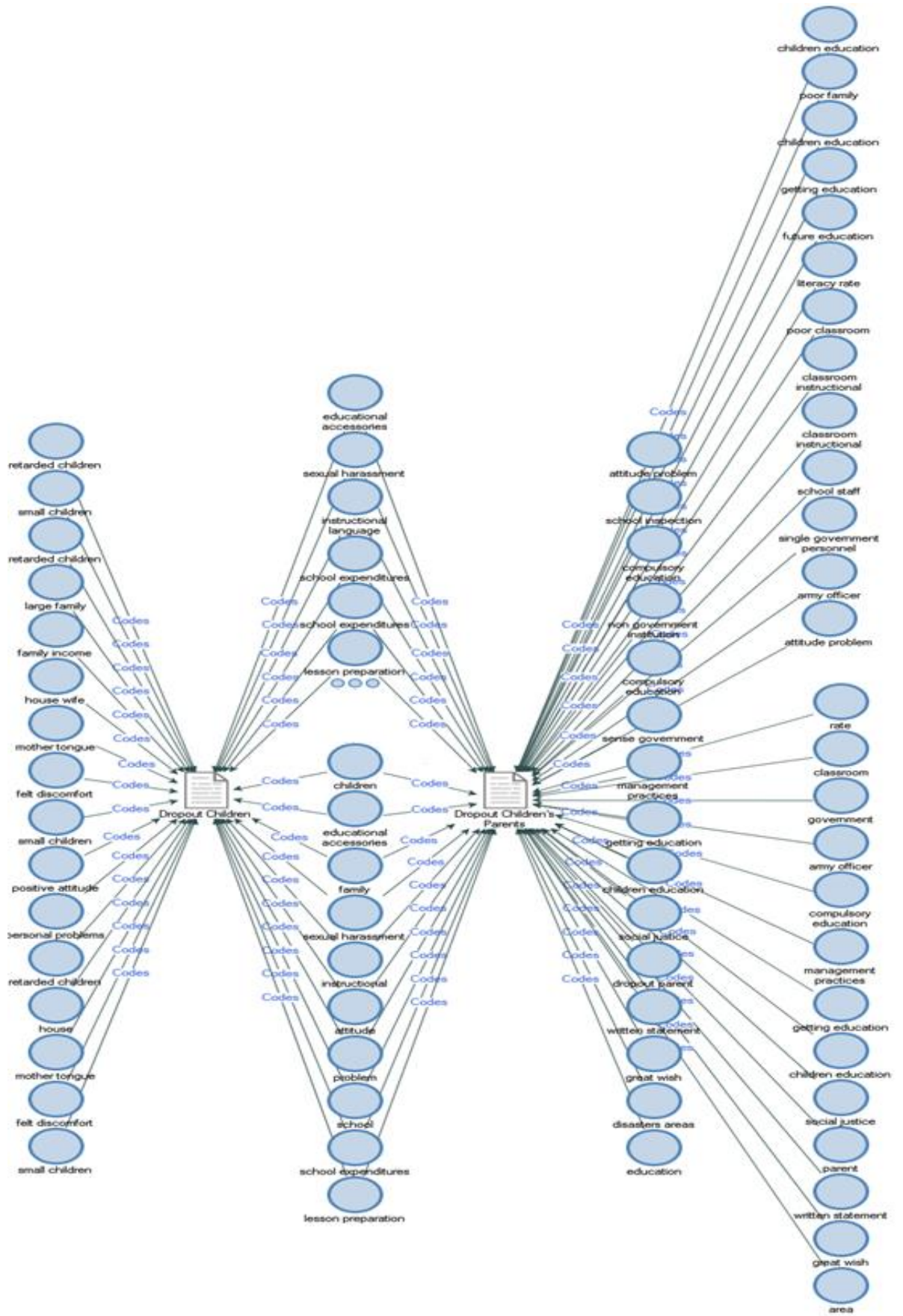


Figure 3: Hierarchy of Identified Comparison of Sub Themes Map of Thematic Analysis in NVivo11 for interviews of Dropout Children and their Parents.

The common attributes on which both dropout children and parents were agreed are educational accessories, sexual harassment, instructional language, school expenditures, lesson preparation, children, family, attitude and problem.

The attributes which were described only by dropout children's parents in their interviews are attitude problem, school inspection, compulsory education, non government institutions, sense government, management practices, getting education, children education, social justice, dropout parents, written statement, great wish, disasters areas, education, poor family, future education, literacy rate, poor classroom, classroom instructional, school staff, single government personnel, army officer, attitude problem, rate, classroom, government, parents, and area.

While the attributes which were described by only dropout children are retarded children, small children, large family, family income, house wife, mother tongue, felt discomfort, positive attitude, personal problem, and house.

Comparison of Interviews of Out of School Children vs. Dropout Children

Common and different attributes among out of school and dropout children in interviews were also highlighted in the figure below. This figure 4 was developed by Nvivo 11 plus in thematic analysis.

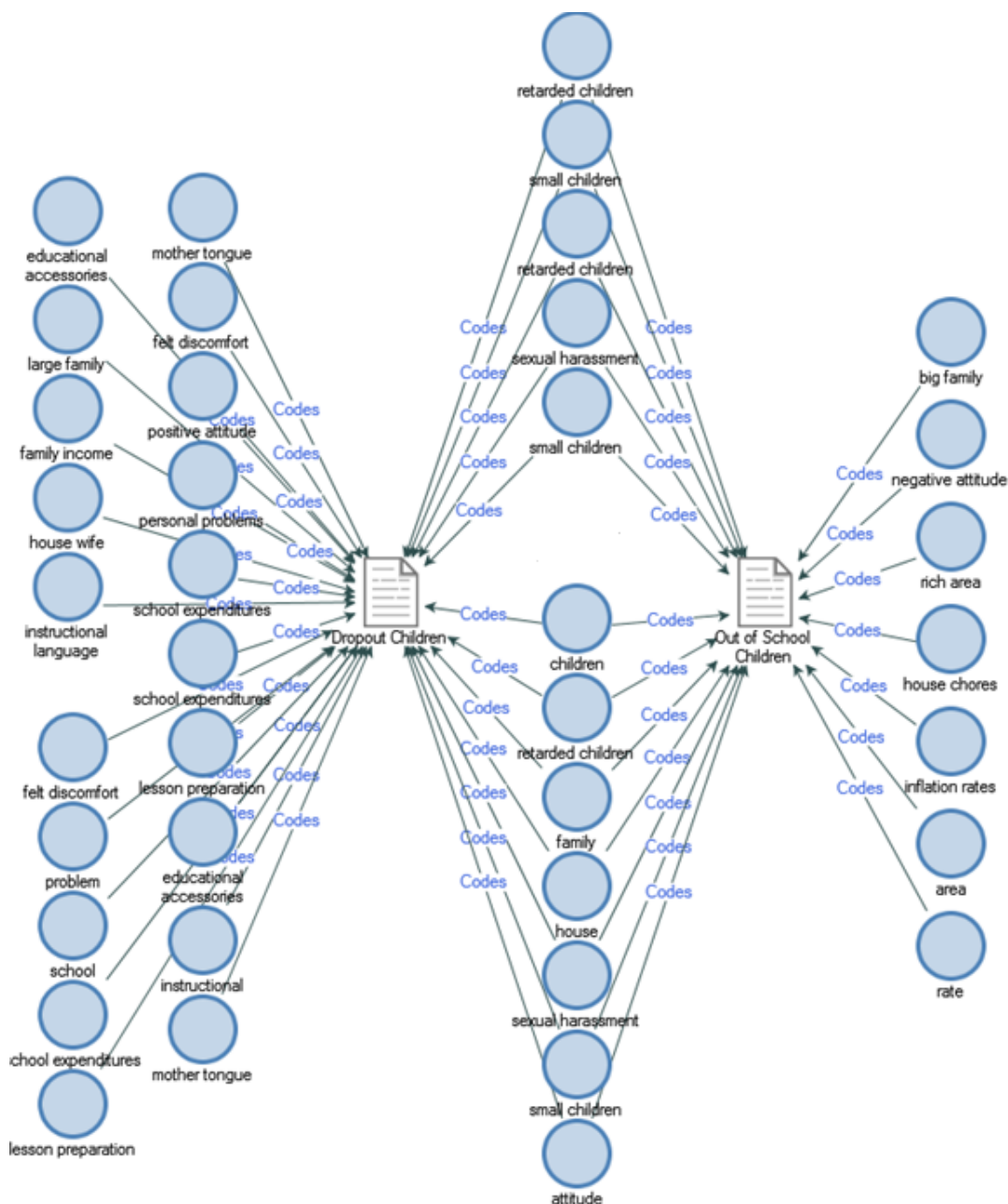


Figure 4: Hierarchy of Identified Comparison of Sub Themes Map of Thematic Analysis in NVivo11 for interviews of Out of School Children and Dropout Children.

The figure 4 above highlighted the common codes identified by out of school children and dropout children in the middle line as retarded children, small children, sexual harassment, children, family, house, and attitude.

The attributes which were described by only out of school children as the reasons for their being out of school are big family, negative attitude, rich area, house chores, inflation rates, area, and rate.

Whereas the reasons which were identified by only dropout children are educational accessories, mother tongue, large family, felt discomfort, family income, positive attitude, house wife, personal problems, school expenditures, instructional language, lesson preparation, problem, school, and instructional.

Comparison of Interviews of Out of School Children's Parents vs. Dropout Children's Parents

Common and different attributes among out of school children's parents and dropout children's parents in interviews were also highlighted in the figure 5 below. This figure 5 was developed by Nvivo 11 plus in thematic analysis of interviews.

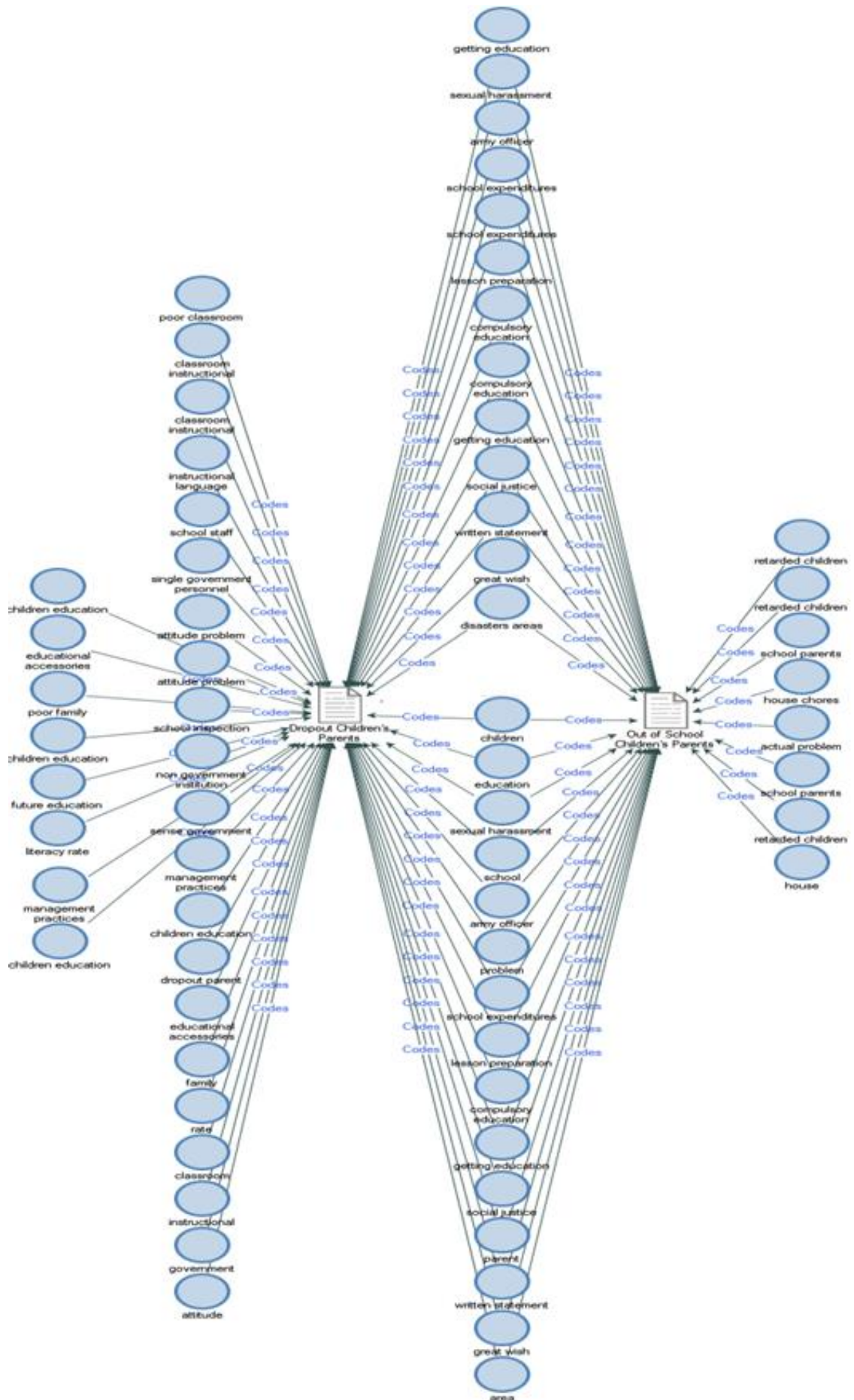


Figure 5: Hierarchy of Identified Comparison of Sub Themes Map of Thematic Analysis in NVivo11 for interviews of Out of School Children's Parents and Dropout Children's Parents.

A long list of common attributes of out of school children's parents and dropout children's parents were highlighted in the middle line of figure 5 above. These were getting education, sexual harassment, army officer, school expenditures, lesson preparation, compulsory education, social justice, written statement, great wish, disaster area, children, education, school, problem, parents, and area.

The reasons which were identified only by out of school children's parents in their interviews are retarded children, school parents, house chores, actual problem, and house. While dropout children's parents' identified reasons were children education, educational accessories, poor family, future education, literacy rate, management practices, poor classroom, classroom instructional, instructional language, school staff, single government personnel, attitude problem, school inspection, non government institutions, sense government, dropout parent, family, rate, classroom, instructional, government, and attitude.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study exposed the objectives of the study. The present study compared the voices of school children and their parents from the interviews of out of school children and dropout children and their parents.

The comparison of interviews of dropout children with dropout children's parents described that less educational accessory, sexual harassment, no proper instructional language, high school expenditures, no help in lesson preparation, children and family's problems are the main factors of being out of school while the comparison of interviews of out of school children vs. dropout children explored the common reasons for being out of school are accessed for education for retarded children, adjustment problems with small children, fear of sexual harassment, home responsibilities, and attitude problems.

Out of school children's parents and dropout children's parents were agreed upon some reasons for the exclusion of children from school. These are no wish for getting an education, fear of sexual harassment, wish to become an army officer, a lot of school expenditures, no help in lesson preparation, unawareness towards compulsory education, no social justice, policies are only written statement, great wish to get an education, live in a disaster area, and problems related to children, education, school, parents and area.

Poverty and lack of interest in studies are the major problems (Vayachuta, et al. 2016; Muttaqin, 2017; & Pradhan, et al. 2018) while for disable children, economical, socio cultural and school related problems are the major reasons that limit the access of education (Sharma & Ng, 2014). Factors that are responsible for keeping children out of schools identified both children and parents are the area's environment, the literacy rate in that area, and female problems, while other than these factors one other factor i.e. teachers' behavior is also responsible for dropout. They also identified factors which reduce access to education. These are family size, living area status, and distance to school. Parents and children were on the point that adjustment problems, future dreams, parents and children's relationship and subject problems were the causes for being out of school. They also explored the factors that affect the educational attainment of out of school children; these are poverty, unemployment, family problems, and parents' occupation. Instead of all these; out of school children and their parents also highlighted that children's help in the family also becomes a cause for not being in school. This study also identified those policy barriers that are limiting the access to primary education for all as a result of poor legislation. Parents highlighted these policy barriers in the form of organizational and structural problems of institutions that may hinder the progress of education. Other than all these factors, some other factors are responsible for the decrease in literacy. These reasons are females' problems, school environment, work on daily wages, wish to get an education, house chores, provision of proper uniform, the involvement of other persons, parents' behavior, teachers' teaching styles, child's needs, curriculum, language barriers and training of other technical skills.

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