

ABSTRACT

Insights into the Perceptions, Beliefs and Behaviours of Dropouts at a Secondary School in Trinidad: A Case Study

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This qualitative exploratory case study describes the issues that led to eleven youths dropping out of a secondary school in Trinidad. The study investigated empirically the school dropout phenomenon based on qualitative methodology, describing intricate details of the experiences of those at risk children who dropped out of a secondary school. Interviews and field observations were conducted and documents were collected in the process of the study.

Social Bonding Theory (Hirschi 1969) was used as the theoretical framework to explain the experiences and behaviours of eleven school dropouts. The findings suggest that there was no single explanation for the young people's decision to leave school prematurely. However the role, influence, involvement and challenges of the family unit, along with teachers and school experiences were major issues that were influential in the lives of the eleven participants. The themes emerging from this study were irrelevance of the curriculum, lack of parental support and involvement, labelling by, and indifference of teachers, delinquency and timely intervention. The Role of the Family, Disengagement, Frustration and Timely Intervention were main theories emerging from the data. This study was done with the intention of increasing the understanding of the

phenomena under investigation and has theoretical implications along with propositions for further research.

Keywords: Ramrattie Prashad; school dropout; social bonding theory.