



## **High school dropout: A reflection on high schools in Itacoatiara-Amazonas/Brasil**

### **O abandono escolar no ensino médio: Uma reflexão nas escolas de ensino médio em Itacoatiara-Amazonas/Brasil**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

According to the Ministry of Education (MEC), high school dropout rates are worrying. The number of students who dropped out in 2019 is still high across the country. The numbers are falling, it's true, but they are still very worrying, because of the almost 50 million students aged between 14 and 29 in the country, 20.2% (or 10.1 million) did not complete any of the stages of basic education, either because they dropped out of school or because they never attended. Of this total, 71.7% were black or brown.

**Keywords:** High school, Dropout, Education.

#### **RESUMO**

De acordo com o Ministério da Educação (MEC), as taxas de abandono escolar no ensino médio são preocupantes. O número de alunos que desistiram no ano de 2019 é alto ainda em todo o país. Os números estão caindo, é verdade, mais ainda são muito preocupantes, pois dos quase 50 milhões de alunos entre 14 a 29 anos do país, 20,2% (ou 10,1 milhões) não completaram alguma das etapas da educação básica, seja por terem abandonado a escola, seja por nunca a terem frequentado. Desse total, 71,7% eram pretos ou pardos.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino Médio, Abandono, Educação.

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

According to the Ministry of Education (MEC), high school dropout rates are worrying. The number of students who dropped out in 2019 is still high across the country. The numbers are falling, it's true, but they are still very worrying, because of the almost 50 million students aged between 14 and 29 in the country, 20.2% (or 10.1 million) did not complete any of the stages of basic education, either because they dropped out of school or because they never attended. Of this total, 71.7% were black or brown.

In particular, the dropout rate for students in the first and third years of secondary school is very high. Even if the MEC's calculation method is adopted. This means that 20.2% of students drop out each year.

The problem that motivated this research arose when it was observed that a growing number of high school students were being expelled and others were dropping out of school. In view of this, the central



question was: what is the involvement of students and its relationship with early school leaving in state high schools in Itacoatiara-Amazonas/Brazil? Based on this question, three specific questions arose: 1) How does the process of high school student maladaptation occur in state schools in Itacoatiara-Amazonas/Brazil? 2) What are the main problems encountered by high school students in state schools in urban areas in the municipality of Itacoatiara-Amazonas/Brazil when they drop out of school? 3) What responsibilities of the school influence high school students to give up studying?

One of the biggest challenges of secondary school education is to keep students motivated to stay in school, precisely because students are in a process of life transition and in these various transitions, research that deals with school transitions is related to school adaptation and professional orientation after enrollment, and is related to researchers and education, which makes this study relevant and increases interest in research.

There are many reports that studies on school transition are accompanied by negative results, such as grades, number of days attended, decreased sense of belonging to school and increased life stress, suggesting that school migration is the key to school mismatch. As an example of school mismatch due to school transfer, there is the problem of high school students dropping out, but according to statistics from the Monthly Report of the Ministry of Education - MEC (2018), in high school, the dropout rate has not decreased, as it increased sharply to 4.3% in 2018.

In addition, 1st graders account for 52.9% of all school leavers, more than half of the total, and the reason is school life/disadaptation at 38.2%.

Therefore, it is considered necessary to study the transition from school to high school and within high school. However, there is little research on the transfer from school to high school and school adaptation compared to the transfer from school to high school and progression within high school and in the municipality of Itacoatiara, Amazonas State, Brazil it is non-existent, which justifies this study.

## **2 OBJECTIVE**

To analyze student involvement and its relationship with early school leaving in high schools in the Regional Education Coordination of Itacoatiara-Amazonas/Brazil.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

The research took a qualitative approach. According to Minayo (2010) qualitative research answers very specific questions. In the social sciences, it is concerned with a level of reality that cannot be quantified. In other words, it works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to numbers and quantitative indicators. Its exploratory nature was developed in two stages, described below:



- ✓ Bibliographical research. According to Lakatos and Marconi (2003),

bibliographic research is a general overview of the main works that have already been carried out, which are important because they can provide current and relevant data related to the topic. Studying the relevant literature can help plan the work, avoid publications and certain errors, and represents an indispensable source of information that can even guide inquiries.

- ✓ Field research. According to Lakatos and Marconi (2003):

Field research is research used with the aim of obtaining information and/or knowledge about a problem for which an answer is sought, or a hypothesis that is to be proven, or to discover new phenomena or the relationships between them. It consists of observing facts and phenomena as they occur spontaneously, collecting data about them and recording variables that are presumed to be relevant, in order to analyze them.

The field research was carried out in the State High Schools in the municipality of Itacoatiara/Am/BR, within a Universe of 334 students, 22 teachers, 01 pedagogue and 01 educational manager. So the researcher decided to listen to a sample of 30 high school students, 10 from each shift (morning, afternoon and evening), making up a total of 8.90% of the students enrolled, 50.00% of whom were male and 50.00% female and all with one characteristic - they had all dropped out of school at some point; 8 of the 22 teachers at the state schools were also interviewed, making up 36.36% of the total number of teachers at these schools, as well as 1 pedagogue and 1 school manager.

#### **4 DEVELOPMENT**

Estimates from the Demographic Census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE (2010) put the average income of dropouts in 2000 at R\$3,500.00, compared to R\$12,000.00 for a high school graduate (CAMPBELL, 2014).

Students who drop out are more likely than students who graduate to experience health problems, get involved in criminal activities and become dependent on welfare and other government programs. The Ministry of Human Rights alongside the Ministry of Labor in consonance with the MEC and the Ministry of Social Welfare, reported in 2016 that dropouts comprised 52% of welfare recipients, 82% of the prison population and 85% of juvenile justice cases (STANARD, 2013).

In addition, dropping out of school has been associated with a number of broad negative outcomes, including (a) foregone national income, (b) foregone tax revenues for the support of government services, (c) increased demand for social services, (d) increased crime and antisocial behavior, (e) reduced political participation, (f) reduced intergenerational mobility and (g) lower levels of health (BELIZÁRIO and LEGIS, 2014).



However, accurately determining dropout rates in states and municipalities has been complicated by differences in data collection policies and practices. In addition, there is no national standardized operational definition of school dropout. According to MEC regulations, states and municipalities are required to report graduation rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity, income *status*, disability status, English proficiency, gender, and internal or external migrant *status* (CAMPBELL, 2014).

Two main methods of reporting the dropout rate are disposable events (i.e. the percentage of students who dropped out of school in a given year) and dropout rates (i.e. the percentage of young adults between certain ages who dropped out of school, usually reported over a 4-year period). The actual dropout rate is likely to be much higher than the reported percentages, because national data does not include students below the 10th grade or under the age of 16 (HAYES et al., 2012).

Another source of inaccuracy in the MEC's dropout figures is that incarcerated students are not counted, although many of them do not complete high school. The MEC (2017) reported the national high school completion rate of 86.5% for the class of 2016, using a dropout rate, i.e., the proportion of 18- to 24-year-olds who left high school and obtained a high school diploma or equivalent, including a General Educational Development Credential.

On the other hand, Greene and Winters (2017) calculated the graduation rate at 69% for the year 2016. Their method of calculating the graduation rate involved counting how many students who entered ninth grade in 2000 actually graduated 3 years later in 2014, as would be expected. The discrepancy between the two rates is due to the difference in methods of calculating the graduation rate and the fact that MEC counted certificates and other alternative credentials.

Despite the differences in the reports, consistent differences have been found between the types of students who drop out of high school and those who enroll. Socioeconomic *status* has a strong relationship with dropout, with students from low-income families being 2.4 times more likely to drop out of high school than middle-income students (STANARD, 2013).

The proportion of black students who fail to graduate from high school is twice as high as the proportion of white students who fail to graduate, and this proportion is even higher for students from other ethnic groups such as Indians, for example. According to Bellis (2013), the 2010-2011 dropout rate for all students with disabilities was 29%, with a range from 13% for students with some cognitive impairment to 53% for the subgroup of students with emotional disorders.

Risk factors for dropping out of school exist in all domains of life (i.e. individual, family, school, community, peer relationships), and the likelihood of a student dropping out of school increases as these risk factors accumulate (CAMPBELL, 2014).



However, most research on dropout has focused on the characteristics of individuals, rather than the characteristics of schools or the local community. The relationship between school experiences and dropout has rarely been considered (BELIZÁRIO and LEGIS, 2014).

The contribution of the wider community has also been overlooked as contributing to the risk of school dropout (e.g. a company leaving the area, resulting in increased unemployment and poverty and a negative impact on local schools) (HAYES et al. 2012).

The decision to drop out of school is influenced by social, political and economic factors and depends on developmental history, educational experiences and current circumstances. A 19-year longitudinal study found that dropping out of high school is determined by several factors, with early influences starting in childhood and involving the family as well as individual factors. The study specifically found that cumulative individual and family stressors, along with low sixth grade performance, low high school performance and motivation, and drug use, were associated with an increased likelihood of dropping out (CAMPBELL, 2014).

Although there is little empirical research on school factors that may be associated with dropping out of school, some studies have reported that dropout rates appear to vary widely depending on school factors. For example, early school failure can act as a starting point in a cycle that weakens a student's attachment to school and eventually leads to dropping out (GREENE AND WINTERS, 2017).

Gomes and Sena (2012) examined students' ability to identify with academics (i.e. their self-reports on the importance of academic performance) in relation to staying in school or dropping out. Alexandre *et al.* (2012) collected data on students in 20 schools in Greater Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais State, Brazil between 2002 and 2004. The study included measures of sociodemographic risks and resources *versus* school risks and resources.

School variables included test scores, grade retention, special education services and engagement behaviors. Their findings indicated that engagement behaviors, even in first grade, rivaled academic scores in predicting future dropout rates. Alexandre et al. (2012) found that grade retention also showed a strong relationship with dropping out, particularly when it occurred at the middle school level. They concluded that dropping out of high school culminates a long process of disengagement from school.

The MEC, together with the MT, studied the contextual factors that contribute to dropout in 2014, identifying high schools with severe dropout problems, as well as the states, cities and neighborhoods where they were located. They identified locations with high schools with low promotion power (i.e. 50% of first-year students did not graduate 3 years later) and weak promotion power (i.e. 40% of first-year students did not graduate 3 years later) for a total of 2,000 of the 10,000 schools examined.

Poverty appeared to be the strongest correlate of low promotion power, indicating fewer resources and lower spending per pupil than high incentive schools. The study pointed out that in many localities, the



concentration of underperforming schools is such that there is little choice but to attend a school where graduation is not the norm (BELLIS, 2013).

Therefore, for many students, the school they attend can be the strongest determining factor in whether they complete or drop out of school. Schools are active and dynamic environments that can unintentionally help or hinder student success. Thus, school characteristics that affect student outcomes are important variables to examine (ALEXANDRE et al., 2014)

The MEC and MT study investigated school characteristics and student outcome data related to dropout rates in secondary schools to identify differences between schools reporting low and high dropout rates (CAMPBELL, 2014).

The variables studied included (a) school historical data, environment, disciplinary policies and procedures; (b) classroom environment and instruction; (c) administrator characteristics, philosophies, attitudes and behaviors; (d) staff characteristics, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors; and (e) student characteristics and behavior (BELIZÁRIO E LEGIS, 2014).

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Recently, renewed public attention has been focused on the high school dropout rate. Conflicting reports on the dropout rate can confuse the debate; however, few deny that dropout is one of the main indicators of educational and economic decline. Regardless of the actual rates. The growing number of high school dropouts, according to the MEC (2017) is the most dramatic indicator of the degree to which schools are failing.

Although services for the majority of secondary school students have improved and expanded significantly in the years since the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - LDB No. 9.394 in 1996, the provision of adequate educational services remains problematic for many students who have dropped out of school at some point.

The results consistently suggest that the young adults most at risk of lifelong economic and social harm are those who have dropped out of school at least once in their lives. These young people are most seriously at risk because of their history of equated educational achievement, their chronic dependence on society and their uncertain future in the labor market.

Presumably as a consequence of the markedly low employment rates among young adults following high school, the recent changes in the law place considerable emphasis on improving the provision of special secondary education and transition services to create more productive outcomes for these young people and society.

Only in the last decade have studies focused on the higher than average dropout rate of students, especially those with learning disabilities. When asked about the main problem they encounter at school when they return to study, the 12 students who once dropped out were emphatic: monitoring teaching and learning. One of the students interviewed was emphatic: "I find it very difficult to keep up with the lessons";



another student who spent eight years away from school said: "I haven't been to school for a long time and so I'm finding it very difficult to learn and keep up with the lessons".

The teachers interviewed also pointed out the same problem. One of them said "they have enormous difficulty keeping up with lessons"; another teacher said: "the students who have returned to school have a lot of problems learning and keeping up with lessons". The MEC (2017) found that 32% of students with learning difficulties who left school during the school years prior to 2020 dropped out of school (WAGNER, 2019).

The rate of students with learning difficulties is second only to students with emotional disturbance, among whom 40% drop out. The dropout rate for students with learning difficulties in the state where Wagner's study (2019) was conducted was estimated at 40%. However, the dropout rate for students in the general population is estimated at 20.2% (MEC, 2017).

Teachers also report that these students are mostly very withdrawn in class. One student reported that he never thought about dropping out, but didn't act on the decision because most of his friends were at school. He pointed out on several occasions that he was liked by the others and that not being on the indoor soccer team didn't bother him either. But he ended up dropping out of school.

On checking this student's academic records these included several handwritten notes that he needed to go on to receive extra reading help and possibly some professional advice. Other comments included his good nature, his ability to work with others and his reluctance to read aloud.

This student was referred to the Guardianship Council and to the school's pedagogical support and was subsequently coded as learning disabled by the school's pedagogue. When talking to the pedagogue, he said "that he is a good boy, but with serious learning problems". The school manager said that "we had to refer him to the Guardianship Council when he was under 18 so that they could take action about his attendance at school, but it didn't do much good".

After he was transferred to the night shift, the records were lost. He didn't receive any religious services during this time, and his mother thought it would be fine if he established himself as a person before being sent to youth and adult education, as the mother herself told the school manager. According to the manager, she wanted the student to "make friends and not be seen as different". The mother was an elementary school teacher and reported that she had seen students with "similar problems get well after reaching high school". According to the school manager, the mother described her involvement in the school as active. For example, she indicated that she helped him with his work and test preparation, but only until he was 18 years old.

Several similarities were found in the analysis of the experiences of the participants in this study, reported by themselves and by the teachers with direct involvement in their lives at this time. For example,





all the participants in this study came from relatively non-traditional families characterized by mothers who are housewives or who work full-time and the absence of mothers in the immediate families.

Although apparently supportive of their sons and daughters, the others of these young people were not well-informed about their parental rights under education law and allowed schools considerable freedom or discretion in designing their learning, even when they perceived problems.

As a group, though, they have found school systems relatively insensitive to the specific issues surrounding these one-time dropouts, and what is evident from their accounts is that they have not taken on an advocacy role or sought support to correct deficiencies or challenge the system.

With the exception of one interviewee, the adult students had a long history of learning problems and failure in traditional public school environments. For these young adults, traditional high school was seen as less rewarding than the alternatives apparent in the outside world. In fact, 11 of the 12 interviewees had low grade performance throughout their elementary and high school years, but their support services never addressed these academic deficiencies beyond statements that indicated the need for students to monitor themselves or their own results resource support when needed.

All the students who reported that they had dropped out of school at some point in their lives were working while in secondary school, most of them in self-employed activities and some had worked since elementary school. Their early introduction to employment was characterized by long working weeks, ranging from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 40 hours a week. The jobs they had were self-employed and required relatively little adult supervision. In each case, their work provided them with money and an important source of satisfaction.

In contrast to their school experiences, their jobs offered them the opportunity to exercise control, responsibility and decision-making. This initial work experience seems to have served as a powerful incentive to drop out; however, there were other mitigating circumstances that also served to influence their early withdrawal.

Several differences were observed regarding gender disparities in the first employment experiences of the young adults in the study. Not by choice, young women had slightly fewer working hours and lower incomes, both during and after formal schooling. Incomes are below R\$1,000.00 per month.

While this pay discrepancy may follow the patterns of their peers, it is worth paying more attention to. In addition, there are two cases in which young women received mentoring advice that was insufficient or inappropriate as a result of their circumstances.

In the case of one student, the vocational assessment was waived because her needs were coordinated, as she thought it was in her best interest, taken care of when she thought she might get pregnant.



The extent to which these differences and issues illustrate the influence of gender roles in the retyping carried out by parents, families, educators, counselors, employers and young women has not been adequately addressed and represents a significant barrier to equity in education, training and employment.

Although the young people involved in this study varied in their ability to predict the future, they felt that they had left behind the most anxious period of their lives.

The decision to leave school, in their opinion, was singularly the most affirmative choice of their school years. Their departure had a lot to do with recovering their own lives and trying to recover their self-esteem.

So, while dropping out of school is seen as a tragic decision by the teachers, the pedagogue and the school manager interviewed, most of the young adults considered it one of their biggest decisions in secondary school. Although some students indicated that they regretted their decision to leave, they were also adamant that they could never go back to their old school.

A recurring theme in interviews with students was the feeling that their personal opinions were neither sought nor valued in the school environment. The failure to document measurable objectives and short building goals and the general lack of attention to modifications or instructional approaches shifts the focus from learning to management.

In the case of these young adults, the effectiveness of self-control (without prior training for students and educators) as a strategy for academic deficiencies - fair processing for remediation, rarely resulting in substantial change in performance outcomes.

Thus, the 12 students who said that they had already left school provided, with their testimonies, diverse and illustrative examples of the subsequent experiences of transition from school and from school to age that students with learning difficulties encounter before and after leaving secondary school.

While they described the reasons why students left school, they also revealed the behavior and attitudes shown by young adults with learning difficulties, their perceptions of the education system and the degree to which school represents the concerns of young adults.

In addition, the case studies examined young people's work histories before and after leaving school, the extent to which young adults related to adult service providers, and their thoughts and experiences related to returning to formal education and training programs. grade performance has consistently been cited as one of the main indicators of dropping out of various quantitative studies in the general population.

Numerous comments from educators and administrators suggested that school problems, personal problems and family and social concerns interacted to produce poor grades and low self-esteem, which subsequently impacted on dropout decisions. Overall, students dropped out of school because they felt that further academic efforts would be anxiety-provoking and humiliating. It seems that (not unlike their peers



who never dropped out) many young people are students and work outside school hours and at weekends. This competition for time and energy has significant consequences.

On the one hand, evidence suggests that, for students with disabilities, paid employment during secondary school has a strong relationship with obtaining employment after leaving school (HASAZI, et al., 2015). On the other hand, evidence also suggests that intensive employment at the start of secondary school is associated with an increased likelihood of dropping out of school for certain groups of students.

To what extent does the struggle for increased earnings and internal encouragement at unsatisfactory grades offer a compelling reason to leave school before graduation. Whether during the high school years it interferes with or tempts students with disabilities at risk of dropping out to choose the path of least resistance and opt for greater personal and economic satisfaction through early withdrawal and increased involvement in the workforce are the central questions that emerge from the qualitative analysis.

This provision represents a significant step forward, but it may come too late to influence young adults with disabilities who are at risk of dropping out early in their high school career. Assuming that a transition component can influence the course of events and provide guidance for potential dropouts with learning disabilities, schools should take the initiative to introduce transition services and assistance earlier and take advantage of community resources and seamless relationships (with cultural services, employers, coworkers, family and friends) to increase the level of support for young people at risk of dropping out early.

Of considerable importance is the school's relationship with employers who hire young adults of school age. If employers understand that excessive hours of employment or employment that cuts into schooling can become counterproductive in the long term, then incentives can be negotiated, so that students can gain employment and non-employment experience.

Nationally, several large companies have incentive plans in place that help students reach their graduation goal and additional incentives to attend colleges and training institutes. The concept of employers as education and training partners remains an underutilized aspect of the transition planning process.

While there is a renewed emphasis on the happiness of school leavers, the fact remains that the transition and outcomes associated with community adjustment vary widely and are not well understood. Affirming several related studies (EDGAR, 2017).

This study supports the assumption that the transition process remains incomplete for a considerable number of young adults with learning difficulties. Evidence from dropout studies in the general population suggests long-term negative consequences related to dropping out.

However, the case studies of young adults with learning disabilities described in this research question earlier depictions of dropouts as failures or losers. The earlier apocalyptic portrayals produced less



than flattering stereotypes of young people struggling in a system that offers limited accommodations and interventions for students.

Without romanticizing their experiences, the young adults with disabilities in this study have considerable resilience, as evidenced by their ability to seek jobs, forge numerous friendships among their peers, further their education and training, earn alternative educational credentials and in some cases pursue their career ambitions.

By using case studies to illuminate the complexity of young adults' school and post-school experiences, we can gain a better understanding of the effects of educational practices and social circumstances on young adults' lives.

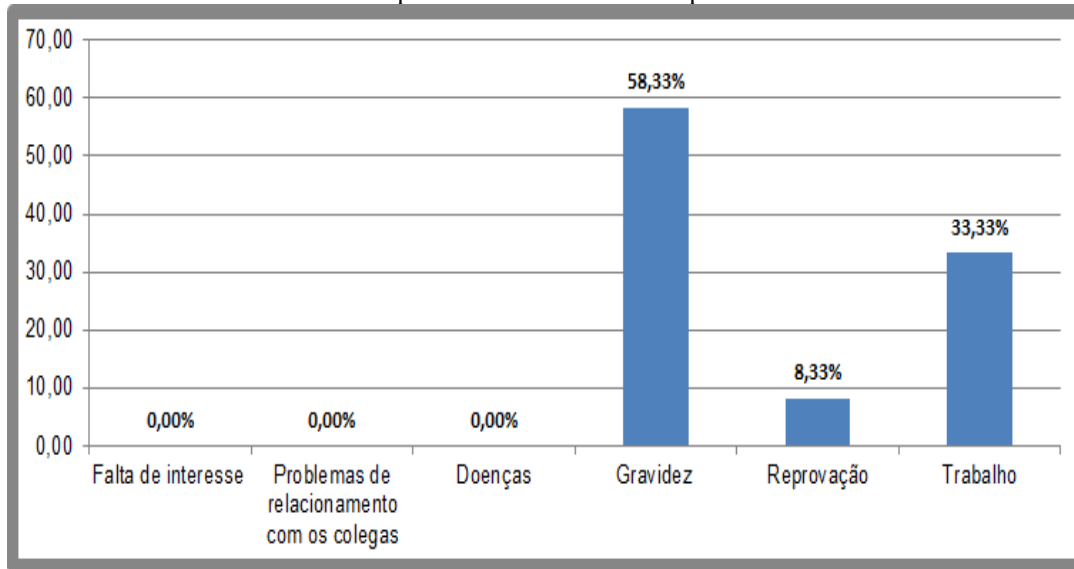
Although many authors have suggested that dropping out is an inevitable feature of modern education and a phenomenon that may cost society less than is often believed, one is forced to agree with Cordié (2014) and others who write that the individual and collective disadvantages that arise when a significant proportion of students do not complete secondary school are impossible to ignore, especially in a society committed to equal opportunities and the full participation of all citizens in political, social and economic affairs.

Since the phenomenon of school dropout is considered to be harmful to a democratic society and to be a long-lasting social problem, it is believed that the time has come to subject it to sustained investigation with the aim of mitigating its worst manifestations.

In the past, researchers, policymakers and education professionals should join forces in the kind of coalition described by Massa (2017) in his article to plan, implement and evaluate programs and policies that will encourage at-risk students to complete secondary school. It is time to renew the research agenda to address the problem of school dropout. In this regard, students were asked what led them to drop out of school? The answers are summarized in Graph 2:



Graph 1 - Causes of school dropout



Source: Author Field Research (2022)

As you can see, two reasons stand out: work, indicated by 33.33 of the interviewees; pregnancy for 58.33%. It is noteworthy that of all the women interviewed who dropped out, all were due to pregnancy.

Pregnancy is a natural state for human beings, who are ready to reproduce when they reach puberty, but reproducing at a young age becomes a social problem, as these are very young people who have not yet reached the age to take on responsibilities. Not being able to watch a movie that is off-limits to under-18s, not being allowed to drive a car, are just some of the restrictions that limit a teenager's freedom of action. There are many others, not always so explicit.

Adolescents are often hindered in their attempts to participate in the adult world. Adequate development should make this possible, because it is through participation that a person learns and takes on mature characteristics, since at eighteen, a whole series of possibilities open up, as if age automatically transformed a teenager into an adult. In fact, much more important than age in assessing an individual's level of development are the various dimensions of emotional, social and intellectual maturity.

In order to take on the responsibility of raising a child, you need to have acquired emotional, social and intellectual maturity, in other words, you need to have acquired responsibility, which hardly ever happens in adolescence. One of the biggest concerns in society at the moment is teenage pregnancy, which is gaining prominence in the media, especially in social and medical support bodies, seeking to denounce and give visibility to the increase in the number of pregnant girls. Every year they give special prominence to this issue. Bocardi (2007, p. 45) points out that "interest in teenage pregnancy has increased significantly [...] due to its organic and procedural implications".

The author quotes Takiuti (1993, p. 45) who states that "in Brazil, around one million adolescents between the ages of 10 and 20 give birth every year, which corresponds to 20% of all live births" (p. 45).



She also presents a study by the same author, which provides enlightening statistics such as "the average number of children of a 15-year-old adolescent was 1.2 in 1970, rising to 2.1 in May 1980, for every 100 women of reproductive age" (p. 45).

The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) reports that fertility rates have been falling in all regions of Brazil since 1970, which does not mean that the number of pregnant teenagers has fallen, as shown in Table 6:

Table 1 - Total fertility rate. IBGE - Demographic Census 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2000 and 2010.

Year	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1991	2000	2010
Fee	6,6	6,21	6,28	5,76	4,35	2,70	2,85	2,35	2,12

Source: IBGE - 2011

The author sees the abrupt transition from daughter to mother as fundamental when a teenager becomes pregnant. An American film - *Lost Dreams* - clearly demonstrates this moment, when it shows a teenage girl becoming pregnant at 15 and leaving her dreams behind, which ends up influencing the mother and child relationship in the following years, as the mother comes to see her son as the great obstacle to the realization of her dreams, in other words, it is clear that the identity conflict happens to teenage girls when they become pregnant early, where these, if not worked on psychologically and socially, can cause serious damage to the future mother, or even to the child she is going to have.

In other words, the author's quote is talking about identity problems, i.e. the fact of going from being a daughter to being a mother causes an identity problem, due to the lack of emotional maturity, which doesn't just mean the ability to control emotions. More than that, it means the ability to express emotions, a fundamental part of human life. There is no life without feeling and emotion. According to Jersild (2011, p. 62):

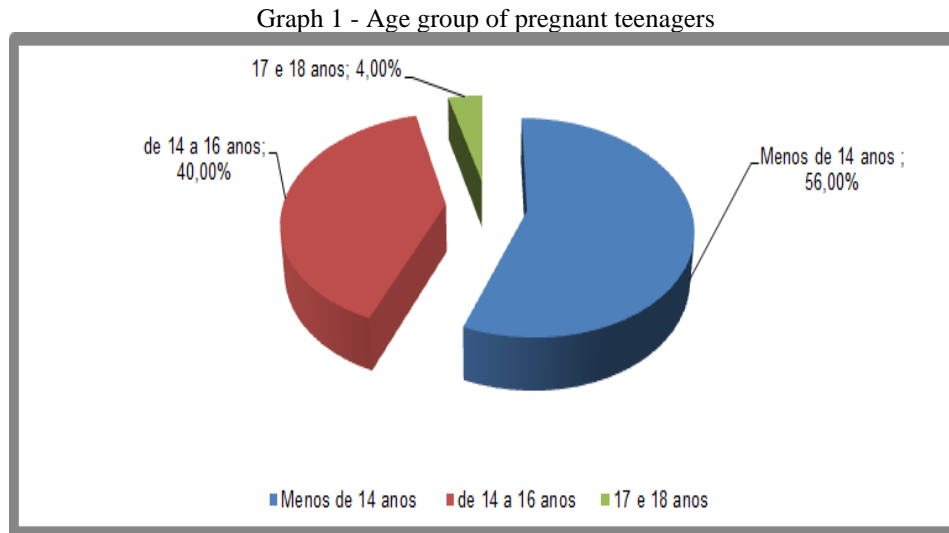
Emotional maturity also means the ability to use emotional resources in order to obtain satisfaction from pleasant things; to be able to love, and to accept love; to experience anger at setbacks that would provoke anger in any reasonable person; to accept and understand the meaning of the fear that arises when facing something threatening, without having to wear the false mask of courage; reaching out and seeking what life has to offer, even if this means facing the possibility of gain or loss, joy or sadness, capacities that can only be acquired with life experience, i.e. an adolescent has not developed this capacity.

In this way, teenage pregnancy causes all sorts of problems, due to the lack of maturity to deal with this new responsibility, not that there isn't love, but that love is confused with a sense of ensuring the intensity of feeling and behavior appropriate to this new circumstance.

The serious problem of teenage pregnancy is not just a problem for one social class or one age group.



According to data contained in the study "*Adolescent Pregnancy and Social Vulnerability*" coordinated by Sylvia Cavasim (2014), the concentration of pregnant adolescents (96%) is in the 14 to 18 age bracket, with 56% aged between 14 and 16, and 40% aged between 17 and 18, as shown in Graph 3.



Source: Cavasim (2014) - Survey carried out in 2003, Belém, Brasília, Porto Alegre, Recife and São Paulo.

Campos (2001, p. 68) observes: "Pregnancy is a phase of life that does not depend on a woman's age, it can occur at any time as long as there are the appropriate physiological and environmental conditions to promote it", in other words, it is enough for a woman to continue menstruating to continue to be able to get pregnant. In Brazil, while there has been a reduction in the total fertility rate, for the group of women aged 15 to 19 the fertility trend has gone in the opposite direction, showing an increase of around 26% between the specific rates of 1970 and 1991, according to the IBGE (2008).

With regard to the schooling of pregnant teenagers, only 4% have completed elementary school, 40% have not completed elementary school and 56% are in high school. The data shows that the experience of sexuality in each individual includes factors from different orders: learning, discovery and invention.

The study by Cavasim (2014) points out that 52% of pregnant teenagers don't use contraceptive methods and 40% recognize that they don't have any information about sexual orientation. 8% became pregnant during their first sexual intercourse, which indicates the main causes of pregnancy (Graph 6).

The data is substantial enough to infer that 100% of pregnant teenagers did not have the necessary sexual orientation to avoid pregnancy. This fact shows that the family, the first educational body, for multiple reasons, does not guide their children in relation to sex education, and the school, the second educational body, does not fulfill its role either.

Schools and health centers at any level should be one of the foundations of information, especially for teenagers, as the first measure to prevent early pregnancy. They should act as guiding centers - the school



in the field of knowledge and the health centers in the field of medicine - for sexual activities, becoming real places of awareness.

This preparatory information should come mainly from the family and the school, as well as from social support institutions, with their social workers and psychologists, who should also be part of the school staff, which would certainly change this situation a lot.

Information is essential, since in the studies by Cavasim (2014), all the adolescents gave this as the cause of their pregnancies. They don't use contraceptives; some got pregnant during their first sexual intercourse; and they said that they hadn't been prepared for this moment (lack of information). All of this can be characterized as a lack of information, giving the impression that family and school, in particular, are far removed from passing on life's knowledge to their loved ones. Nor can we forget the absence of the state in this process.

The state should be present, especially at school, where the presence of social workers and psychologists is essential, precisely to act on this type of information, which is so absent in the family.

The data presented refers to various aspects surrounding teenage pregnancy, such as age group, marital status, schooling, work situation, income bracket and, above all, the causes of pregnancy, thus tracing a very accurate profile of the problem so that a diagnosis can be made and measures inferred.

On the question of causes, for example, we can see the complete inefficiency of the Brazilian state in relation to its health policy, in relation to sexual issues, since the propaganda is intense for the use of contraceptive methods, such as the use of condoms, which even prevent the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, the absolute majority do not use in their sexual relations.

It was also possible to infer from the data that the majority became pregnant before the age of 14 (56%), inferring that the topic of sexuality, as a cross-cutting theme at school, has not been given enough attention, since in the early grades of elementary school, the curriculum, according to the PCNs, emphasizes the assimilation of concepts; it seeks to develop cognitive structures, providing students with the knowledge necessary for meaningful learning and the construction of competencies. As established in the National Curriculum Guidelines, it is necessary to recognize that learning is constituted in the interaction between knowledge, language and affective processes, as a consequence of the relationships between the different identities of the various participants in the school context, through inter- and intra-subjective actions.

Therefore, we mustn't forget that students bring knowledge and life experiences that are evident in this interaction. The school needs to value this knowledge as the starting point for acquiring systematized knowledge, skills and abilities that are to be developed and mastered. Leiva (2014, p. 125) says:

As far as language is concerned, there is a special and privileged situation in the Federal District, where the various regional languages that make up the Brazilian linguistic atlas coexist. In the literacy process, the teacher must pay attention to the various languages in the classroom, respecting them as





correct in the family context and gradually introducing the cultured norm as a form of socio-cultural interaction.

Respecting students' knowledge, perceptions and impressions encourages successful learning and strengthens the self-concept that is so necessary for the individual and social formation of a person who belongs to a certain group that considers and appreciates them. This consideration and appreciation, so necessary for human coexistence, should be expressed first and foremost by the teacher and encouraged among all the students in the classroom.

In the context of schooling, students have access to a universe of knowledge that they have not yet had the opportunity to experience. The school must seek to correlate the contents of the areas of knowledge with the universe of values and ways of life of its students.

In this sense, the Transversal Themes are inserted, precisely to take account of the fact that the school is inserted in a social context in which it acts, modifies and is influenced by; it cannot avoid discussions relating to this society; it needs to deal with issues that interfere in students' lives and with which they are confronted in their day-to-day lives. Because of their undeniable importance in students' education, social issues have long been discussed and often incorporated into school curricula and planning.

Sexual Orientation at school should be understood as a process of pedagogical intervention aimed at transmitting information and problematizing issues related to sexuality, including the attitudes, beliefs, taboos and values associated with it. This intervention takes place in a collective setting, differentiating it from individual, psychotherapeutic work and focusing on the sociological, psychological and physiological dimensions of sexuality. It also differs from education carried out by the family, as it makes it possible to discuss different points of view associated with sexuality, without imposing certain values on others. According to Andrade (2008, p. 33):

Sexual Orientation work aims to provide students with the possibility of exercising their sexuality in a responsible and pleasurable way. Its development should offer criteria for discerning behaviors linked to sexuality that require privacy and intimacy, as well as recognizing the manifestations of sexuality that can be expressed at school. Three fundamental axes are proposed to guide the teacher's intervention: Human Body, Gender Relations and Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

The approach to the body as the matrix of sexuality aims to provide students with knowledge and respect for their own bodies and notions about personal care and that offered by health services. The discussion on gender allows for the questioning of rigidly established roles for men and women in society, the valuing of each one and the flexibilization of these roles.

Preventing sexually transmitted diseases makes it possible to provide scientific and up-to-date information about the diseases. It should also combat discrimination against HIV-positive people in order to help students adopt preventive behaviors. Classroom work on sexual orientation should prioritize the



problematization of issues that encourage reflection on and re-signification of the information, emotions and values received and lived throughout each person's history, which so often hinder the development of their potential.

Although the research pointed to only 3 reasons for dropping out of school in Itacoatiara, Amazonas State, Brazil (teenage pregnancy, work and failure) the literature says that the process is influenced by several types of factors: early and recent school performance, academic and social behaviors and educational and general attitudes. What differentiates these models is how these various factors interact to promote the process of gradual withdrawal and, ultimately, dropping out, as well as the relative focus on individual versus institutional factors.

Rodrigues (2013) developed a model in which dropping out, like other school results, is jointly influenced by two broad factors: school affiliation (or social attachment) and educational engagement. The social dimension of schooling is influenced by factors such as social ties with other people, commitment to the institution, involvement in school activities and beliefs in the value and legitimacy of the school.

Educational engagement concerns the academic dimension of schooling and is influenced by the extrinsic rewards associated with schoolwork and the intrinsic rewards associated with the curriculum and the way educational activities are constructed. Finn (2009) analyzes two alternative models. The first, which he calls the frustration-self-esteem model, argues that the initial, antecedent to dropping out of school is early school failure, which in turn leads to low self-esteem and then problematic behavior. This further decreases school performance and, subsequently, self-esteem and behavior. Eventually, students either leave school voluntarily or are removed from school due to their problematic behavior.

The second model Finn (2009) calls the participation-identification model. In this model, the initial antecedent to dropping out is a lack of participation in school activities, which in turn leads to poor school performance and then less identification with the school. Participation in school activities includes responding to teacher instructions and class requirements, participating in homework and other learning activities, participating in non-academic school activities and participating in school governance.

This model argues that there is a behavioral and emotional component to the abstinence process. Both of Finn's (2009) models involve long-term processes that start at the beginning of elementary school. Several other models of the quitting process have been developed in recent years based on long term empirical studies of small groups of students in specific communities.

Alexandre et al. (2012) developed a life course perspective model of high school graduation based on a cohort study of first graders in schools in a Brazilian city that began in 2002. The model examines the effects of school experiences, parental resources and personal resources in first grade, then in elementary school.



But the models do not differentiate between the factors that can affect students dropping out of a particular institution. These models identify some important factors that influence students dropping out of school, including attitudinal and behavioral factors. But the models do not differentiate between the factors that can affect a student dropping out of a particular institution (mobility) and those that can affect a student dropping out of school as a whole (dropout).

Furthermore, the models do not specifically address the characteristics of schools that can directly influence student participation and identification with the school. However, several studies have shown that schools consciously and directly contribute to student dropout through the types of policies and practices they practise, especially with regard to certain types of students.

When we spoke to the teachers, we found that 32% of those interviewed said that they were always trying to improve their practice, and 100% felt satisfied with their profession and happy to take part in the teaching-learning process, and that they had been working in this area for a long time. So why are the results so poor in relation to repetition and dropout? Teachers are not achieving results by changing their teaching practices alone. In relation to the teachers' opinion, the pedagogue and the school manager spoke about the causes of school dropout, 50% of them were adamant: family income contributes to school dropout, and they commented that the physical space of the classrooms does not correspond to the students' wishes. Among the factors cited as contributing to school failure were low family income 40%, lack of interest on the part of the student, 20% unstructured family 15% and other factors, 15%.

School dropout has become one of the most challenging issues faced in the schooling process: not only in Brazil, but also in other parts of the world. According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), among the 100 nations with the best Human Development Index, Brazil has the 3rd highest dropout rate<sup>1</sup>. The much-publicized high school dropout crisis is not a problem of the last decade, it has been reproduced over long periods of history.

Young people's citizenship depends on a good formal education, and the government tries to ensure that teenagers complete primary and secondary school. Every day, it's distressing that schools don't manage to have a better relationship with families and students. Encouraging pupils to stay at school until they have completed their compulsory studies gives them more knowledge and helps them to develop their potential, progressing towards intellectual and human development.

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<sup>1</sup> Brazil has 3rd highest dropout rate among 100 countries, says UNDP. Available at: [educacao.uol.com.br/noticias/2013/03/14/brasil-tem-3-maior-taxa-de-evasao-escolar-entre-100-aises-diz-pnud.htm](http://educacao.uol.com.br/noticias/2013/03/14/brasil-tem-3-maior-taxa-de-evasao-escolar-entre-100-aises-diz-pnud.htm). Accessed on: March 18, 2021



## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although geographical relocations have been associated with a number of potentially problematic behavioral situations during adolescence, little is known about the reasons why adolescence and school mobility seem to increase the risk of adolescents dropping out of school.

The question here used two waves of MEC data (2014 and 2017) to explore factors that help explain the higher dropout rates in State High Schools in the municipality of Itacoatiara, Amazonas State, Brazil. It was also examined whether student level and mobility in adolescent schools independently affect the risk of dropping out of school.

The research showed that there is a clear need for studies on the consequences of dropping out of high school in the city of Itacoatiara, Amazonas State, Brazil. Very little is known about the economic or social consequences of dropping out.

It has long been assumed that the costs to society of the dropout problem are quite large. As the high school completion rate has increased, however, the population of dropouts in the 1980s may be very different from the population of dropouts in the 1950s and 1960s. As the 2020 rates are different from the 2010 and 2000 rates.

It is desirable to have estimates of the costs of dropping out of school for policy purposes, and it is important to weigh up the costs in reais (R\$1.00) of preventing school dropout and the expected benefits of maintaining school dropout. Figures regarding the costs of dropping out of school are non-existent in the city of Itacoatiara, Amazonas State, Brazil, specifically at the José Carlos Martins Mestrinho State School, and although more recent attempts to estimate how the costs of the dropout problem still suggest that it would be cost-effective to invest in dropout prevention programs, more up-to-date data on the monetary costs of dropping out of school is needed.

We hope that a primary source of information on the consequences of dropping out will be the ongoing study conducted by the MEC. Taking into account this current study of a representative regional sample of young people surveying substantial numbers of pupils who have dropped out of secondary school, we come to the conclusion that the cost is high more empirically.

Data from Brazilian state surveys is suitable for analyzing the consequences of early school leaving on the labor market. The articles in this issue have already documented some of the early consequences of dropping out of school and shown that the self-esteem of high school dropouts increased after leaving school.

Finally, will the MEC follow-up (2017) help clarify the question originally raised by several authors that high school dropout is a problem or a symptom? Given that the majority of high school dropouts are socially, economically and academically disadvantaged, can one isolate that part of the economic and academic *deficit of dropouts* in relation to graduates that can be attributed to dropping out of school itself?



To do this, we need detailed information on the experiences and characteristics of high school dropouts, as well as data on their experiences in the labor market, cognitive performance and attitudes and behaviors after leaving school.



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