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Marcelo Albuquerque de Oliveira; Francirlene Belo Mendes de Santana; Dércio Luiz

Reis; Raimundo Kennedy Vieira; Gabriela de Mattos Veroneze

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# **The Causes of School Evasion in A Private Higher Education Institution: Case Study**

## **Marcelo Albuquerque de Oliveira (Corresponding author)**

Postgraduate Program in Production Engineering, Federal University of Amazonas,  
Amazonas, Brazil.  
[marcelooliveira@ufam.edu.br](mailto:marcelooliveira@ufam.edu.br)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2496-646X>

## **Francirlene Belo Mendes de Santana (Corresponding author)**

Postgraduate Program in Production Engineering, Federal University of Amazonas,  
Amazonas, Brazil.  
[francirlene.santana@gmail.com](mailto:francirlene.santana@gmail.com)  
Phone: +55 69 99987-0619  
Address: 6200, Rodrigo Octávio Ave., Manaus – Amazonas  
Zip Code: 69080-900

## **Décio Luiz Reis (Corresponding author)**

Postgraduate Program in Production Engineering, Federal University of Amazonas,  
Amazonas, Brazil.  
[dercioreis@ufam.edu.br](mailto:dercioreis@ufam.edu.br)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8175-3212>

## **Raimundo Kennedy Vieira (Corresponding author)**

Postgraduate Program in Production Engineering, Federal University of Amazonas,  
Amazonas, Brazil.  
[kennedy71@gmail.com](mailto:kennedy71@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3685-0034>

## **Gabriela de Mattos Veroneze (Corresponding author)**

Postgraduate Program in Production Engineering, Federal University of Amazonas,  
Amazonas, Brazil.  
[gveroneze@ufam.edu.br](mailto:gveroneze@ufam.edu.br)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1978-9190>

## **Abstract**

*The objective of this research was to identify the causes that motivated the students to evade the courses of a private Higher-Education Institution - IES, in the city of Porto Velho-RO. It was intended to raise the number of students evaded by periods and courses in recent years to assess the impact of school evasion*

on HEI management decisions. To obtain results, we used the interpretation of data obtained through quantitative and qualitative research, questionnaires and interviews.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a significant growth in Private Higher-Education Institutions and new students. Similarly, there was also a growth in dropout. In the face of the problems faced, there is a need to know the phenomenon to ensure an intervention, to bring qualitative changes to avoid a complex situation that presents causal multifactor that negatively influence the strategic results in a highly competitive environment, by the presence in the educational market of new colleges with different types of demand and trends in creating innovative courses.

Higher-education institutions are going through a process of great competitiveness, and the expansion of enrollment does not represent the retention of students. School evasion in Brazilian colleges is a problem that private education entities face and must develop strategies to ensure management based on internal control and relationship management focused on dropout problems. The research problem points to the following question: *What are the main causes of school evasion in the Higher-Education Institution surveyed?*

The study hypothesis points out that there are multiple causes of school evasion in educational institutions, becoming a problem that cannot be completely addressed. However, managing student retention through internal measures aimed at efficient management to address the causes of student dropout may reduce the financial impact on organizations. It is justified to conduct the study based on the assumption of the specific point of management, being very important to know the various realities that causes the dropout, so that the creation and effective strategies in the face of financial problems that impose aspects of academic and administrative nature.

To achieve the objectives of the study, it was decided to conduct a case study in a private higher-education institution, with the purpose of conducting a data survey, in order to corroborate the research hypotheses, identify the most common variables, and propose actions to reduce or eliminate dropout.

## 2. Theoretical Referential

The incentive to create strategic actions to address the problem has shown that higher-education institutions need to establish an action plan to stimulate student retention, seeking greater adherence between courses through a reassessment of curricula bringing issues that are according to the students' wishes and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. The following is the theoretical basis for this study, regarding the management strategies, dropout and growth of educational institutions.

## **2.1 Strategic Management**

Martins (2007) evaluated that this moment of crisis is a key point that HEI management must pursue in order to create efficient strategies. Thus, this greater understanding about the preponderant factors of dropout in undergraduate courses and their relationship with a range of variables still little known. According to the author, strategies to reduce school dropout have their benchmark in the training of professionals who work as teachers, the improvement and access to teaching materials, encouraging actions that determine educational experiences for teachers who can determine skills that can support the challenges of the profession.

According to Duarte and Bertelli (2013), to identify the problems of higher education in Brazil, it is necessary to show that the low quality of education and the factors that interact with the student's perceptions, favor the dropout. Miranda *et al.* (2015) assess that the strategic management should act from the problem of student permanence, identifying the affinity that the student has with the course, from this perception, it will be understood that much of the cause of dropout is lacked of interest in the course. For many reasons, students do not score well enough to earn a place during their dream. This condition is limiting, as it is a deactivation process that can trigger evasion. As can be seen there are several reasons for student dropout, and one factor that needs to be assessed is the macroeconomic aspects of higher-education institutions.

## **2.2 Macroeconomic Aspects of Higher-Education Institution Expansion**

In the macroeconomic aspects that favored the expansion of HEIs in the Brazilian economy, the main factor is the partnership with the State in the transfer of Student Financing (FIES), enabling organizations to manage many yields on profitability indicators. In this regard, in terms of capital structure, HEIs benefited from two situations that led to the expansion of their investments: Firstly, the process of open capital of educational companies in the financial market, which favored a significant amount of capital for the application of financial strategies. and second, the effective financial impact of the State passing on to maintain the conditions of educational funding that began in 2010 with the implementation of the National Education Development Fund (FNDE), which favored a large expansion of education supply for Higher Education (FREITAS, 2015).

From 2010 to 2015, the Brazilian government favored the profitability of several HEIs, based on the positive impact of FIES. In this sense, there was a high rate of income favorable to private higher-education institutions. Currently, HEIs have a smaller number of underprivileged students who are enrolled in scholarships through the Student Finance Fund Program (FIES) offered by the Ministry of Education (MEC) to students in private institutions. However, there has been an effective decrease, as evidenced by the result's analysis between 2015 and 2017, which recorded a reduction of -20% from 2015 to 2016 and a -24% reduction in stock exchange offers for the year 2015. 2017. This drastic reduction has been justified by unstable government policies and the difficulty of the government to reduce public spending generating a major impact on Brazilian HEIs with the reduction of state transfers.

According to Duarte and Bertelli (2013), against the background of the great stagnation of the Brazilian economy in the last four years, they produced changes that drastically reduced FIES as a social program. In this context, the great majority of the HEIs had a great impact with the 50% reduction of state transfers in their cash. Miranda et al (2015) sustains that the federal government had an impact close to 50% in terms of default compared to FIES. To remedy the problem, the state's strategy was to drastically reduce supply, shifting responsibility to private sector funding, creating the conditions for expanding many higher-education offerings at low prices, which represents a reduction in investment in educational quality, passing on only the basic teaching, without the presence of research and extension opportunities that enrich the training courses.

In this context, what is evident in the reality of HEIs is that there are much supply and little demand for enrollment, in addition to the problem of dropout who generates financial impacts on the management of private entities. With the State's drastic reduction in educational funding, as a result of changes in legislation, there was a negative impact on the profitability of HEIs. Normative Ordinance 23 provides for the semiannual renewal of the Student Financing Fund (Fies) financing agreements, an effective change in the amendment guidelines regarding students. This change had a major impact on HEIs, associated to the problem of student delinquency and dropout.

### ***2.3 Dropout in Higher-Education Institutions***

The term school / university dropout reflects the phenomenon that characterizes the dropout of the school period before its end. This characteristic phenomenon in Brazil and Latin America has as cause's factors that favor this situation in education. The dropout in higher education in Brazilian institutions is a management challenge, and the HEIs have been facing passively and without alternatives to solve the problem in a time of crisis of great competitiveness. From the perspective of Dias Sobrinho (2002), there are many corporations operating in the higher-education market, and this has resulted in idleness of vacancies and delinquency in private higher-education institutions. Therefore, the reality was already foreshadowed: too much supply and too little demand resulting from the impact of the exhaustion of the system in the face of students' financial difficulties.

The problem becomes even more complex due to the lack of sources of information and knowledge about the phenomenon of dropout, understanding its causes and consequences for the student and his family. The financial impact on HEI emerges as a problem that requires alternatives, considering that it is a worrying social framework that is part of the current debates and reflections. This phenomenon in the educational field encompasses a wide range of factors that are beyond the responsibility of HEIs, but at the same time, it is relevant to identify internal conditions that may be contributing to students' dropout. Thus, knowing the aspects of the phenomenon of dropout in Brazilian HEI is fundamental to define the profile of educational problems in the Brazilian reality, especially in relation to higher education, assessing as an assumption that this constitutes the most important teaching modality to meet young people and adults in the labor market. Therefore, this reality proposes a critical reflection to highlight concrete alternatives in

the face of a problem that directly affects revenues and puts in uncertainty the sustainability of the educational institution.

Analyzing from the focus of research on the subject, it appears that the national literature reflects a concern with the causalities of dropout in HEI in a quantitative view, taking into account the need for greater stimulation and investments in the infrastructure of colleges. . However, it is pressing to know the real issues that pervade as influencers of higher-education dropout. In the view of Duarte and Bertelli (2013), the socioeconomic factor is one of the main factors that make up the Brazilian reality, but it still needs a thorough study to analyze the socioeconomic profile of students evaded in undergraduate courses at private institutions.

In this regard, Freitas (2015) considers that the phenomenon of university dropout is not only explained by the economic bias, although the crisis is considered an important factor, given the difficulty of low-income students to obtain scholarships. Indeed, other motivational issues should also be considered in relation to the lack of opportunities to choose a specific course. However, the motivations and vocations do not match the financial conditions, and preparation needs to get a place in courses of great market interest, so these conditions have a great weight in choosing the course that generally does not represent the real student's desire.

Understanding this phenomenon in HEIs triggers various situations in the educational, social, economic and cultural process that deserve proper study, taking into account the different social contexts that involve the management of private colleges. Therefore, according to Freitas (2015), the evasion of private HEIs is one of the constitutive elements that can be explained in terms of affective, sociocultural, economic, motivational and especially self-aware situations in the world and in relation to the individual's state with the world.

Martins (2007) analyzed that reflecting on dropout in the context of higher education is a way to recognize that higher education is lacking in motivating aspects in the educational process in its various methodologies, content and curriculum basis, as in all database's management structure for student permanence.

In Santos (2014) approach, relationship marketing should be implemented as a critical success factor, where HEIs should rethink their capture strategies. In contrast, Rodriguez (2014) states that the increasing number of dropouts in the higher-education sector is a threat to private HEIs, considering the impact on their revenues, which can be considered as an opportunity for HEIs to assess the permanence of the private sector student is as important as their uptake. At this juncture, the HEIs as educators must seek strategies to obtain the necessary subsidies to understand the evasion, the conditions that can form a power conjuncture that excludes the popular classes, through mechanisms of action that expose social inequalities, making it difficult them the extent of educational opportunities.

### 3. Materials and Methods

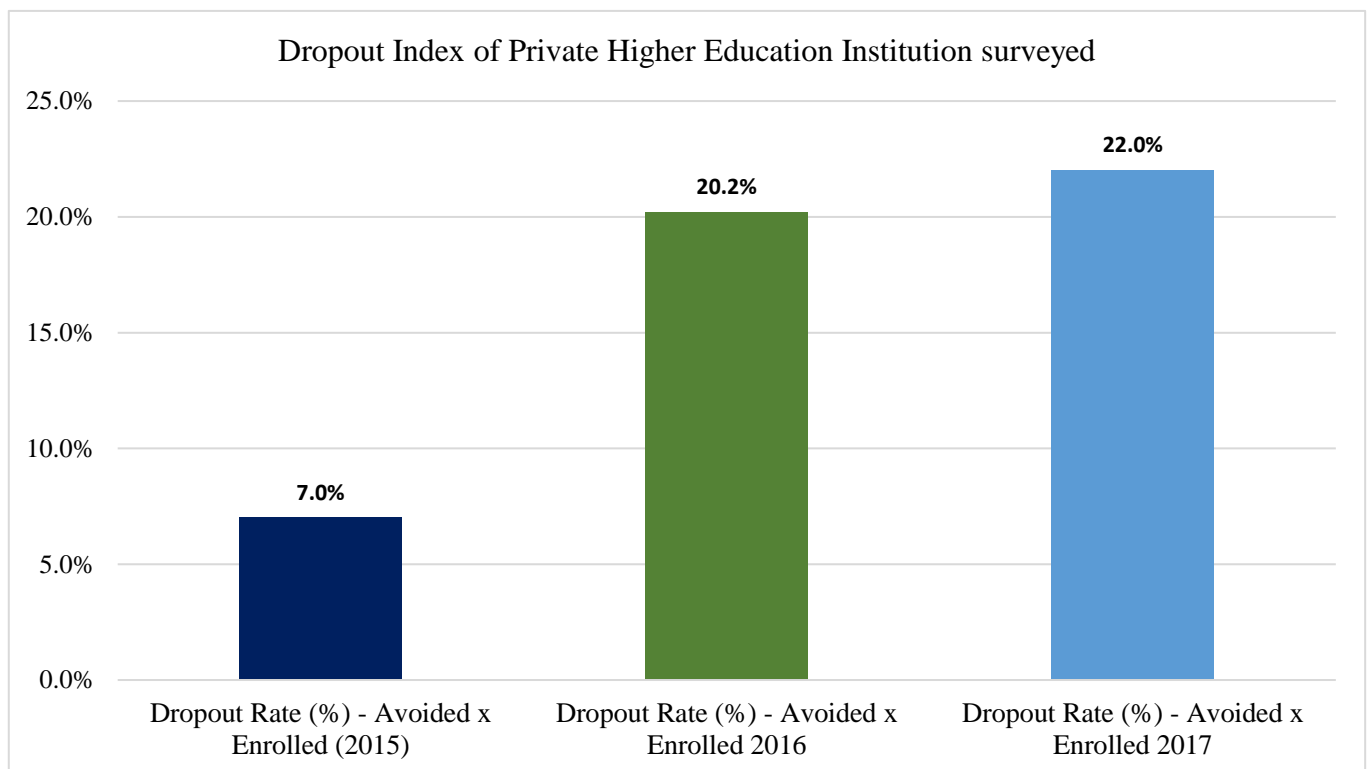
The researched IES currently has five courses in operation, which are *Administration, Accounting, Civil Engineering, Environment Engineering and Law School*. A non-profit institution has been operating in the Educational market for over 30 years. Firstly, we sought data regarding dropout in the educational system of the educational institution for the last 3 years.

The collection of data used in this research was documentary analysis through the systems of the institution researched, questionnaire applied to the evaded students sent by e-mail, messaging application (SMS) and telephone, as well as interviews with the main managers of the institution (Directors General, Academic and Financial), given a qualitative approach to this study. The approach was quantitative, due to the exploration of the dropout data available. The qualitative approach is related to data analysis, considering the response to questionnaires applied during the present study.

### 4. Case Study

The Institution studied has been in the market for over 20 years, and for much of that period has achieved significant revenue that slackly covers all its costs and still has reserves. In the survey conducted through the INEP Census, the surveyed institution obtained the following result with respect to dropout in 2015, 2016 and 2017, as evidenced in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Dropout Index of Private Higher Education Institution surveyed.



As can be seen, the index in 2016 and 2017 rose exponentially, but the percentage of 2016 remained in 2017. The total evasion of the State of Rondônia, in the same years above, according to INEP, was 17% in

2015. This shows that the educational institution surveyed had a lower rate than the state average, where the average dropout rate was 16% for 2016 and 20% for 2017, with the institution surveyed above the state dropout average in these two years. Table 1 detail the dropout rate that occurred in the institution in its main courses offered.

Table 1 - Course dropout data.

COURSES	2015	2016	2017
Administration	5	8	11
Accounting sciences	9	13	15
Law school	35	82	126
Civil Engineering	25	70	90
Environmental engineering	27	15	40

As expected, there were a large number of students evaded in recent years, highlighting the need to search for the causes. After analyzing the characteristics of the educational institution and the interviewees, it was decided to investigate the causes that led the students to evade the institution. With this information, a survey was started to find out what causes the dropout of students from the researched institution in recent years. It was initially based on the evasion of the year 2018, because it is more current data, which can contribute to the strategic decisions made by the senior management of the educational institution. After applying the questionnaire to students evaded in 2018, the results are presented in Table 2, which demonstrates the motivations for dropout. The number of students evaded in 2018 was 148. Of these, 03 had outdated data in the system, with incorrect email address and telephone and 22 did not answer the calls and did not answer the survey. The research sample consisted of 71 evaded students, representing a percentage of 47.97% of the total. It is observed that the main causes of dropout are *unavailability of time, which represents 27.70%; opting for another educational institution, which has a result of 14.86%; change of city, which represents 12.16%*. As can be seen in Table 2, the other causes presented represent 45.28% of the total surveyed.

Table 2 - Main Cause for Evasion 2018 Reference.

Main Causes	2018.1	2018.2
Approved in the PROUNI program	1	0
Approved in the University for All Program (Porto Velho City Hall)	0	1
Unemployed	1	1
Distance to the institution	3	5
Divide HEIs	12	0
IES does not have the new course option	0	2
Unavailability of time	22	19
Dissatisfaction with the researched institution	0	2
Monthly payment does not fit the budget	10	4
Personal reasons / declined to respond	7	2
City change	8	10



Student did not find the course it were looking for	5	2
It did not adapt to the course	0	0
Opted for another educational institution	3	19
Health problems (personal or third party)	4	1
Transferred to Federal University	0	0
High monthly fee	0	2
Travel (vacation, business or study, but will return)	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>71</b>

## 5. Conclusion

There is no denying that student dropout rates are a major social and economic problem in Brazil. The multiple causes and complex nature of the dropout problem require a variety of approaches to help at-risk students and dropouts.

Clearly, several factors lead the student to evade higher-education institutions. It is believed it is essential that educational institutions make investments to maintain the quality of service provision, since it is evident, it costs more to recover a student than to guarantee their permanence.

As a future study, it is proposed to implement a permanence management program to attract new students and keep already enrolled students satisfied.

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