



Original Article

# Dropout and retention of undergraduate students in management: a study at a Brazilian Federal University

## *Evasão e retenção de graduandos em administração: um estudo em uma universidade federal brasileira*

Francisco José da Costa\*, Marcelo de Souza Bispo, Rita de Cássia de Faria Pereira

*Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa, PB, Brazil*

Received 15 April 2016; accepted 6 March 2017

Scientific Editor: Wesley Mendes-Da-Silva

### Abstract

This article analyzes the antecedents of the dropout rate and retention of students in management undergraduate programs. Empirical research was carried out in a management undergraduate program at a Brazilian Federal University, using the data of 1202 freshman students between the years 2004–2009. These students were followed up until the year 2013. In the analysis, we surveyed information regarding the student's time in the program, their graduation or dropout, as well as their socio-demographic information and program characteristics. The statistical technique used was the survival analysis, which allowed us to assess the factors that influence the time of program completion and the evolution of the dropout risk. In the main results, it was found that the number of semesters, student grades, gender, and the existence of failure or dropouts per course, were factors that explained both the time of completion of the course and the risk of dropping out. In addition, variables, such as age, marital status, race and high school background (public or private), showed no influence on these variables (graduation time and dropout rate).

© 2017 Departamento de Administração, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo – FEA/USP. Published by Elsevier Editora Ltda. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

*Keywords:* Higher education; Course management; Dropout; Retention; Graduation

### Resumo

O objetivo, neste artigo, foi analisar os condicionantes da evasão e da retenção de alunos do ensino superior em administração. A pesquisa empírica foi realizada em um curso de Administração de uma universidade federal brasileira com dados de 1202 ingressantes entre os anos de 2004 a 2009 que foram acompanhados até o ano de 2013. Na análise, foram levantadas informações relativas ao tempo de permanência do aluno no curso, forma de saída (diplomação ou evasão), além de informações sócio demográficas e sobre as características do curso. Para análise, foi utilizada a técnica estatística de análise de sobrevivência, que permitiu avaliar, ordenadamente, os fatores que influenciam o tempo de conclusão do curso e a evolução do risco de evasão. Como principais resultados, foi verificado que o número de semestres do curso, o desempenho do aluno, seu gênero, além da existência de reprovação e trancamento são fatores que explicam tanto o tempo de permanência quanto o risco de evasão. Na pesquisa foi constatado que variáveis relativas à idade no ingresso, estado civil, raça e natureza da escola de educação básica (pública ou privada) não demonstraram influência no tempo de conclusão ou evasão.

© 2017 Departamento de Administração, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo – FEA/USP. Publicado por Elsevier Editora Ltda. Este é um artigo Open Access sob uma licença CC BY (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

*Palavras-chave:* Ensino superior; Gestão de curso; Evasão; Retenção; Diplomação

\* Corresponding author at: Cidade Universitária, CEP 58051900 João Pessoa, PB, Brazil.

E-mail: [franze.mq@gmail.com](mailto:franze.mq@gmail.com) (F.J. Costa).

Peer Review under the responsibility of Departamento de Administração, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo – FEA/USP.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rauspm.2017.12.007>

2531-0488/© 2017 Departamento de Administração, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo – FEA/USP. Published by Elsevier Editora Ltda. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## Introduction

The focus on the expansion policy of Brazilian higher education over the last 20 years has refocused the attention of educational managers on two problems: the dropout levels and the retention of higher education students (Aina, 2013; Arias Ortiz & Dehon, 2013; Belloc, Maruotti, & Petrella, 2010; DesJardins, Ahlburg, McCall, 2002; Lassibille & Gómez, 2008; Lightfoot & Doerner, 2008; Platt Neto, Cruz, & Pfitscher, 2008). The concern is associated with the risk that the educational system is not being effective in training professionals. Public managers and policymakers are concerned about the inefficiency and the waste of public resources, both where there is total State funding, as in the case of Brazilian public universities, and where funding is through scholarships and special financing of school fees, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Belgium (Aina, 2013; Arias Ortiz & Dehon, 2013; DesJardins et al., 2002). Many public managers have been measuring rates of dropout, retention, and graduation of higher education students to discover the variables that most influence the possibility of the student's not finishing the program or even delaying the graduation time of his/her program.

Between 2003 and 2014, the Brazilian federal government invested R\$ 8.4 billion in the expansion and restructuring of federal universities, increasing the number of institutions, programs, job positions, and students. Through the so-called "Reuni" program, designed to support the restructuring and expansion of federal universities, 2046 new undergraduate programs were created. The admission of students increased from 638,000 to more than one million, between 2003 and 2011 (Brazilian Ministry of Education, 2017).

After more than a decade of these expansion policies, there is enough data to evaluate the effectiveness and value of the program for Brazilian higher education. We understand that the current moment is suitable to evaluate the positive and negative results of the expansion policy, as well as to analyze the need for corrective actions for any gaps and problems that have emerged over the years.

In this article, we analyze the antecedents of dropout and retention of students of higher education in Brazilian public universities. As a context of the empirical analysis, we chose the Management program in a Brazilian Federal University. The choice of this program is justified because management is one of the most commonly found programs in Brazilian higher education institutions and because, at the time this article was written, this is the program with the largest number of enrollments in Brazil (INEP, 2015). Our focus is on the variables that potentially influence dropout and retention in the chosen program.

After this introduction, the paper presents a brief literature review on the theme, followed by the research procedures, the results, and analysis. At the end, we present our final remarks and the conclusions, aiming to improve the view on such an important subject, in the academic and financial sense, to governments and society in general.

## Literature review

The phenomena of dropout and university retention have been relevant themes in many countries around the world such as the United States (DesJardins et al., 2002; Hu & St. John, 2001; Lightfoot & Doerner, 2008; Radcliffe, Huesman, & Kellogg 2009), Spain (Lassibille & Gómez, 2008), Italy (Aina, 2013; Belloc et al., 2010), Belgium (Arias Ortiz & Dehon, 2013), the United Kingdom (Arulampalam, Naylor, & Smith, 2007), and Brazil (Furtado & Alves, 2012; Platt Neto et al., 2008). Dropout and retention have been investigated from a variety of perspectives, exploring their causes and consequences and reasoning on preventive and corrective actions that may reduce their impact (Astin, 1975, 1997; Berger, 2001; Braxton, Bray, & Berger, 2000; Furtado & Alves, 2012; Munro, 1981; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 1987).

Dropout is defined as the abandonment of a certain program, regardless of the motivation of the leaving (Lassibille & Gómez, 2008). Retention concerns the student's permanence in the program beyond the original time of completion. Ideally, programs are designed to not have dropout nor retention because of the negative impacts when students do not finish or extend their program time. It is worse in the cases of Brazilian public universities financed exclusively by the state. These negative impacts are associated with both the waste of public money and social losses due to the cost of late training of the professionals demanded and financed by society (Mangum, Baugher, Winch, & Varanelli, 2005; Platt Neto et al., 2008).

The total financing of higher education by the state is not part of public higher education policies in many countries. In the United States, public universities have tuition fees, and state participation in the budget of their public higher education institutions is practically derisory (Hu & St. John, 2001; Marx, Garcia, Butterfield, Kappen, & Baldwin, 2015). As a way of promoting the inclusion of people with lower incomes, the U.S. government has adopted a policy of assisting higher education students based on special funding conditions and scholarships (Hu & St. John, 2001; Lucas, 2006). In Italy and Belgium, there is an important participation of the state in public universities; however, there are also tuition fees albeit at a much lower rate than those practiced by U.S. universities (Aina, 2013; Arias Ortiz & Dehon, 2013).

In the international context, authors have been researching for decades the antecedents of dropout and retention in higher education. For Astin (1975), many causes lead university students to drop out or get retained in their courses, such as the poor quality of teaching, financial difficulties, dissatisfaction with requirements or regulations, changes in career plans, and low grades. Tinto (1975, 1982) endorsed the antecedents mentioned by Astin (1975), giving more attention to the financial aspects of dropouts. More recently, other aspects have been investigated, such as issues related to race (Hu & St. John, 2001), gender (Severiens & Dam, 2012), family history (Aina, 2013), educational background, and adaptation to the program (Arias Ortiz & Dehon, 2013).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8941149>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8941149>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)