

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDICATORS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MORRINHOS/GO



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ABSTRACT

Higher education is seen as a driver of economic and social growth, although there are challenges, such as the alignment of regional demands with the offer of courses and university-business interaction. By analyzing the case of Morrinhos/GO, the research sought to identify barriers and opportunities for higher education institutions to expand their positive impact, collaborating for the economic and social advancement of the region and promoting a fairer and more sustainable development. In the study, qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used, investigating how higher education institutions (HEIs) influence economic, social and infrastructure aspects. The results show that with the increase in schooling, including higher education, it correlates with improvements in economic indicators, such as GDP growth, job creation and expansion of local businesses. And that there was an increase in the Municipal Human Development Index (MHDI) of Morrinhos/GO, especially in the Education dimension. In addition, the survey points to a significant evolution in the qualification of the local workforce, driven by academic training in strategic areas such as education. However, the study emphasizes that regional development depends on multiple factors, not exclusively on higher education. And that challenges remain, especially related to income inequality, expanding access to basic services in rural areas, and creating strategies to retain talent trained in higher education.

Keywords: Higher Education. Local Development. Regional development. Socioeconomic Indicators. Public Policies.

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between local and regional development related to higher education is a relevant theme for public debate and for the formulation of public policies in various parts of the world. The development of a region can be characterized in terms of aspects related to access to health, education, security, housing, and mobility (Santos et al, 2018).

For Theis (2006), regional development is the process of local progress, which takes place through the emphasis on economic improvement and social change. Thus, Boisier (1996) supports this definition by explaining that regional development is a process of change that aims at the progress of the region and the individual who resides in it. Within this reality, education represents a relevant means that implies the promotion or increase of development levels in a region.

According to Haddad (2008), education reassembles dialectical processes in search of knowledge that will establish the individual construction and socialization of the person, developing skills in the name of autonomy and assumption of a critical and creative posture in the face of the world. From this formation there is development, even if seen in its most generic view. Education is the act of developing.

In the context of education as a differentiating factor in a place, the role of the university in regional development has received increasing attention in recent years, being considered as a key element in this process. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have a strong impact on the regional development process as they establish links and commitments and are focused on overcoming the issues of the region in which they are being inserted (Rolim & Serra, 2009).

However, there is still much to be explored in this relationship, especially in developing countries, where the relationship between the university and the local/regional community may not be so consolidated. In this context, it is essential to understand what are the main barriers and opportunities for greater integration between universities and the local/regional community, as well as to assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of this relationship.

In this line of thought, the main research question is: what is the relationship between higher education and local/regional development in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO, considering economic-social evolution and public policies related to these issues?

The general objective of the research is to analyze the existing relations between the higher education institutions located in Morrinhos/GO and the local and regional development in the same time period, with regard to economic, social and infrastructure aspects.

In this sense, the study aims to investigate the relationship between local/regional development and higher education in the municipality of Morrinhos in the State of Goiás, in order to understand how this relationship can be strengthened and how higher education institutions have contributed and can continue to contribute more effectively to the sustainable and inclusive development of local and regional communities. For this, a literature review on the subject was carried out, followed by a case study in a specific region, using qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the understanding of the factors that affect the relationship between local/regional development and higher education in the municipality of Morrinhos in the State of Goiás, as well as to the elaboration of public policies and strategies to strengthen this relationship, thus promoting a fairer and more inclusive development.

The relevance of the research project is justified by the existence of demand for solutions to local and regional problems, such as job creation, improvement of the population's quality of life, economic development and environmental sustainability. And yet, in the evolutionary process of the population of Morrinhos, as well as the economic results, they tend to have, to a certain extent, the participation of local higher education institutions, and before these, regional, such as those located in the municipalities of Itumbiara and Goiatuba in the State of Goiás. In this sense, higher education institutions tend to play a fundamental role in the development process of these regions, through the training of qualified professionals and the production of knowledge and technology.

However, despite the potential positive impact of universities on local/regional development, there are still many challenges to be faced in this regard, such as the lack of alignment between the demands of the region and the offer of courses and research in universities, the lack of interaction between universities and local companies, and the difficulty of access to knowledge generated by higher education institutions.

Therefore, it is important to study this relationship between higher education and local/regional development, in order to identify ways to strengthen the contribution of universities to the development of these regions. In addition, this type of research can

contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area of local/regional development and to the improvement of public policies aimed at this issue.

The research hypotheses regarding the relationship between local/regional development and higher education in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO may vary according to the specific objectives and the methodology adopted. Some hypotheses that could be investigated are:

The presence of higher education institutions in the region can contribute to local/regional economic development, through the generation of jobs, increase in per capita income, and promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship: a) the quality of higher education offered in a region can positively influence the quality of the labor available to local companies, increasing the competitiveness and productivity of these companies; b) The offer of higher education courses in strategic areas for regional development, such as renewable energy, information and communication technologies, and agribusiness, can contribute to attracting investments and strengthening local production chains; c) The existence of public policies that encourage the approximation between universities and companies can enhance the positive effects of the presence of higher education for regional development.

The present study aimed to analyze the theme of regional/local development in the Municipality of Morrinhos/GO regarding the influence of the higher education factor as an economic, social and institutional driver.

About the municipality in question, Morrinhos is located in the state of Goiás, under the Midwest region, and also borders the cities of Goiatuba, Aloândia and Rio Quente (IBGE, 2016). It was founded in the nineteenth century by Mr. Antônio Corrêa Bueno, in which he lived in the city of Patrocínio in the state of Minas Gerais. Based on this, Mr. Antônio built his home and a chapel called Nossa Senhora do Carmo. This chapel was given to the village that appeared with the presence of some Mineiros and Paulistas, with the purpose of exploring the fertility of Antônio's lands (IBGE, 2002).

On November 25, 1855, the municipality advanced in the category of evolution, in which it was only possible to supply on August 19, 1859, which was called Vila Bela do Paranaíba and restored again on July 2, 1871, with the name of Vila Bela de Morrinhos, in which the Municipality of Piracanjuba was now in possession of this municipality. Under this, in 1882, the city was renamed Morrinhos (IBGE, 2002).

Over time, the city of Morrinhos grew and developed. And its main focus was on the development of the economy. However, the economic proportion of the Municipality is linked to rural activities (IBGE, 2021). Although the importance of the rural economy is recognized, the agro-industrial sector of the municipality has an area of enormous proportion in which it supports many companies in the food sectors such as civil works, plastic material and agribusiness. However, the region encompasses very fertile land and a pleasant climate for growing food, with the main economic engine of the city: agriculture. No less important, trade is essential for the service sector (CODEGO, 2015).

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL

Conceptually, it is possible to interpret the expression "development" as a reference to moving in the right directions, that is, on the way to the most appropriate way, since when development takes a certain direction, the culture, customs and mental models of a society reinforce this trajectory, in the sense of boosting this development for the same purpose, innovating it (Santos et al, 2012).

However, the Brazilian policy aimed at the development of the most diverse regions that did not have a concentration of income or industry, historically, has gone through several attempts of an economic nature to compromise the various social sectors.

In a historical recall, it is noted that the Federal Constitution of 1946, even in the face of scarce visibility, established that an amount of the Union's revenue would be destined to minimize regional disparities, with a focus on the State of the Northeast and the Amazon. Based on this great step, programs such as the Defense Plan Against the Effects of Drought in the Northeast and the Plan for the Economic Valorization of the Amazon (Lima and Alves, 2018) were developed.

It is evident that the regional development in the period prior to 1960 has reference to a series of actions of a welfare nature, with the framework of prioritizing the conception of a territory pointed out as rigid and homogeneous, a fact visualized by the macro-regional cut for the effectiveness of the State's actions. In other words, from the mid-1960s to around 1970, the Brazilian territory is understood as a rigid space, with no room for major changes, since social actions were limited only to the macro-regional scale (Lima and Alves, 2018).

In this sense, Steinberger (2000) points to the creation of the Superintendence for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE) as a milestone in the beginning of regional planning in Brazil. But, even so, it was only in 1962, with the Triennial Plan, that the national policies of regional development were made visible in the government plan, since the social objectives and the distribution of economic activities that are the guide for Brazilian regional policies to the present day were brought to the fore. The plan was intended, in a specific chapter, to reduce regional disparities and, at the same time, not to increase the cost of social development.

In this initial focus on social development, in 1967 the Ministry of the Interior (MINTER) was created, whose objective was to be responsible for matters that encompass the regional nature. From then on, new plans and new strategies were encompassed aiming at the visual and social growth of regional development.

From then on, a new stage began regarding Brazilian regional planning, whose focus is on the restructuring of the territory. Here new interpretations of regional development in the country are born, so that the heterogeneity, now dominant, becomes flexible for political decision-making. In other words, there is greater visibility in the interpretations of the country's regional development, which begin to consider diversity as a whole and based on this emphasis, a period of redefinition of the country's regional dynamics is currently understood (Lima and Alves, 2018).

With this new scenario, these same authors highlight that the evolution of the bodies responsible for planning development programs and projects has become constant. After several events, extinctions of organizations and new organizations directly linked to the Federative Republic of Brazil, arriving in the twenty-first century, marked by transformations resulting from the vigor of the Brazilian economy and its stability, but also with representativeness of old regional problems that directly influence the formulation of new regional policies.

Nevertheless, in this period the regional issue was taken up again by the government, whose elaboration of the National Policy for Regional Development proposed to promote the integration and decentralization of state actions. With this, multi-scale territorial planning becomes feasible and, with the State as the main agent of this planning, it is possible to glimpse the presence of a theoretical and practical evolution regarding the governmental agenda, despite the fact that the deficiency under regional

policies in previous periods are still placed as gaps for the institutionalization of the National Policy of Regional Development (Lima and Alves, 2018).

At that time, as for looking at this theme, the notion of development was linked to the idea of economic growth. Afterwards, development studies discussed the importance of innovation for economic development, which reflects directly on the regions.

In this sense, it is important to point out that, for Schumpeter (1988), development comes from new combinations of productive factors, that is, he was the precursor of the innovation economy. Since then, new pillars of development have been considered as fundamental to the idea of development.

Chiarello's (2015) view emphasizes that the greater the capital, the more comprehensive the improvement of the citizen will be in all contexts. Analyzing local and regional development is a way of working on the content that is highlighted to be acquitted.

Regarding the theme of development, it is a notorious point of view to highlight that authors such as Adam Smith, Thomas Robert Malthus, David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill, when mentioning development, it is at the origin of economic science that the relevant questions about accumulation of wealth arise. However, the authors Smith, Malthus, Ricardo and Mill demonstrated concern with the economy if it failed to obtain a high or satisfactory economic result.

As it becomes crystal clear, due to the evolution of studies on the development of a region have perceived implications of various factors beyond the economic, there is no rigid and absolute concept of development, since it is in a constant process of social, economic, cultural and political transformation, although so optimized, it has the characteristic of improving more dynamic regions, strengthening them compared to less dynamic regions. There is, therefore, the conclusion that regional development is due to oscillation in its determinants, for example, in the transport system, technology, government actions that encompass social benefits and the origin of capital. These factors, if irregular, and associated with the income of the social capital of a certain region, consequently reflect on its growth and may tend to be unequal to another region. (North, 1977) .

Thus, among so many concepts, it can be said that the concept of regional development permeates an analysis of social and economic factors explored within a region, which when well operated can reduce or accelerate regional inequalities (Oliveira, 2021).

Whatever the focus, it is important to relativize the meaning presented, since the concepts need to be redefined whenever the context of structuring in social relations changes, and it should be noted that both the concept and its objective are subject to the social and political reality in which one lives, since in order to contribute to regional development it is necessary to combine state policy and social organization (Corrêa, Silveira and Kist, 2019).

HIGHER EDUCATION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Arguing about education is a role of understanding it as a social right and applying it as a regional strategy, to contribute to regional development. The Federal Constitution of 1988 provides in its article 6 (sixth) the right of the citizen to education, as an act of providing public and quality form. However, it is essential to emphasize that basic education must be guaranteed to children and adolescents, for a better qualification and development of life. For Oliveira, Libâneo and Toschi (2017), quality education is one in which the professional promotes the entire mastery of knowledge in that planned subject, to pass on to their students. From this point of view, the projection of education as a producer of results beyond the person taught is highlighted.

The role of higher education in local and regional development is based on the way education is applied in institutions and both on local and regional developments. When it comes to regional development, the most common assumptions are to take into account environmental, cultural, social, human and economic factors.

Buarque (2002) made a reference conceptualizing that development is an activity of commitment with the aim of raising economic viability to a more comprehensive level. Dallabrida (2020), on the other hand, has highlighted a more comprehensive form of development beyond the economic, he understands that economic development should not be the only concern, as it is important to pay special attention to regional issues, which are not always visible in a macroeconomic view.

It is essential to expose the role of universities, because only in this way can they understand their importance. In this aspect, according to the understanding of the authors Peres, Souza and Dell'Oso (2020), its function is to organize, practice and involve society.

Hernández-Arteaga, Alvarado-Pérez and Luna (2015) emphasize that universities have to know the needs of the population, identify problems and have a method of solving this adequacy of problems. It often involves political actions that encompass companies

and public entities. In addition, working this method of resolution with students would be the most effective plan for them to become a quality professional. With this, higher education aims to improve students, so that after they become professionals they can contribute to society. Thus, the importance of the role of higher education within regional development, according to these authors, is to provide paths with a fruitful relationship with the company and the State. These fruits with the company and the State are not limited only to economic development, but also encompass social, environmental and cultural proportions.

Thus, the engagements and connections that are necessary for social progress are elaborated and analyzed through research and actions of the teaching-learning processes for a better understanding of the specific professional trained under the new work path.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in this study on local and regional development related to higher education in the municipality of Morrinhos in the state of Goiás, involved different approaches and techniques to achieve the objectives of the research.

The proposed research was carried out through the qualitative approach, whose objective was descriptive. The research strategy used was the bibliographic and documentary approach. The main objective of the qualitative research was to describe the place and phenomenon of regional development with the data obtained in public databases, making it possible to extract perspectives and configurations (Lüdke and André, 2014).

The systematic review of the literature was through a systematic review of the literature, seeking articles, theses and dissertations that address the theme of the relationship between local/regional development and higher education, in order to map the main trends and gaps in the area. With the objective of identifying the main studies and concepts. Databases such as *Scopus*, *Web of Science*, and *Google Scholar* were used to identify scientific articles, technical reports, and relevant publications.

In this case, the literature review is relevant mainly because of the amount of conceptualization that covers the theme "regional development". The coherent literature review situates the research in a coherent line of reasoning, reinforcing the bases of the research (Yin, 2016).

The documentary analysis was carried out through an analysis of official documents, such as regional development plans, public policies for education and innovation, data obtained from public databases and institutes of statistics and social research, all to understand how the theme is treated within the scope of government policies.

For the research, quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data will include information on economic and social indicators in the region, such as GDP *per capita*, unemployment rate, education level of the population, among others. The qualitative data are found in the choice of the bases of criticism and interpretative construction of the analysis, especially in the confrontation of articles that deal with the same theme.

It is important to emphasize that the choice of methodology was taken into account the characteristics of the object of study and the specific objectives of the research, as well as the availability of resources and information to carry out the research (Collado, Lucio and Sampieri, 2013).

For the collection of secondary data, several social and economic indicators for a given region were used, such as the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) through the IBGE website (www.ibge.gov.br). The Institute of Applied Economic Research through the IPEA website (www.ipea.gov.br) that were useful to interpret socioeconomic indicators.

Some economic and social indicators were used in the research to analyze the relationship between local/regional development and higher education in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO. Some economic indicators were a reference in the analysis, although not always directly used, such as: number of companies installed in the region; generation of formal jobs in the region; investments in research and development (R&D) by local companies; exports made by companies in the region, and public spending on education in the region;

In addition, some social indicators were directly linked to the core of the research, such as: education rate of the population; illiteracy rate of the population; Human Development Index (HDI) of the region and the like.

After data collection, data analysis and discussion were carried out, where first the data collected was cleaned and organized, to eliminate redundant or inconsistent information, and organizing the data according to the categories defined in the questionnaire script. In sequence, descriptive analysis to perform simple statistical

analyses, and these analyses can be useful to identify patterns and trends in the data collected.

After data analysis, the results were discussed and the results obtained were discussed and an interpretation was made. In this stage, the relationship between the socioeconomic indicators studied and local/regional development was evaluated, as well as the relationship between higher education and local/regional development.

Finally, the conclusions and recommendations based on the results obtained were made, identifying the main contributions of the research and its limitations. It was also possible to make recommendations for future research and actions that can contribute to local/regional development.

The writing of the final report was based on the discussion and interpretation of the results, and the final report of the research project was written, which included a literature review, the description of the case study, the methodology used, the results and the conclusions of the research.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

At the outset, it is important to point out that there is no ready-made index to assess whether or not a particular person had development exclusively due to higher education. This is because the development and growth factors of a given place are guided by a set of factors and given social and cultural aspects. What is done is to carefully analyze the data collected and economic and social indices for a given period and observe coinciding and relevant factors for conclusions based on comparative studies.

It is essential to emphasize that, in the labor market, the municipality of Morrinhos/GO proposes to its inhabitants a quality for their reinsertion. In this way, the development of collective enterprises is also verified and technical assistance and official management is made available to entrepreneurs. As a result, these actions are prepared by the Federal Government (PRONATEC), the State Government, workers' and employers' class entities, institutes and universities (IBGE, 2014).

The synthesis of social indicators makes up the quality of life, aiming at an improvement in the well-being of both families and population groups, safeguarding and respecting human and social rights.

This synthesis, according to IBGE data analysis, began in 1998, for a better living condition, perceiving in particular the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as the result of a

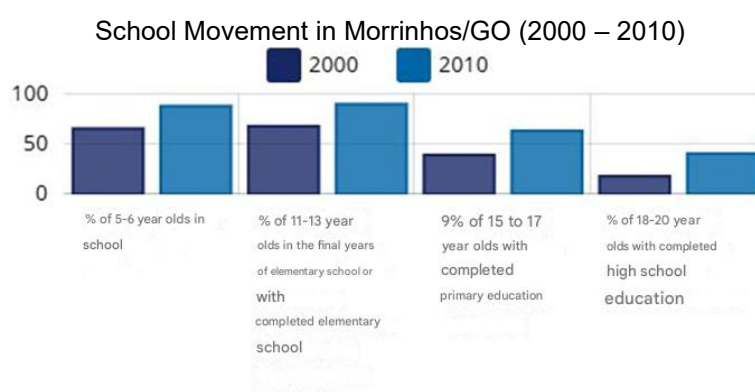
reform in the division of labor, in the employment sector, in the distribution of income, education, health and financial reinforcement.

The collection of data under the Human Development Index of the municipality of Morrinhos/GO (MHDI) showed an increase between the years 2000 and 2010, and it is observed that in the meantime the MHDI of the Federative Unit of Goiás went from 0.615 to 0.735. During this period, the growth of the index was 17.82% for the municipality of Morrinhos/GO and 19.51% for the Federative Unit.

When comparing the dimensions that make up the MHDI, it is observed that, between 2000 and 2010, the MHDI for longevity increased by 7.35%, the MHDI for Education grew by 48.21 and the MHDI for Income grew by 3.07%.

The MHDI in the area of Education is made up of five indicators, four of which evaluate the school flow of children and adolescents, in order to verify whether they are attending school in the grade corresponding to their age group. The fifth indicator analyzes the level of education of the adult population. The Education dimension, in addition to being one of the three dimensions that make up the MHDI, is related to the Sustainable Development Goal.

Graph 1 on the school movement in the years 2000 to 2010 in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO is presented:



Source: IBGE/2024

As shown in graph 1, in 2010, in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO, 88.47% of children aged between 5 and 6 years were in school. In the same year, 90.40% of children aged 11 to 13 attended the final years of elementary school. The proportion of young people aged 15 to 17 with completed primary education was 63.65%, and among young people aged 18 to 20, 40.77% had completed secondary education.

Higher education in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO in 2021, registered 169 graduated students. However, one of the areas of study with the most graduated students in the city of Morrinhos/GO were Education with 53 students, Agriculture with 31 students, and Administration with 50 students.

In the year 2022 in Morrinhos/GO, it verifies the development and evolution of children and adolescents in the school environment, and especially in the area of higher education. According to data provided by the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira, the areas of study with the most incoming students in the city of Morrinhos/GO were education (243 students), Business and administration (241 students), and Health (205 students).

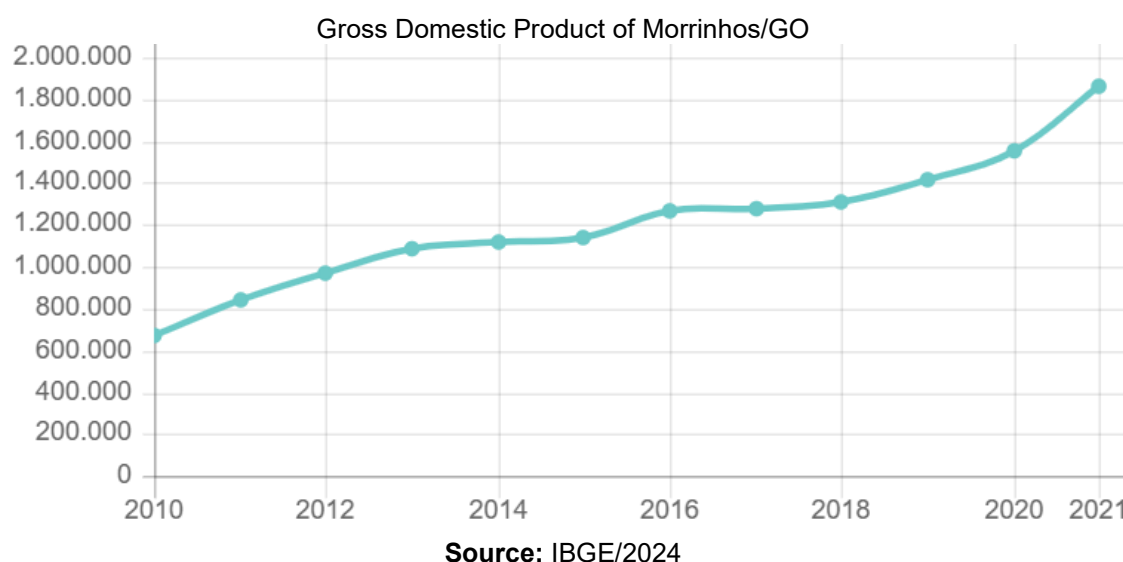
The observation of the increase in the proportions of students who leave high school, become part of higher education and come to complete it is the basis for understanding that in Morrinhos/GO education reached more people during the mentioned period, making the population more likely to use such knowledge for the most varied social sectors and personal initiatives, as well as influencing collective and business measures.

According to information from the Annual Report of Social Information (RAIS), in 2016 to 2022, Morrinhos/GO registered 13,227 employees, which represents an increase of 13.9% compared to the initial year of the comparison. The average remuneration of workers in 2022 was R\$ 2,687.74 and the total number of registered establishments was 2,285, indicating a decrease of 4.27% compared to 2021. And in 2020 to 2021, the employment sectors that evolved the most and that employed the most workers in the city of Morrinhos/GO were in Agriculture, Livestock and Related Services with professionals through the retail trade. Also in 2021, 38.8% of workers are female and received an average remuneration of R\$ 1,874.52. And 61.2% are male, with an average salary of R\$ 2,355.06.

According to data from the Federal Revenue Service of Brazil (RFB), among the establishments registered until 2024, 8.3% are classified as Other (431 establishments), 52.5% as Individual Microentrepreneur (MEI) (2,726 establishments), 35.9% as Microenterprise (ME) (1,865 establishments) and 3.26% as Small Business (EPP) (169 establishments).

It is noted that the business sector has been fostered in recent years in Morrinhos/GO. It is also clear that the working class has also made progress in recent

years. When compared with the Gross Domestic Product of Morrinhos/GO, such coherence can be perceived, as can be seen in graph 2:



As shown in graph 2 based on IBGE data, in 2020, one of the sectors with the highest GDP was 38% in Services, 27.6% in Agriculture and 19.1% in Industry. The GDP in Morrinhos/GO in 2021 was 1.86 billion, which represents a variation of 119% compared to the previous year.

Thus, higher education and economic and social results of the Morrinhos community are relevant to the extent that, while the levels of higher education have increased, the economic profile of the place has also improved. Therefore, such data are consistent with the idea that when higher education manages to raise the social levels of a place, it also ends up reflecting on the economic issues of that place, demonstrating a relationship of data parallelism in the form of cause and consequence, although not exclusive.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study aimed to analyze the influence of higher education on the local development of the municipality of Morrinhos/GO. The research hypothesis directed the understanding that there is a contribution, along with other factors, of higher education to the regional/local society with regard to social and economic aspects, mainly.

The survey of data from the survey revealed a progressive performance in the percentage of people who received education in the municipality of Morrinhos/GO, from pre-school to higher education in the period from 2010 onwards. Concomitantly, the

economic results and social and development indices showed growth in the municipality. Such correlation is observed in such a way that the more the proportion of people with schooling increases, including higher education, the greater the economic results and business influence for the place, returning in products and services (increased availability of new local companies).

Although it is not possible to conclude that higher education is exclusive to the increase of such levels, the correlation of this data has been closely linked to the regional and local development of societies, as demonstrated by the theoretical references presented.

The analysis of the economic and social indicators of the municipality of Morrinhos/GO shows a constant and diversified growth over the last few years. Economic progress, represented by rising GDP and expanding labor market, is complemented by significant advances in key sectors such as education and entrepreneurship.

The increase in the Municipal Human Development Index (MHDI), with emphasis on the Education dimension, shows that investments in public policies and in the qualification of the population have generated positive impacts, preparing citizens to participate more actively in local development. The expansion in the number of business establishments and the strengthening of categories such as individual microentrepreneurs (MEIs) and microenterprises (MEs) / small businesses (EPPs) also demonstrate a more favorable environment for entrepreneurship and economic diversification.

However, challenges remain, especially related to income inequality, expanding access to basic services in rural areas, and creating strategies to retain talent trained in higher education. The continuity of integrated public policies and partnerships between different levels of government and the private sector will be essential to ensure balanced and sustainable development.

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