

SCHOOL DROPOUT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND RETENTION POLICIES: A STUDY AT THE MANOEL DA ROSA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL, PAUDALHO – PE



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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates school dropout in the first five years of Elementary School at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School, located in Paudalho, Pernambuco, between the years 2017 and 2023. School dropout is a complex social phenomenon that negatively impacts the academic and social training of students. The research quantitatively analyzes the school's administrative records, including enrollment, transfers, and student tenure, identifying patterns and trends throughout the period studied. The results indicate a downward trend in school dropout, with a peak recorded in 2017 and a significant reduction from 2021 onwards, reaching 0% in subsequent years. These data suggest the effectiveness of educational policies and institutional strategies in student retention. The permanence rate ranged from 92.68% (2020) to 94.75% (2018), highlighting the impact of socioeconomic, family, and pedagogical factors on the continuity of studies. The COVID-19 pandemic presented additional challenges, but the school was able to maintain low dropout rates, possibly due to the adoption of educational technologies and the strengthening of communication with families. Thus, the findings of the study reinforce the importance of a set of public policies and pedagogical practices to ensure the permanence of students in the educational system.

Keywords: School dropout. Primary education. School permanence. Educational policies.

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INTRODUCTION

The premature and unjustified withdrawal of students from school, regardless of its causes, in public or private schools, is a complex social phenomenon that causes serious social, academic and economic consequences (BORJA; MARTINS, 2014). Brazilian education faces many challenges, and dropout is a problem that affects all educational areas, in basic education it is no different. In this sense, dropout and dropout represent a very complex, dynamic and cumulative process of the student's departure from the space of school life (FILHO; ARAÚJO, 2017).

School dropout is a chronic problem throughout Brazil, and is often passively assimilated or tolerated by schools and education systems, which go so far as to exercise make-up expedients by admitting the enrollment of a higher number of students per class than adequate, already counting on the 'dropout' of many throughout the school year. Although official propaganda always trumpets a significant number of enrollments at the beginning of each school year, in some cases reaching close to 100% (one hundred percent) of the total number of school-age children and adolescents, it is already known in advance that of these, a significant portion will not complete their studies in that period, to the direct detriment of their education and life, to the extent that it places them at a disadvantage compared to others who do not have an age-grade gap (DIGIÁCOMO, 2011).

The school has an essential social role when it comes to enhancing social bonds, developing physical and cognitive skills and making the student a social agent. However, there are daily mishaps and denials of the right to education that increase the likelihood that young people will not continue their studies. Lopes (2010) points out that, in order to mitigate some problems related to dropout, firm action by the public authorities is necessary, especially in relation to school managers who need to ensure good teaching and learning. Strategic pedagogical planning has as a tool to combat school dropout, the perspectives and realities in the early years of elementary school.

"Basic education aims to develop the student, to ensure him the common education indispensable for the exercise of citizenship and to provide him with the means to progress in work and in further studies" (BRASIL, 1996).

The State's duty with regard to education will be fulfilled through the guarantee of: I - compulsory and free basic education from 4 (four) to 17 (seventeen) years of age, including its free provision for all those who did not have access to it at the appropriate age (BRASIL, 1988). As exposed, Brazilian legislation supports the right of all children, adolescents and

young people to basic education, as a means of developing their citizenship, preparation for work and life in society.

According to Cury (2002), the very etymology of the term base confirms the meaning of the concept and stages conjugated under a single whole. Base means, at the same time, pedestal, support, foundation and walking, setting in motion, advancing. Basic education is a more than innovative concept for a country that, for centuries, has denied, in an elitist and selective way, its citizens the right to knowledge through the systematic action of school organization. It follows that early childhood education is the basis of basic education, elementary education is its trunk and secondary education is its finish, and it is from a vision of the whole as a basis that one can have a consequent view of the parts (SILVA; MOREIRA; VOLSI, 2021).

In this sense, the present study evaluates the number of students dropping out of Elementary School at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School, from 2017 to 2023, enabling the identification of patterns and suggesting strategies to mitigate the problem.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as a quantitative and descriptive research, since it seeks to analyze numerical data regarding school dropout in the first five years of Elementary School at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School, located in Paudalho, Pernambuco, between the years 2017 and 2023.

The data were obtained from the school's administrative records, including annual enrollment, transfers, and permanence of first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The following indicators were analyzed: number of students enrolled in each period analyzed, number of students transferred to other institutions and number of students who remained in school until the end of the school year.

The data was organized in tables and graphs, allowing a clear visualization of the dropout rate and retention of students in school over the years. The following variables were considered for analysis: annual dropout rate: proportion of students who left school in relation to the total number of students enrolled, permanence rate: number of students who remained in school over the five years, and transfer rate: percentage of students who migrated to other institutions.

Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to identify patterns of school dropout over the years. In addition, data between years were compared to check for trends or seasonal variations.

The study is restricted to documentary analysis and may not cover subjective factors that influence school dropout, such as socioeconomic, family and pedagogical issues. In addition, the reliability of the data depends on the accuracy of the school's administrative records.

The data used was treated anonymously, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of student information. This study follows the ethical principles of educational research, respecting institutional and legal guidelines on the use of academic data.

RESULTS

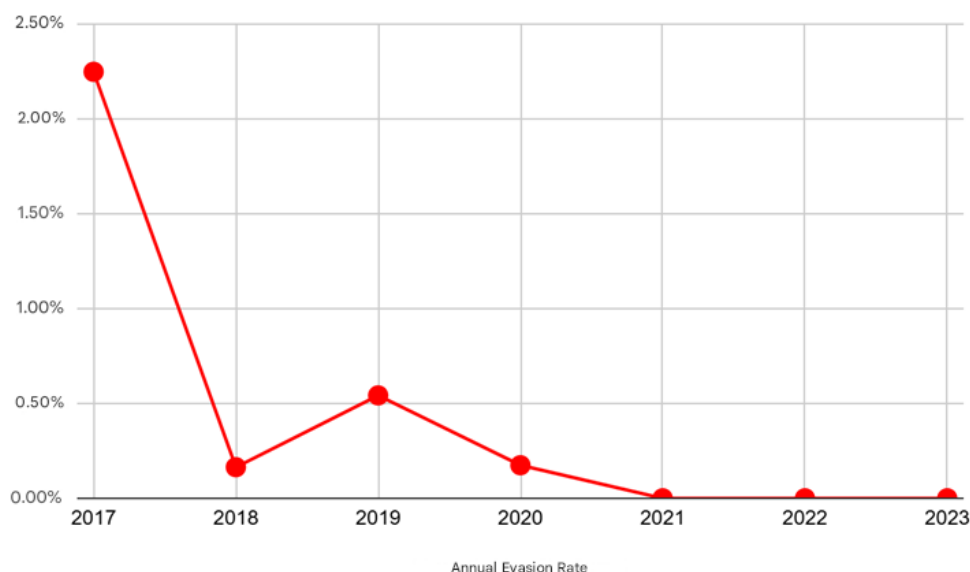
School dropout is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon, which significantly impacts the educational and social performance of students. In the present study, it was observed that, between 2017 and 2023, twenty students dropped out of the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School, with a peak of dropout in 2017, Table 1 and Figure 1. However, in the years 2021 to 2023, there was no record of dropout, suggesting that effective measures may have been implemented, Figure 1.

Table 1. Data from the administrative registry of the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School, including annual enrollment, permanence, transfer and dropout of students.

Year	Class	Beginning	Final	Transferred	Evasion
2017	1st year	102	92	07	3
	2nd years	122	110	10	2
	3rd year	167	157	06	4
	4th Years	114	106	05	3
	5th Years	162	157	02	3
2018	1st year	81	77	04	0
	2nd years	95	91	03	1
	3rd year	176	165	11	0
	4th Years	107	98	09	0
	5th Years	151	147	04	0
2019	1st year	79	72	07	0
	2nd years	87	81	06	0
	3rd year	110	101	08	1
	4th Years	141	135	06	0
	5th Years	136	127	07	2

2020	1st year	79	70	09	0
	2nd years	87	81	06	0
	3rd year	134	122	12	0
	4th Years	138	131	07	0
	5th Years	136	128	07	1
2021	1st year	92	87	05	0
	2nd years	96	88	08	0
	3rd year	79	73	06	0
	4th Years	106	99	07	0
	5th Years	119	111	08	0
2022	1st year	92	85	07	0
	2nd years	93	90	03	0
	3rd year	95	87	06	0
	4th Years	82	76	06	0
	5th Years	113	105	08	0
2023	1st year	86	81	05	0
	2nd years	92	84	08	0
	3rd year	100	94	06	0
	4th Years	95	92	03	0
	5th Years	77	74	03	0

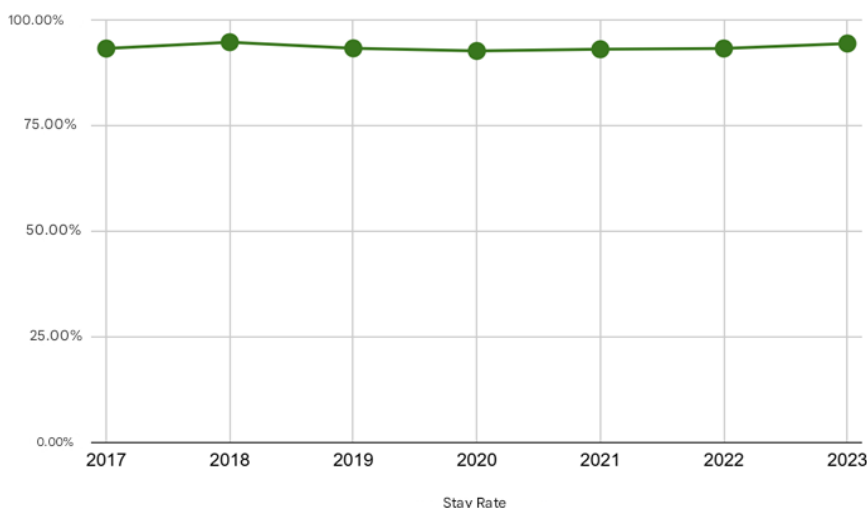
Figure 1. Annual school dropout rate.



The analysis of the school dropout rate at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School between 2017 and 2023 reveals a downward trend, with a higher rate in 2017 (2.25%) and a significant reduction in subsequent years, reaching 0% from 2021 onwards. In addition, the data analyzed on the permanence of students in school show that the school permanence rate at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School remained consistently high between 2017 and 2023, ranging between 92.68% (2020) and 94.75% (2018). In 2017, the retention rate was 93.25%, a relatively positive rate, but which indicates the existence of

challenges that could impact student retention. In the following year (2018), there was an increase to 94.75%, the highest percentage in the period analyzed, Figure 2.

Figure 2. Annual student retention rate at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School.



DISCUSSION

These results are comparable to similar studies that highlight the relationship between educational policies and the reduction of school dropout, as well as suggest the implementation of effective strategies for student retention, aligned with public policies and institutional actions aimed at school permanence (CALDEIRA; VIEIRA, 2023).

The high initial dropout rate may be related to socioeconomic, family and structural factors of the school. According to Oliveira et al. (2024), school dropout in the early years of elementary school is often associated with financial difficulties for families, lack of support in the home environment, and deficiencies in school infrastructure. In addition, the lack of innovative pedagogical methodologies can compromise student engagement and contribute to early dropout (PEREIRA; DIAS, 2020).

Another relevant factor for reducing dropout can be the expansion of social policies that help keep students in school. According to Sidney (2024) and Santos et al. (2019), financial assistance programs, such as Bolsa Família, and municipal initiatives for the distribution of school supplies and food contribute significantly to the permanence of students in situations of social vulnerability.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, represented an additional challenge for students' permanence in school. However, data from the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School indicate that, even during this period, the dropout rate remained low (0.17%),

suggesting that the school adopted strategies to ensure the students' bond with the school environment, such as the use of educational technologies and the strengthening of communication with families. Studies by Souza and Santos (2020) indicate that schools that adopted hybrid methodologies and continuous monitoring of students had a lower impact of the pandemic on school dropout.

Thus, the results obtained reinforce the importance of public policies and school actions aimed at the permanence of students in elementary school. The absence of dropout between 2021 and 2023 demonstrates that strategies such as strengthening the relationship between school and family, adaptive pedagogical methodologies, and effective assistance policies can contribute significantly to reducing school dropout. These findings corroborate studies that highlight the need for integrated approaches to combat school dropout and guarantee the right to education (BRANCO *et al.*, 2020).

The literature points out that a high retention rate is associated with a combination of factors, such as the quality of teaching, the involvement of the school community, and the support offered to students and their families. According to Sidney, 2024 and Santos *et al.*, 2019 Barbosa (2022), schools that promote a welcoming environment, innovative pedagogical practices, and individualized monitoring tend to have a higher retention rate.

In 2020, there was a slight drop in the permanence rate (92.68%), possibly due to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, many schools faced difficulties in maintaining the students' bond with the school environment due to the adaptation to remote teaching, the lack of access to the internet, and the absence of adequate face-to-face monitoring (SOUZA; SANTOS, 2020). Despite this, the reduction was not so significant, which suggests that the school adopted strategies to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on school dropout.

As of 2021, the permanence rate rose again, reaching 94.44% in 2023, which represents the second highest rate in the period analyzed. This increase can be attributed to the resumption of face-to-face classes, the strengthening of student reception policies, and the expansion of social and pedagogical assistance programs.

The results show that, despite small declines in some years, the school permanence rate at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School remained high over time. This reinforces the importance of a set of educational and social strategies to avoid dropping out of school.

The permanence of students in school during the first years of elementary school is essential for the academic and social development of children. Studies show that early

dropout negatively impacts literacy, cognitive development, and inclusion in the future labor market (Melina Carminati book chapter 2024). In this way, reducing dropout not only improves educational rates, but also promotes greater social equity and opportunities for students.

Therefore, the analysis of the data obtained at the Manoel da Rosa Municipal School reinforces the importance of public policies aimed at preventing school dropout, especially in the first years of elementary school. The success in reducing dropout between 2021 and 2023 highlights the effectiveness of educational and social actions that favor students' school permanence and academic success.

CONCLUSION

The reduction in school dropout is the result of integrated actions that involve school management, the community and the public authorities. The implementation of effective strategies and the continuity of support policies are essential to maintain the progress made and ensure that all students have access to quality education, promoting greater inclusion and social development.

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