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**YOUTH AND ADULT
EDUCATION AS A
SOCIAL INSERTION
TOOL**

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Abstract: The Youth and Adult Education - EJA, represents a leap towards the freedom of the human being, including him in the society that is in constant evolution. Therefore, it is essential to know the reasons that lead young people and adults to enroll in EJA. We hypothetically believe that dropping out of school as a teenager is related to the need to work. This study aimed to investigate the reasons that led young adults to attend EJA in a public school in the city of Piracicaba/SP; assess what changes the EJA brought to the social life of these graduates and; what is the contribution that this training has brought to them in the insertion in the job market. The population studied was composed of men and women aged between 23 and 60 years old. Questionnaires were prepared that were answered and information was extracted. Work and teenage pregnancy were the main reasons given for dropping out of the school environment. It was observed that the EJA was fundamental in the process of changes that occurred in the lives of these people, with significant changes in the area of activity in the labor market. Many changed professions after completing the EJA. And most importantly, they continued to study beyond high school, either in a technical course or even in a higher education course. Education provided the development of their critical system and inserted them into the social context, leaving the past of exclusion and inaccessibility to school environments, enabling personal and professional growth.

Keywords: Social ascent. schooling. Educational progress.

INTRODUCTION

We are part of a society where writing is part of our daily lives. The new structure of the Brazilian population, technological advances, the demands of a technological world and, above all, the demands of the job market

demand a constant updating of people in all aspects. In this process, according to Rangel, Rojo (2010) and Arruda et al. (2019), writing becomes fundamental, because for almost all the functions of our daily lives we use written language.

In the social structure in which we currently live, we know how important education is in human life. According to Colavitto (2014), this is necessary so that the individual can remain included in society as a participatory being, and that reading and writing is one of the main tools for keeping in touch with others. According to Grosch (2018), in the current context, where academic literature has supported a change in the ways of teaching to read and write, the literacy process assumes an extremely important role in people's lives, as it culminates in factors decisive in their life projects.

For Schwartz (2010), literacy has different levels. And through its different levels, we realize that each human being is capable of developing in a way, until reaching full literacy, which is when, in addition to reading and writing, he can already understand.

When we speak of "adults in the literacy process", we are referring to men and women marked by childhood experiences in which they were unable to remain in school for various reasons. Whether due to the lack of resources, proximity to the school community, or the need to work, among other factors that kept him away from this school formation process. Many of these adults have lived and are still living in extreme situations in which their childhood was usually spent working and providing for the family.

In view of this, it is essential to know the reasons that young people and adults enroll in Youth and Adult Education (EJA). But it is important to know the reasons, is to be able to bring possible solutions to this problem. We hypothetically believe that this distance from

the school environment as a child is related to the need to work to help their parents. Therefore, the present work had the general objective to investigate what reasons led young adults to attend youth and adult education in a public school in the city of Piracicaba/SP. Of the specific ones, we aim to evaluate what changes the Teaching of Youth and Adults has brought to the social life of these graduates; what is the contribution that this training has brought to them in the insertion in the job market.

In a country where the rate of completion of Elementary School at the correct age is very low, investment in the educational area by the government is decreasing, the devaluation of professionals in the educational area is increasingly evident, the lack of quality of the system education, all these factors have a direct impact on the lives of school-age children. This reflects in the abandonment of the school environment, bringing serious consequences for the child, which later lead young people and adults to enroll in EJA.

The search in an attempt to discover and solve the problems that lead so many young people to give up studying, and to know what makes them look for school again, later on, is important to reduce school dropout. To Machado; Oserlli (2019) and Poletto (2019), this is a work that involves family, managers, school, teachers, Ministry of Education, State and Municipal Education Departments.

The study was carried out with graduate students who attended the Teaching from Youth to Adults - EJA at a public school in the city of Piracicaba between 2018 and 2020. This research had an investigative nature, with field research involving questionnaires, assessments, interviews and testimonies of the alumni involved.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PUBLIC

The study was carried out between April and November 2021 in the city of Piracicaba, state of São Paulo. The population object of the study presented very peculiar characteristics, which demonstrate a past of exclusion and inaccessibility to school environments. The school unit where these former students participated in the formation of Youth and Adults maintains a register of its former students, which made it possible to carry out this research. It was possible to contact a significant number of graduates who made themselves available to be part of the research, contributing significantly to the realization of this. A total of 30 graduating students took part in the study.

PREPARATION AND APPLICATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires were designed to allow extracting important information for carrying out the study. Contact information for EJA students was obtained from the secretary of the school where EJA is held annually. The choice of the target audience was motivated by the fact that I worked as a teacher at that school, I even had the opportunity to teach classes in the EJA modality for some of the interviewed graduates. A document about the research that would be carried out with former students was filed with the school secretary. In this document, access to the contacts (telephone, e-mail) of students who graduated from the school in the previous 3 years was requested. After the authorization of the school administration, the information was made available allowing the activities to be carried out.

The initial contact with the graduates was made through calls, conversations via WhatsApp and some through Facebook.

At this point, it was explained to them what the research was about, leaving it up to them whether or not they would agree to participate in the study. A total of 58 students were contacted and of these, 30 accepted to participate in the research.

After agreeing to participate in the study, a brief explanation was sent in writing about what the research was about and a consent form to disclose the collected data. At the time, it was clarified that the names of the participants would not be disclosed in the final research.

The forms were built with the objective of collecting relevant information that would make it possible to know how the graduating students are personally and professionally after completing the EJA. The questionnaire templates are described below. In all questionnaires, the participant's identification was left free.

The forms were sent to the participants in Word format via WhatsApp as well as by e-mail. Some participants received the forms in person. For all of them, a period of thirty days was stipulated for the questionnaires to be answered and sent.

After receiving the duly answered questionnaires, the data were tabulated, allowing for the understanding and discussion of the results. The data tabulation was performed using the Excel spreadsheet program of the office 365 package.

RESULTS

We can observe that the age of the public participating in the research ranged between 23 and 60 years, with an average age of 39.7 years (figure 4).

This audience consisted mostly of men, totaling 19 men against 11 women who collaborated with the study (figure 5).

Among the graduates, we can observe that they are from different states of origin,

covering the North, Northeast and Southeast regions. Most of the states of origin are in the Brazilian northeast. Most of the interviewees come from the state of Maranhão, in the northern region of the country. Of the thirty graduates, ten came from Maranhão, five are from the state of São Paulo, four from Ceará, two from the states of Amazonas, Alagoas, Espírito Santo, Pará, Sergipe and only one graduate is from the state of Pernambuco.

The results of the study allowed us to better understand the public that attended the EJA between 2018 and 2020. They started their studies at the right age, but they stayed in the school environment for a short time. Abandonment occurred during adolescence for most respondents (figure 7). The average age of abandonment among respondents was 15.3 years. The return to the school environment occurred only in adulthood, a long time after dropping out, with an average return to school of 37.4 years among the population studied.

The reasons why the interviewees left the school environment were the most varied. The biggest reason for abandonment was the fact that these individuals had to work from this very early age, which corresponded to 40% of the reasons. Another decisive reason for these dropouts was pregnancy while still in high school. Teenagers who were fathers and mothers at a very early age had to leave school and decide to raise their children. Other reasons reported were dropout due to illness, death of parents, unwillingness to study, distance between home and school, student indiscipline, lack of acceptance by the school management towards the student, among other factors (figure 8).

The first jobs of these individuals were in different areas. As they were workers without basic training, occupation in the labor market took place in roles that require little or no experience (figure 9). Among the functions

NAME	AGE	SEX	STATE OF ORIGIN
I prefer not to identify myself * (X)			

Figure 1 - Initial characterization of research subjects

NAME	THE AGE THAT STARTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	AGE THAT INTERRUPTS STUDY	REASON FOR INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES	AGE YOU RETURNED TO STUDY	AGE YOU STARTED WORKING	FIRST EMPLOYMENT, FORMAL OR INFORMAL?	ACTUAL JOB
I prefer not to identify myself * (X)							

Figure 2 - Characterization of research subjects addressing different situations

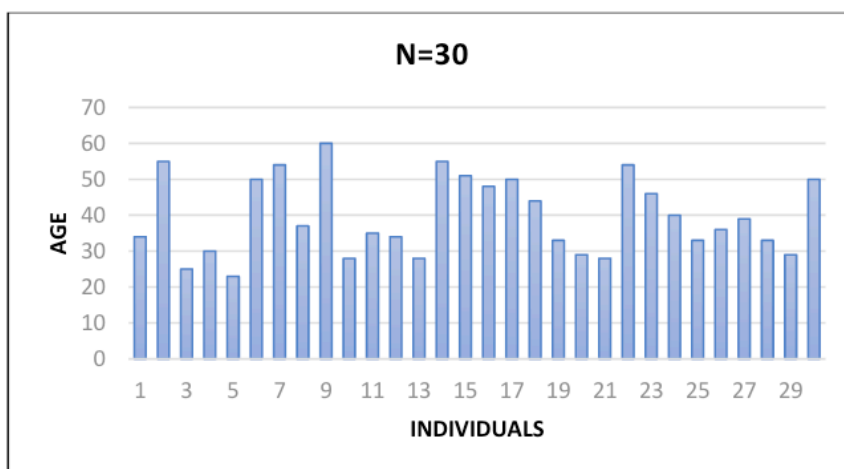


Figure 3 - Age of students graduated from Youth and Adult Education (EJA) who took part in the research in the city of Piracicaba between April and November 2021

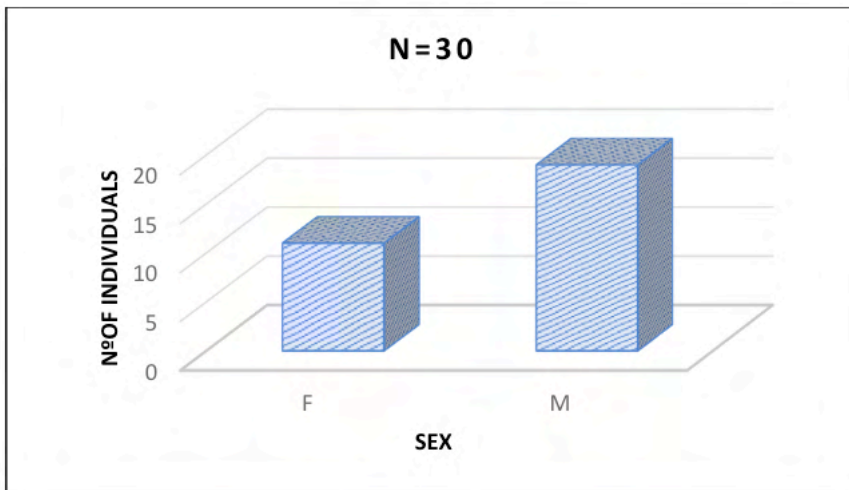


Figure 4 - Profile of students graduated from the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) who took part in the research in the city of Piracicaba between April and November 2021

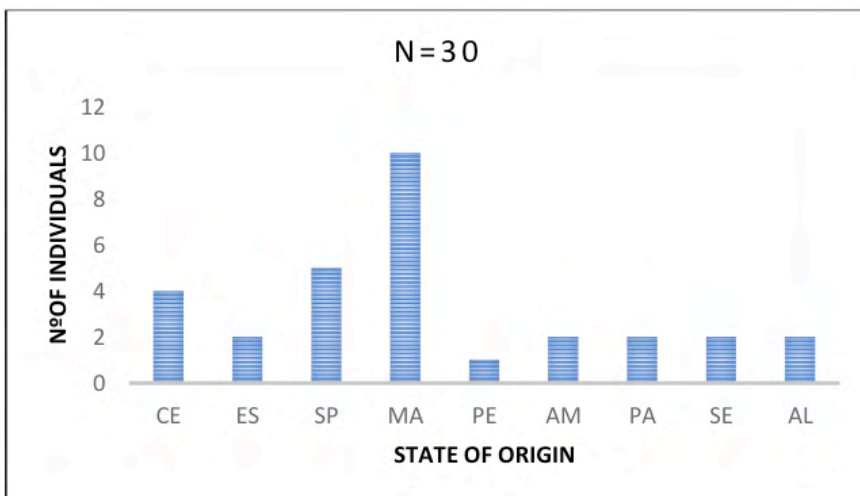


Figure 5 - State of origin of students graduated from the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) who took part in the research in the city of Piracicaba between April and November 2021

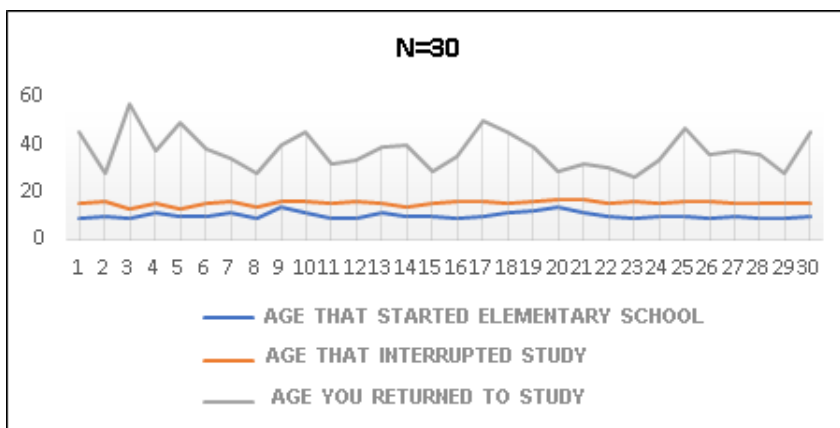


Figura 6 - Perfil dos alunos egressos da Educação dos Jovens e Adultos (EJA) que fizeram parte da pesquisa na cidade de Piracicaba entre abril e novembro de 2021

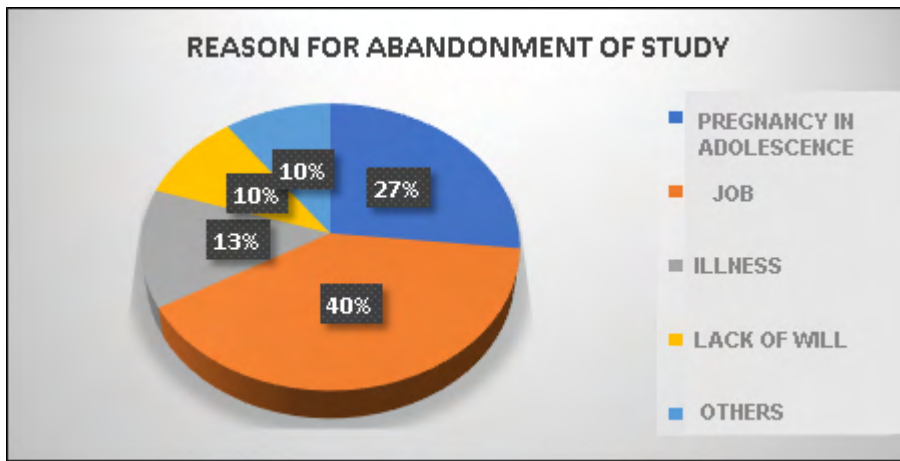


Figure 7 – Reasons that led students from Youth and Adult Education (EJA) to abandon their studies. Research carried out in the city of Piracicaba between April and November 2021

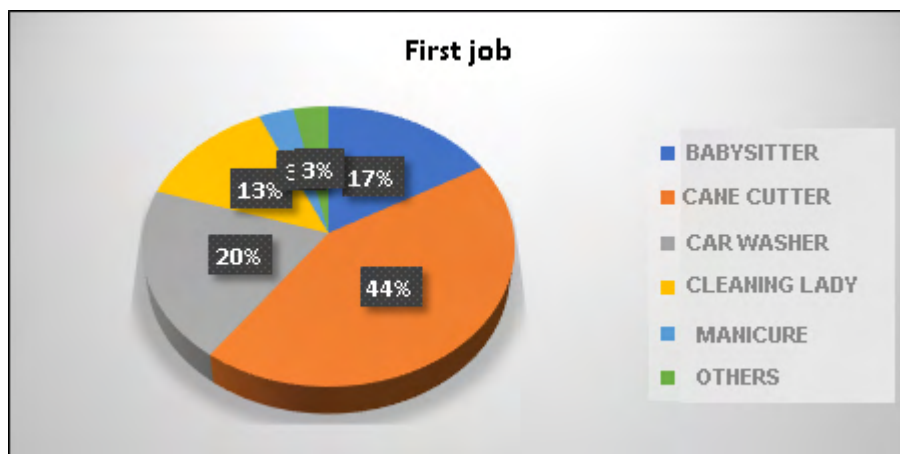


Figure 8 – Profile of students graduating from Youth and Adult Education (EJA) on their first job. Research carried out in the city of Piracicaba between April and November 2021

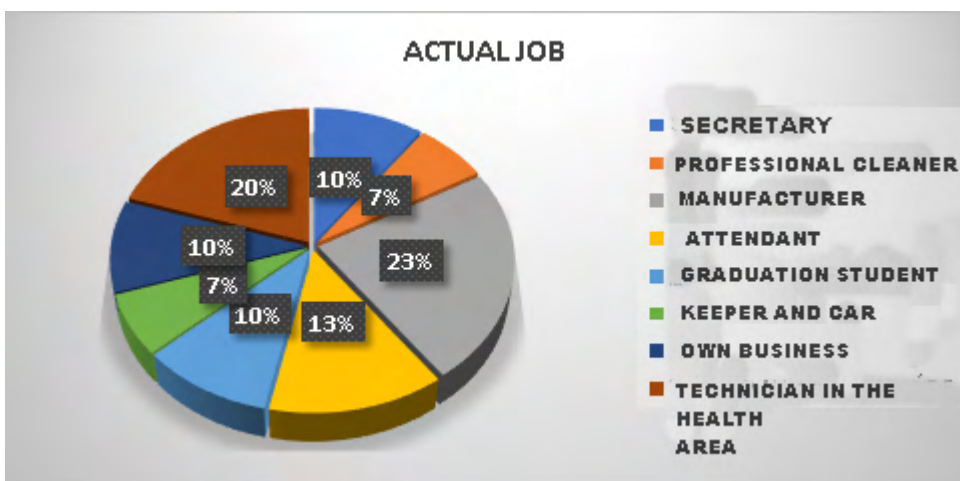


Figure 9 – Profile of students graduating from Youth and Adult Education (EJA) on current employment. Research in the city of Piracicaba between April and November 2021

occupied by these individuals are sugarcane cutters with 40%, car washers with 20%, babysitters with 17%, cleaning women with 13%, manicurists with 3% and other functions.

Currently, these people are working in areas that are very different from those of their first job (figure 09).

Twenty-three percent are working in the industrial area, in the industrial hub of Piracicaba. After completing high school in the EJA modality, 20% of those interviewed took a technical course focused on the health area and are now working in the area. Others (13%) are working in the public service area (office, market, pharmacy). Others are opening the MEI (Individual Microentrepreneur), and are self-employed (10%). Others are pursuing degrees in different areas (10%). Among other professions.

DISCUSSION

The present study brought us important information about our EJA students. The public studied was composed of men and women, being mostly men. The graduates who participated in the study were aged between 23 and 60 years old. Before completing their studies, more than 90% of the public lived in peripheral areas of the city, with more than five people living in the same residence.

Most had children under the age of twenty, many of them still in their teens, without any family planning, compromising the entire structure of what is expected of a family. This forced them to leave the school environment and work in functions, to a certain extent degrading to support the family. A family without any structure only increases social inequalities and further increases the poverty rate within the population.

The state of origin of the interviewed public draws attention. More than 50% of these came from the state of Maranhão. A state with few job opportunities. It was observed

that most people came from the northern and northeastern states of the country. These people with low levels of education tend to come to the state of São Paulo looking for new life opportunities. However, arriving in the region, they are faced with a lack of study, lack of experience and subject to any type of service.

In the region of Piracicaba there is a large sugar and alcohol pole, with a large area planted with sugar cane and corn. This sector attracts many people from other states to work in the countryside, mainly low-income and uneducated people. This explains the fact that we have several of our interviewees who had their first job as a cane cutter.

We can observe how the EJA was fundamental in the process of changes that occurred in the lives of the people who participated in this study. The most significant change was in the area of performance in the labor market. All changed professions after completing the EJA. And most importantly, they continued to study beyond high school, either in a technical course or even in a higher education course. They understood that education provides the development of their critical system and inserts them in the current social context. They left the past of exclusion and inaccessibility to school environments and are progressing more and more.

These people began to develop reflective thinking, allowing them to share experiences with other people, from different cultures and thoughts. They began to develop skills to solve real problems of their daily lives and this way, making everyone learn something.

We understand the importance of education in the social insertion of the individual. This study shows how much formal education is necessary for the life of all men, because only this way are we able to know our rights and duties and, mainly, it opens our horizons to achieve our opportunities in life.

CONCLUSION

The present study allowed us to conclude that Youth and Adult Education - EJA was essential for students to develop critical thinking and become inserted within a social context. Training was essential for them to change their profession, and to see that age is not a limiting factor for studying. They developed thoughts and attitudes that were decisive in their personal and professional growth.

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