

## YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION: PROFILE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

## EDUCAÇÃO DE JOVENS E ADULTOS: PERFIL DOS PROFESSORES E ALUNOS NUMA ESCOLA PÚBLICA

## EDUCACIÓN DE JOVENES Y ADULTOS: PERFIL DE DOCENTES Y ESTUDIANTES EN UNA ESCUELA PÚBLICA

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This is a quantitative and descriptive study that aims to characterize the profile of teachers and students and to identify the presence of didactic and audiovisual resources for the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) modality; conducted with 12 teachers and 60 students in a public school in Uberaba, Minas Gerais, Brazil, through interviews from a questionnaire, in June 2014. Among the main results are: 66.7% are female; 50% are over 41 years old; 58.4% are graduated, 33.3% are specialists and 8.3% are Master; 50% have been working for more than 21 years; 66.7% of teachers have been working in EJA from one to 10 years; 100% said that the class materials and audiovisual resources are inadequate. With regard to the profile of students: female, aged from 26 to 35 years old, married, with children, formal workers, with individual income of 1 minimum wage, living in urban area and far from EJA, without company support both to study, and for training activities. This study showed the need to expand training activities for teachers and students' stimuli, particularly in the public administration field of education.

**Descriptors:** Education; Primary and secondary education; Teaching.

Este é um estudo quantitativo e descritivo, que tem como objetivo caracterizar o perfil de docentes e alunos e identificar a presença de recursos didáticos e audiovisuais para a modalidade EJA; realizado com 12 docentes e 60 alunos numa escola pública de Uberaba-MG, através de entrevista a partir de questionário, no mês de Junho de 2014. Dentre os principais resultados destacam-se: 66,7% são do gênero feminino; 50% acima de 41 anos; 58,4% tem graduação, 33,3% tem especialização e 8,3% mestrado; 50% trabalham há mais de 21 anos; 66,7% dos docentes trabalham na EJA de um a 10 anos; 100% referiu que o material didático e recursos audiovisuais são inadequados. No que se refere ao perfil dos alunos: sexo feminino, de 26 a 35 anos, casados, com filhos, trabalhadores com carteira assinada, com renda individual de 1 salário mínimo, morando em zona urbana e distante da EJA, sem apoio da empresa tanto para estudar, quanto para ações de capacitação. O estudo mostrou a necessidade de se ampliar ações de capacitação aos professores e estímulos aos alunos, em especial na esfera de gestão pública da educação.

**Descritores:** Educação; Ensino fundamental e médio; Ensino.

Este es un estudio cuantitativo y descriptivo, que tiene como objetivo caracterizar el perfil de profesores y alumnos e identificar la presencia de recursos didáticos y audiovisuales para el modo de EJA; hecho con 12 profesores y 60 alumnos en una escuela pública de Uberaba-MG, Brasil, a través de entrevista y cuestionario en junio de 2014. Entre los principales resultados destacan: 66,7% son de sexo femenino; 50% más de 41 años; 58,4% hicieron La graduación, 33,3% tienen especialización y 8,3% maestría; 50% trabajan más de 21 años; el 66,7% de profesores que trabajan en la EJA de uno a 10 años; 100% declaró que el material didático y recursos audiovisuales son inadecuados. En relación con el perfil del alumnado: mujer, de 26 de 35 años, casados, con hijos, trabajadores oficialmente registrados, con ingreso individual de 1 salario mínimo, viven en el área urbana y distante de la EJA, sin apoyo de la compañía para estudio y acciones formativas. El estudio demostró la necesidad de ampliar las actividades de formación para profesores y para alumnos, estímulos en el ámbito de la educación de la administración pública.

**Descritores:** Educación; Educación primaria y secundaria; Enseñanza.

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## INTRODUCTION

Youth and Adult Education (EJA in Portuguese), in accordance with Article 37 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education is presented as the education "aimed at those who did not have access or continuity of their studies in primary and secondary education<sup>1</sup>".

EJA is an educational modality guaranteed by law for individuals who failed to achieve regular education for some reason, as well as those who did not have access or the possibility to continue their education in elementary and secondary education, in appropriate chronological time<sup>2</sup>.

EJA may be a possibility of redemption to education as a social right, and that given the characteristics of its audience it may require different ways from the regular education.

A survey on the legislation shows that in EJA modality the school aims to provide training for citizenship and the labor market, but is restricted to literacy and, in practice, does not address the public that should meet<sup>3</sup>.

Another qualitative study that analyzed the perceptions of students on the social role of EJA shows that the main focus is on reading, writing and basic math learning<sup>4</sup>.

Souza<sup>5</sup>, generally speaking, states that EJA students may be workers, retirees, young employees, those in search of the 1st employment, people with special needs.

From this perspective, and the possible diversity of groups that may seek EJA, that is, if it is intended to be a different type of education, it is expected that the teacher, as a facilitator of learning process, must be prepared to this educational modality.

Soares<sup>6</sup> reports that, ideally, for this area, the teacher should be trained in pedagogy with specialization in Education for Youth and Adults. Aside from possible successful experiences, it is not what we see in practice, which cannot achieve the social proposal initially formatted, and thus, bring on a teaching disconnected from reality.

Thus, this study is justified inasmuch as it can provide information that may support public policies in the area surveyed,

since there is no research on adult education in the city of Uberaba.

Based on the above, this study aims to characterize the profile of teachers and students in EJA modality of a public school in Uberaba-MG and to identify the presence of didactic and audiovisual resources for this type of education, in the view of teachers.

## METHOD

This is a quantitative and descriptive study, carried out with EJA teachers and students from a public school in Uberaba-MG.

Data collection was held in June 2014, through a questionnaire for teachers with seven questions and for students with 12 questions, after authorization of the direction of the school. Teachers were approached in the staff room and the students in turn were interviewed in classrooms (four in number).

For teachers, the variables studied were gender, age, education, length of teaching experience, length of experience in EJA, presence of educational materials and audiovisual resources. For students, elected variables were gender, age, marital status, presence of children, education level, occupation, income, and for those working, whether the company supports studies and offers training; and whether their residence is next to the analyzed school. Four classrooms were surveyed, two of elementary and two of secondary level.

In terms of analysis, data were tabulated and arranged in figures with the presentation of absolute values and percentages, so that the most relevant data were discussed with the pertinent literature.

## RESULTS

This research was conducted with 12 teachers and 60 students of a public school of Uberaba-Minas Gerais, Brazil, and sought to define the profile of teachers and students.

Regarding the profile of teachers, 15 are working with EJA, but only 12 teachers were interviewed. It was found that 66.7% are female; 50% are over 41 years old, 41.7% are between 31 and 40 years old, and only

8.3% are between 20 and 30 years old, as Table 1.

**Table 1.** EJA teachers profile and the presence of didactic and audiovisual resources of a public school. Uberaba-MG, Brazil, June 2014.

Variables	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	8	66.7
Male	4	33.3
<b>Age</b>		
20 to 30 years old	1	8.3
31 to 40 years old	5	41.7
Over 41 years old	6	50.0
<b>Education</b>		
Graduation	7	58.4
Specialization	4	33.3
Master's Degree	1	8.3
<b>Length of Teaching Experience</b>		
1 to 10 years	2	16.7
11 a 20 years	4	33.3
More than 21 years	6	50.0
<b>Length of Experience in EJA</b>		
1 to 10 years	8	66.7
11 to 20 years	3	25.0
More than 21 years	1	8.3
<b>Class material adapted to students' reality</b>		
Yes	0	0.0
No	12	100.0
<b>Presence of audiovisual materials for EJA classes</b>		
Yes	0	0.0
No	12	100.0

As for education, 58.4% of teachers are graduated, 33.3% reported being specialists and 8.3% said they were masters. Regarding the length of time in teaching, 50% have been working as teachers for more than 21 years, 33.3% from 11 to 20 years and 16.7% have been working from one to 10 years. About working in adult education, 66.7% of teachers have been working from one to 10 years, 25% from 11 to 20 years and only 8.3% have been working for more than 21 years. With regard to the use of teaching materials and audiovisual resources in the EJA classes, 100% of the teachers interviewed said that the teaching material is inconsistent with the reality of the students and the audiovisual resources are non-existent (Table 1).

Regarding the profile of students, 72 students were enrolled, but 60 students

were researched, who were present as in Table 2.

**Table 2.** EJA students profile of a public school. Uberaba-MG, Brazil, June 2014.

Variables	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	35	58.4
Male	25	41.6
<b>Age</b>		
15 to 25 years old	12	20.0
26 to 35 years old	30	50.0
Over 36 years old	18	30.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	6	10.0
Married	45	75.0
Separated	9	15.0
<b>Having children</b>		
Yes	48	80.0
No	12	20.0
<b>Level of insertion in EJA</b>		
Elementary School	23	38.3
High School	37	61.7
<b>Occupation</b>		
Yes	55	91.7
No	5	8.3
<b>Occupancy status</b>		
Formal worker	39	70.9
Independent worker	16	29.1
<b>Workplace</b>		
Urban area	50	90.9
Rural area	5	9.1
<b>Earned income</b>		
1 minimum wage	49	89.1
2 to 3 minimum wages	6	10.9
More than 3 minimum wages	0	0.0
<b>Help from employer for studies</b>		
Yes	5	9.1
No	50	90.9
<b>Presence of company training</b>		
Yes	5	9.1
No	50	90.9
<b>Living near EJA</b>		
Yes	21	35.0
No	39	65.0

Of the participants, 38.3% were enrolled in adult education, at elementary level, and 61.7% in EJA high school. It was observed that 58.4% of students are female; 50% are between 26 and 35 years old, 30% over 36 years old and 20% between 15 and 25 years old; 75% of students are married, 15% separated and 10% are single; 80% have children and 91.7% of the students are workers. Of those who work, 70.9% have a formal contract and 90.9% work in the urban area, with income of up to one minimum wage

(89.1%); 65% do not live near schools that offer adult education (Table 2).

## DISCUSSION

Regarding the profile of teachers in relation to gender, it was observed female predominance (66.7%). Two other studies have found identical results to this<sup>7,8</sup>. In fact this trend follows that present in basic and secondary levels<sup>9</sup>.

Regarding the age group we found that 50% are over 41 years old, followed by 41.7% who are between 31 and 40 years old. Studies of the city of Ponta Grossa and Sao Paulo have presented similar research<sup>7,8</sup>. Possibly, it is mentioned here people with certain "maturity" and that, therefore, identifies with this work.

On the training of teachers, 58.4% were graduated, 33.3% were specialists and 8.3% were masters. Teaching EJA implies educational strategies appropriate to this group (which is varied - teenagers, elderly, workers, etc.), which ask, for that reason, a teacher with special training, beyond graduation, of at least one specialization that can discuss themes correlated to this educational typology. Souza<sup>5</sup> describes that there is deficiency in teacher education in educational practice, leading the educator to reproduce the traditional education.

Regarding the length of time in teaching, 16.7% have been working from one to 10 years, 33.3% from 11 to 20 years and 50% for more than 21 years. About experience in adult education, 66.7% of teachers have been working from one to 10 years, 25% from 11 to 20 years and only 8.3% have been working for more than 21 years. Comparing the length of time working in teaching and in adult education, it is possible to infer that somehow the teaching practice is more attractive than the second modality because all teachers surveyed came from the regular teaching and few of them went straight to the EJA. A research paper<sup>10</sup> presented at the 65th Annual Meeting of the SBPC (Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science) showed lower time than those presented in this study.

Of the teachers 100% report that learning and audiovisual resources are inadequate or nonexistent. It is observed that the above features may be important, but do not guarantee the success of a class for this group that has its own characteristics. Possibly, group and more participatory techniques with students may give better results. The Teaching Guidelines Notebook for EJA Literacy<sup>11</sup> points out a number of educational opportunities, such as reading, use of art, drama and other aspects that flee from the unique presence of resources.

As for students it was observed that 58.4% of students are female; 20% are between 15 and 25 years old, 50% are between 26 and 35 years old, 30% are over 36 years old. Study from the state of Sergipe<sup>12</sup> had gender profile data and age group of students enrolled in EJA similar to the study in question here. In turn, two other studies conducted in two cities of Piauí showed different gender profiles<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes the choice of studying competes with the workday, in that it takes a lot of assertiveness to decide to do both simultaneously, and this might be related to any level of education, but here we speak of a context of *"someone who seeks to recover the studies"*.

Regarding marital status, 75% of students are married, 15% are separated and 10% are single. Study<sup>13</sup> found that 59.5% of respondents were married and little more than 40% were single or separated. The greatest demand for EJA by married people may be beyond the search for social mobility but the possibility of a better job, that is, an important social function.

Of respondents 91.7% of the students work. Of those working, 70.9% have a formal contract and 90.9% work in the urban area, with income of up to one minimum wage (89.1%). As Ferrari<sup>14</sup> states, young people who belong to the world of work, or are unemployed, as it is more common, seek the EJA course aiming to reach stages of their schooling to find best offers in the labor market by their inclusion in the literate world. In the research in question, students that work realize a very low income and have children. The search for EJA may have

proposal to rise to better employment opportunities.

As it was verified, companies are not motivating factors for the search for EJA, neither give support or training opportunities. Perhaps given the low wages, the real demand is justified by seeking a better education in order to reach a better job in the future.

Most students live far from the school, although they live in urban area. Study also showed that most students lived in urban area<sup>15</sup>. Distance to school can be an impediment agent for adhesion and even maintenance of the student in school, in addition to their performance. In turn, we can also infer that the number of EJAs may not be sufficient for the demand.

## CONCLUSION

The profile observed in this study points for teachers: female, aged over 41 years old, graduated, more than 21 years of regular teaching and 1 to 10 in adult education, teaching materials and audiovisual seen by them as inadequate.

With regard to the profile of students: female, 26 to 35 years old, married, with children, formal workers, with individual income of one minimum wage, living in urban area and far from EJA, without company support both to study, and for training actions.

Results of this study may indicate the need for more training for teachers, since didactic needs of the EJA group are different from regular education, in particular as regards the techniques, the use and adequacy of resources, among others. This training does not have to be necessarily only on post-graduation, but also through continuing education courses, which can occasionally support faster their practice.

Regarding students stimuli coming from companies should be expanded, as well as the search for citizen integration of the student, in addition to a better job.

This study is limited by the fact that it was developed in a single EJA school and, therefore, without the possibility of broad generalizations, but possibly reflects the

reality of other places and deserves to be more widely investigated in other studies.

We address here a joint action by the school administration in terms of community participation, and political intervention through educational manager, namely the municipal and/or state education secretary.

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS

**César Henrique de Melo** was responsible for data collection, study design and final writing of article. **Álvaro da Silva Santos** did critical analysis of the study and participated in the writing of the article. **Niura Sueli de Almeida Martins** directed the study and participated in the final writing of Article.