

Theoretical models of dropout in higher education and notes on the national context

Modelos teóricos da evasão no ensino superior e notas sobre o contexto nacional

Modelos teóricos de la deserción en la educación superior y apuntes sobre el contexto nacional

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Abstract: The dropout phenomenon is configured as a concern in undergraduate courses at Brazilian universities, causing some problems, among which we highlight the expenditure of public resources, resulting in a serious commitment to qualification of our young people, in the most varied areas of knowledge. Theoretical research on evasion in higher education, especially those related to evasion in Brazil, are very recent, but, despite being recent, they are very important so that we can situate ourselves in face of this phenomenon and better understand it, since they bring losses, both for institutions and for individual who evades. In this sense, this article presents important theoretical models on evasion, such as those elaborated by Tinto, Bean, Coulon, Astin and Cabrera, authors commonly used as a reference in studies on university dropout. We seek, therefore, to encourage and deepen that discussion, contextualizing the dropout phenomenon from our reality, with studies carried out by Brazilian researchers. So that solutions can be thought of, knowledge of reality is fundamental.

Keywords: evasion; higher education; theoretical models.

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Resumo: O fenômeno da evasão se configura como uma preocupação nos cursos de graduação das universidades brasileiras, acarretando alguns problemas, dentre os quais destacamos os gastos de recursos públicos, tendo como consequência um sério comprometimento na qualificação dos nossos jovens, nas mais variadas áreas do conhecimento. As pesquisas teóricas sobre a evasão no ensino superior, principalmente as que dizem respeito à evasão no Brasil, são muito recentes, mas, apesar de recentes, são muito importantes para que possamos nos situar diante desse fenômeno e melhor compreendê-lo, visto que traz prejuízos, tanto para as instituições, quanto para o indivíduo que evade. Neste sentido, este artigo apresenta importantes modelos teóricos sobre evasão, tais como os que foram elaborados por Tinto, Bean, Coulon, Astin, e Cabrera, autores comumente utilizados como referência nos estudos sobre evasão universitária. Buscamos, portanto, fomentar e aprofundar essa discussão, contextualizando o fenômeno da evasão a partir da nossa realidade, com estudos feitos por pesquisadores brasileiros. Para que soluções possam ser pensadas, o conhecimento da realidade se mostra fundamental.

Palavras-chave: evasão; ensino superior; modelos teóricos.

Resumen: El fenómeno de la deserción se configura como una preocupación en los cursos de graduación de las universidades brasileñas, provocando algunos problemas, entre los cuales destacamos el gasto de recursos públicos, resultando en un serio compromiso con la calificación de nuestros jóvenes, en las más variadas áreas del saber. Las investigaciones teóricas sobre la evasión en la educación superior, especialmente las relacionadas con la evasión en Brasil, son muy recientes, pero, a pesar de ser recientes, son muy importantes para que podamos ubicarnos frente a este fenómeno y comprenderlo mejor, ya que trae pérdidas, tanto para las instituciones como para el individuo que evade. En este sentido, este artículo presenta importantes modelos teóricos sobre la evasión, como los elaborados por Tinto, Bean, Coulon, Astin y Cabrera, autores comúnmente utilizados como referencia en estudios sobre la deserción universitaria. Buscamos, por tanto, incentivar y profundizar esa discusión, contextualizando el fenómeno de la deserción escolar desde nuestra realidad, con estudios realizados por investigadores brasileños. Para que se puedan pensar soluciones, el conocimiento de la realidad es fundamental.

Palabras clave: evasión; enseñanza superior; modelos teóricos.

1 Introduction

Dropping out of undergraduate courses is a problem that affects higher education institutions in Brazil and around the world, whether public or private. Currently, discussions about reasons that lead to evasion have expanded in the academic environment. It appears, therefore, that the phenomenon of evasion has increased in undergraduate courses, causing, among other problems, huge expenditures of public resources, resulting in a serious compromise in the qualification of young Brazilians, in the most varied areas of knowledge (SILVA-FILHO, 2007).

With regard to public universities, that phenomenon is configured as a problem, which affects not only educational institution, but also society, since the student leaving constitutes an investment of public resources without the due social return, thus increasing the number of idle vacancies that could be filled by other people, in addition to not qualifying/preparing young people for the job market. Furthermore, university evasion makes social inequalities in higher education evident, since it affects, in most cases, students from the popular classes, who, as we know, have serious difficulties in accessing and remaining in this level of education (PAULA, 2017).

The amount invested in the public university includes, among other things, expenses related to infrastructure, the ratio between the number of professors per student, the number of graduates in relation to the number of freshmen and the cost per student, too. As a result, evasion also impacts on management indicators and, consequently, on the proper use of services provided by the institution.

The issue of evasion in higher education has permeated discussions in the academic environment for some years now, with theoretical models developed by different scholars. Over time, concepts developed by Tinto, (1975), Bean, (1980), Coulon (1980 *apud* Coulon, 2008), Astin, (1999) and Cabrera *et al.* (1993).

In Brazil, research on that phenomenon is recent, marked by preparation and dissemination of the Report of the Special Commission for Studies on Evasion (BRASIL, 1997). There has been an increase in those surveys in recent years. In general, they are case studies carried out by courses, teaching areas and even by higher education institutions themselves, stimulated mainly by the expansion of access to higher education through the university expansion project, experienced in the country from of the 2000s. National surveys seek to outline a concept for the term "dropout", which, in general, is seen as the student's definitive leaving from the undergraduate course of origin, without the proper conclusion. However, most of the academic works published in national journals guide evasion based on determining factors that lead students to drop out of the course. Normally, those surveys are carried out in isolation, based, in some cases, on international models, since there is no theoretical model that meets the specificities that involve the dropout of Brazilian students.

In that context, it is evident that theoretical research on the dropout phenomenon in higher education, mainly in Brazil, is recent, however, fundamental for understanding this phenomenon, which manifests itself in contemporary educational institutions and brings losses, as already mentioned, both for the teaching institution and for the individual who drops

out. Therefore, a greater theoretical deepening is necessary covering more specific characteristics of evaders of our institutions.

In this sense, this text is responsible for presenting the main theoretical models, often used as a reference in studies on university dropouts, as well as elements for a broader and deeper reflection on that phenomenon, more specifically with regard to national research, with its specific characteristics.

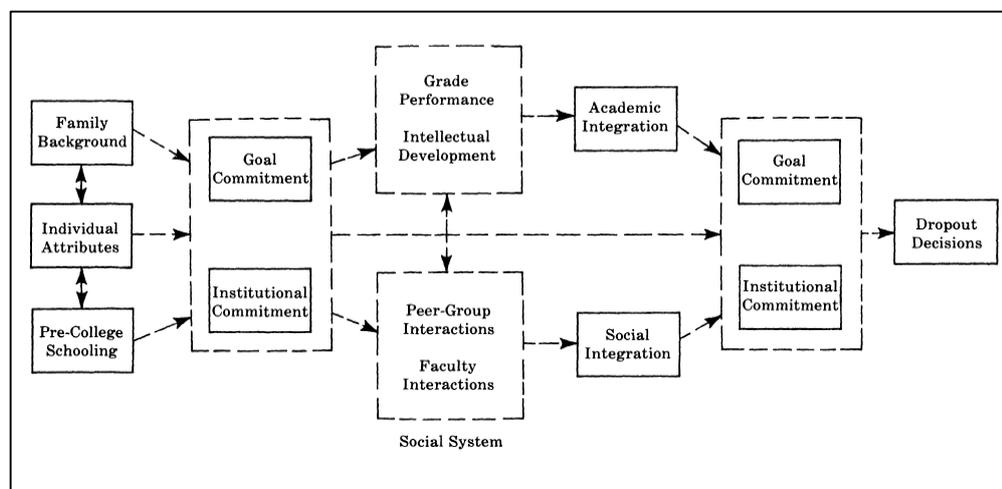
2 Theoretical models on dropout

From an international point of view, one of the first conceptual studies on school evasion was carried out by Vincent Tinto (1975), who presents a theoretical model of behavioral evasion based on the theory of suicide by sociologist Émile Durkheim (2000). According to Durkheim's theory, suicide is more likely to occur when people are not socially integrated. In the field of evasion, Tinto considers the educational institution as a social system, when comparing the dropout of higher education to suicide that occurs in societies. The author tells us that the theory of suicide, applied to school evasion, was first used by Spady in 1970 and based on this initial study, he proposes not only a behavioral description of dropout phenomenon, but also ways of predicting when this phenomenon occurs, as well as the lack of interaction with people from the institution and insufficient adequacy to the prevailing values in the university institution.

According to Tinto, the individual who is not socially integrated will not commit himself adequately to the educational institution, thus increasing the probability of dropping out, as he starts to look for other activities outside the university environment. In that way, not only personal characteristics will lead to evasion, but also the professional and motivational expectations of the individual in relation to the academic and social environment, prevalent in the institution.

Tinto (1975) discusses dropping out of higher education, considering it as a longitudinal process of individual interactions with the academic and social system of university institutions, and the individual's experience, during this interaction process, tends to change its objective, in order to lead to persistence and/or to different forms of evasion. In view of that, the author proposes a conceptual scheme for dropping out the institution, shown in the image below:

Figure 1 - Conceptual framework for college dropout



Source: Tinto (1975, p. 95).

Since dropout is a longitudinal process of integration among students, different factors contribute to their dropping out of higher education, which involve individual/personal, social, academic and motivational characteristics. However, the individual's integration into the institution's academic and social system would be related intrinsically to staying in that space. For the author, the individual's permanence at the university is directly related to his insertion in the university's academic and social systems, and when there is no interaction and integration of the student, socially and academically, he tends to drop out.

In that sense, the form of interaction between the individual and the lack of commitment to the institution will lead the student, as already mentioned, to dropout, that is, the lower the student's commitment, the more likely he/she will leave that space, as points out the author: "[...] the greater the degree of integration of the individual in university systems, the greater will be his commitment to the specific institution and to the goal of completing college" (TINTO, 1975, p. 96, our translation).

The student integration model proposed by Tinto (1975), as we have seen, considers that dropout happens when the student does not integrate socially, that is, when he cannot interact with his peers when he does not participate in extracurricular activities (groups or student communities) and, also, when the student has difficulties in academic performance and career development, presenting low grades, for example. The author also points out institutional factors such as resources and infrastructure, although in a smaller percentage, are also related to dropout rates (NIEMBA, 2021; FRANCO *et. al.*, 2021).

Tinto (1975) emphasizes that the student, when entering higher education, has a framework of experiences, personal characteristics and family background that influence the definition of the completion goal; also points to the importance of the commitment given by the student to achieve it. In that context, family expectations are an important factor for their permanence, considering that family expectations contribute to the student's performance. Another factor that stands out is the student's prior knowledge, that is, their skills

prior to entering higher education, which also determine the relationship with the commitment towards objective and institution. In addition, the interaction between the commitment to institution and student's objective in completing the course (expectations of entering the job market or taking a postgraduate course, for example) are characterized as guaranteed conditions that motivate the student to seek conclusion. External issues such as the need to work for their own maintenance or for the maintenance of family can also contribute to the decision to stay (FRANCO *et al.*, 2021).

In summary, we can point out that the student integration model takes into account the academic dimension and social integration. The first concerns the student's feeling of being integrated into the institution's environment, considering, for example, academic performance and the positive experience of the course and its contents. In that context, if the student obtains below-average grades or has difficulties regarding the methodology adopted by professors and content covered during classes, such issues may influence the decision to drop out of the course. Social integration, in turn, refers to the experiences and social relationships that the student establishes, such as friendship bonds, involvement with extra-academic activities and informal relationships with professors and other people who work in the course to which they are enrolled in.

In that perspective, the role of the institution becomes preponderant in the student's decision-making, between dropping out or remaining in the course, bearing in mind that relationships established in the university environment can also have a negative influence. The more integrated the individual is with the university, the better his academic performance and his relationship with the other subjects who are part of this process – professors, colleagues, administrative technicians, etc. In addition, another determining factor for permanence is the commitment assumed by student to university and to its goal, aiming to finish the course and acquire the degree.

The theory proposed by Tinto (1975) is very opportune, since it makes us reflect on the factors inherent to the university and the student's own perception of the academic environment, which he is inserted in. However, this theory does not take into account broader aspects, which may influence an individual's decision to stay or drop out of an undergraduate course. Although often cited in national research, we believe that this theoretical model, by itself, does not contemplate the complexity that is the dropout in higher education in a country like ours, with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) distributed in regions with different specificities and with students with such diverse profiles that they end up interfering in the decision to stay or drop out.

Even considering, independently, the different aspects described by Tinto, we will certainly not have a concrete answer on the dropout phenomenon in higher education, in view of the complexity of this issue and the different aspects that involve the dropout of students from undergraduate courses. In our case, a country as diverse as Brazil, with university institutions that reflect local cultures and where the democratization of higher education and the access of the popular classes to this teaching modality have occurred, mainly, from the last two decades, we are led to consider other different theoretical models, in an attempt to understand this phenomenon in the national context.

On the other hand, still based on Tinto's theory, John Bean (1980) proposes the "student attrition" model, which focuses on the intention to stay or drop out of the course (CASANOVA, 2018), considering that school dropout from the influence of environmental determinants, it is also related to university dropout. In this case, "friction" is considered when there is an interruption in the student's registration/enrollment in a given higher education institution. Therefore, the term is used as a synonym of the word "dropout".

Bean (1980) considers that determining factors for evasion are configured within exogenous causes, which are those extrinsic to the individual, that is, interference that comes from outside, or endogenous, which refer to factors intrinsic to the subject, which are form within and are external. Thus, the proposed model considers independent variables that may have an external or internal origin, resulting from a causal sequence, as follows:

- a) Background variables - refer to the student's experiences prior to entering higher education, such as family education, performance in high school, hometown and distance from home, that is, they would be the influences prior to the student's entry into the institution;
- b) Organizational variables - relate to the organization of the higher education institution itself, such as university grades, *campus* organization, references also used for the student's choice of institution;
- c) Personal variables - commitment to goals, greater occupational certainty and confidence;
- d) Environmental variables - include transfer opportunity, marriage, ease of financing education and approval of the institution by family regarding attitude variables;
- e) Attitudinal variables - refer to behaviors that reflect the certainty of choice, satisfaction and practical value.

Note that Bean's model (1980) differs from that proposed by Tinto (1975), as it considers environmental and individual factors in the process that leads to higher education dropout. Bean also points out non-traditional characteristics presented by some students, who are those who interact for less time and less intensively with their peers.

More recently, the "involvement" model, proposed by Alexander Astin (1984), emphasizes the energy, whether physical or psychological, released by the student in academic experience. Thus, the more involved with the graduation the student is through dedication of time and participation in academic activities, the greater the probability of staying in the course.

Based on the Freudian concept of "cathexis" (investment of energy), Astin considers the model of "involvement" in the student's profile. The student involved, according to the cited author, is the one who has the time and energy (effort and disposition for a certain activity) to study, interact with professors, colleagues and stay for a long time in the institution: "The student engagement refers to the quantity and quality of physical and psychological energy that students invest in the university experience" (ASTIN, 1999, p. 528, our translation).

As an example, we can cite students who engage in research and extension projects, participate in study groups and academic and cultural activities provided by educational institutions to which they are connected. That is, energy assumes the sense of effort emitted by student to carry out a certain activity, in this case, those related to the academic environment.

The expression involvement is seen by Astin (1999) from the behavioral perspective, being, in this sense, the commitment of the student's effort to activities related to the academy. The more involved the student is, whether in the quantitative or qualitative sense, the greater the probability that he will remain in the course/institution. For the author, what the student puts into practice, how he behaves, defines and identifies the concept of involvement, that is, it is not just a matter of motivation, although this is important, or what the student thinks, but his behavior and what is put into practice by him. The theory proposed by Astin (1999) is based on five guiding principles, namely:

- a) Involvement is the student's investment of physical and psychological energy towards academic activities, which can be general, such as, for example, the student's experience in the undergraduate course and their dedication to a final evaluation of the course;
- b) The degree of involvement for the same activity will be different among students. Thus, a student can be more involved in academic activities – such as, for example, participating in tutoring – than another, and the same student will also manifest different degrees of involvement for the same activity at different times. That is, a student can be more involved in a certain activity than another one, at the same time that the student manifests different degrees of involvement for the same activity, depending on the moment;
- c) Student involvement has quantitative aspects, which can be measured, for example, the number of hours dedicated to studying, and qualitative aspects, when the student reviews the content and understands the activities;
- d) Student learning and personal development are related in proportion to the quality and quantity of that student's involvement in the educational program;
- e) For any educational policy or practice to be effective, it must be related directly to the ability of that policy or practice to increase student engagement.

The theory of involvement emerged from studies developed by Astin, in 1975, on the factors in the university environment that impacted dropout and university retention. In that study, the author identified the positive factors that contributed to the students' permanence were related to their involvement with the academy, while the negative factors, which influenced dropout, were related to the students' lack of involvement.

Among the positive factors identified by Astin in his research, the student residence stands out, among others, given that students residing on campus have more time to get involved in all aspects of university life. Students involved in extracurricular activities and in student groups, such as participating in research projects and sports activities, were also less likely to drop out. Another factor identified was carrying out a profitable activity on the

university campus itself, such as, for example, a paid internship. On the other hand, if the student works entirely in another space, there is a greater tendency not to remain in the course, since he is dedicating time and energy to an external activity, unrelated to the academic environment, consequently reducing the time and energy dedicated to graduation.

Corroborating the theory proposed by Astin, Camila Fior (2021), when conducting a study with freshmen at a higher education institution on academic involvement as a predictor of dropout, identified that, after two years of research, 38.9% of participants dropped out, and dropout rates were higher among students who worked, when compared to those who did not have a paid job. In addition, the author identified that dropout students had a lower average involvement with academic activities – mandatory and non-mandatory – compared to those who remained. It was also identified that day shift students, who worked and who were less involved in mandatory academic activities, were likely to drop out.

The theory of involvement is important, as it makes us reflect on student engagement in undergraduate courses and on how educational institutions can carry out actions to enable greater student involvement in the academic space. It is evident that when students need to reconcile their time with work – sometimes to maintain basic expenses –, family, and other everyday tasks, academic demands tend to be placed in the background.

On the other hand, if this student is involved, for example, in research or study groups, in extension projects, in academic monitoring, in cultural activities, part of his energy and time is dedicated to academic activities that are not only mandatory, as components curricular, but also non-compulsory ones. Participation in activities that permeate classroom teaching involves the student not only in the course, but also in the institution, thus reducing propensity to drop out.

The existing literature on the subject also presents us with the interactionist models, proposed from studies developed by authors cited in the course of this topic. Basically, as the name implies, the interactionist model proposes the integration of two or more aspects of models previously elaborated, one of the best known and cited in academic studies and research being the Integrated Permanence model, elaborated by Cabrera and other authors, in 1992. According to Oberdan Costa and Luis Gouveia (2018, p. 165) the integrated model of permanence says the following:

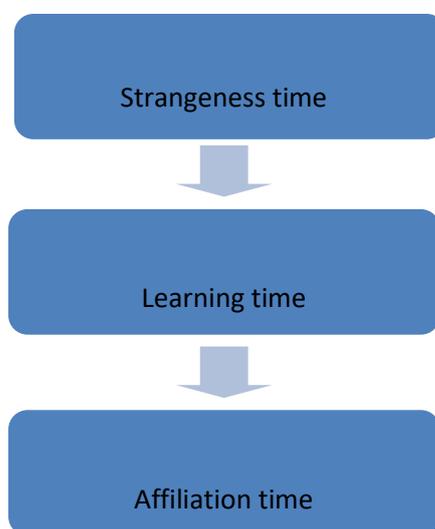
That financial aid and the attitudes immediately resulting reflect positively, not only to balance opportunities for students to enter with a lower socioeconomic situation, but also to facilitate the integration of this contingent of students in the academic and social components of the institution.

It is noted that in the model proposed by Cabrera and other authors, among other issues, the financial factor is evidenced as something that reflects positively on the permanence of the individual, at the same time that it facilitates the eventual integration of students in academic and social components of the institution. In addition, the authors incorporate, into the model, factors related to commitment to the institution, commitment to the objective of obtaining the degree, involvement in academic debates and activities carried out in the internal

and external environment of the campus, as well as academic performance in the first year of the course, which ends up interfering in the decision-making regarding staying in the institution.

The Frenchman Allain Coulon, still in the 1980s, carried out some studies on university success and failure with students entering undergraduate courses in his country. Coulon (2017) emphasizes the term “affiliation”, that is, the student must become affiliated, that is go through a process that corresponds to gaining a new social *status*, when familiarity with activities with which he must be involved is demonstrated. He realized, however, that students who do not join their new context end up failing, having as a consequence dropping out of the course.

Coulon (2008) tells us that the student's entry into university life can be seen as a passage, divided into three specific moments, as shown in the following diagram:



Source: Adapted from Coulon (2008).

The time of strangeness is the initial moment, the first contact that the student has with the university environment, at the same time that he is detached from a familiar past and realizes that the university is a different environment from that of high school. At this stage, what is important is the meeting point between the university and the student's future (COULON, 2008, p. 40).

In the second phase, called learning time, the student goes through a moment of ambiguity, because the recent past, the previous student life was broken, however, this still does not have a defined future. The author uses the term “learning” to designate this phase as the moment when the student essentially learns his duty, becoming an apprentice.

The third phase, called affiliation time, occurs when the student becomes familiar with the new environment, that is, it is at the time of affiliation that the student becomes, permanently, a member:

The student is now doubly affiliated: both at the institutional level, as he now understands and interprets the multiple institutional devices that govern his daily student life and also comes to know what is expected of him at the intellectual level so that he can demonstrate his competence (COULON, 2008, p. 193).

The author also emphasizes the time for the student affiliation process varies according to each individual, with the educational institution, with the degree of institutional sophistication and with the quantity and complexity of its rules.

With a view to a synthesis of theoretical models on evasion in higher education, presented in this topic, we elaborated, for a better understanding of what was approached, the table that follows, presenting the author, model and theoretical perspective, according to the concepts described in the existing literature on the topic.

Author	Decade	Model	Theoretical Perspective
Tinto	1970s	Social and Academic Integration	The more academically and socially integrated the student is in the institution, the greater the probability of staying.
Bean	1980s	Student Attrition Model	Considers the influence of environmental factors on the decision to drop out of higher education.
Astin	1980s	Involvement Theory	The more involved with graduation the student is through dedication of time and participation in academic activities, the greater the probability of staying in the course.
Coulon	1980s	Affiliation Concept	Students who fail to become affiliates flunk: entering the university is in vain if they do not go through the process of affiliating themselves with the intellectual world they entered, without truly knowing that they were entering.
Cabrera et. al.	1990s	Integrated Model	They integrate different theoretical models.

Source: Own elaboration.

3 Notes on dropout in the Brazilian context

The definition of the concept of evasion in higher education is not consensual. It is generally linked to the idea of abandonment, withdrawal, failure, definitive escaping from a course, an institution and/or a school system. In addition, the term is also addressed from the perspective of permanence in the course, and its antonym is even seen from the perspective of permanence (LIMA; ZAGO, 2018).

In Brazil, studies on evasion increased, mainly from the 1990s onwards. Precisely, in October 1996, shortly before the enactment of Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996 – which establishes the guidelines and bases –, the Ministry of Education (MEC) published the report on Graduation, Retention and Evasion in Undergraduate Courses in Public Higher Education Institutions. It is worth mentioning that this document, prepared by the Special Commission for Studies on Evasion, will guide studies on evasion until the present day. The study, carried out at the time, presented data on the performance of Brazilian public universities regarding the retention, dropout and graduation rates of undergraduate students, transforming the term 'dropout' into a concept and classifying the existing types.

According to the MEC report (BRASIL, 1997), dropout “[...] is the definitive exit from the original course without completion, or the difference between freshmen and graduates, after a complete generation.”¹ That is, the phenomenon of evasion happens when the student leaves the undergraduate course definitively, without completing it. The report also conceptualizes the existence of three types of evasion:

- a) Evasion of course, which occurs when the student migrates from one course to another, but remains in the same institution;
- b) Evasion from the institution, which occurs when the student leaves the institution of origin and migrates to another higher education institution;
- c) Evasion of system, which is evident when the student leaves the education system definitively, that is, moves away from the course of origin, but does not enroll in another course or institution of higher education.

In the 2000s, another important study to understand this phenomenon was carried out by Silva Filho and other authors (2007), through the Lobo Institute for Research and Educational Management. The study also sought to conceptualize the term dropout, and proposed a formula for calculating the percentage of total dropouts in institutions. In addition, data regarding dropout in Brazilian higher education, between the years 2000 to 2005 were presented.

For those authors, there are two dropout concepts, namely: 1) annual dropout, whose average is calculated from the number of students enrolled in an educational institution or

¹ According to MEC (BRASIL, 1997) the term “Complete Generation” corresponds to the situation of the group of entrants in a given course, in a base year/period, at the end of the maximum period of curricular completion.

course who did not conclude and also did not enroll in the following year (or in the following semester) and 2) total dropout, which considers all students who entered a course or educational institution and did not obtain a degree by the end of the completion period. It is the complement of what is called the "title index" (LOBO *et. al.*, 2007).

Gaioso (2005, *apud* BAGGI; LOPES, 2011), considers dropout as a complex social phenomenon, defined by the interruption of the study cycle. For Gilioli (2016), evasion is divided into the following modalities: evasion from the course or microevasion, evasion from the institution or mesoevasion and evasion from higher education or macroevasion, manifesting itself in various ways, such as: freshmen who do not enroll, dropouts, withdrawal and retirements, in addition to varying according to the area of knowledge, course, student profile chosen modality (bachelor's degree or degree) and stage in which it is in the course. In addition to all that, evasion varies according to the area of knowledge, student profile and stage in which he is in the course. Santos and Silva (2011, p. 254), however, point out that dropout "considered as a general class, means a dropout of the student who leaves the university without completing the course".

Santos (2017), in turn, understands the concept of evasion from three dimensions: semantic evasion (or meaning), cultural evasion (or representation) and methodological evasion (or indicators), which can be addressed within the same context or independently, depending on the institution.

As for INEP (2017), this institute understands evasion as a synonym for dropping out, and, regardless of the reason that led the student to drop out of the course, dropping out before completion is considered a form of failure in terms of the development and expansion of competences, promoted by the institution where the student joined. On the other hand, non-completion due to death, for example, is not seen as a failure, as it is not an intentional action. Therefore, it appears that evasion must also be linked to the subject's intention of not wanting to continue, or the lack of conditions to stay on the course.

In general, what can be noticed is that the term evasion has been used to designate the definitive departure of the student from the course of origin, to which he is linked, without the proper conclusion. This exit can be a migration to another course or different institution, or it can be the exit from the higher education system, which occurs when the student does not continue the academic life. After all, in all cases dropout is configured as something negative, either for the institution or for the student. However, leaving the education system is even more worrying as in this situation, the student not only withdraws from the course or institution of origin, but from academic life as a whole.

For a better understanding of what was discussed, we summarize the theoretical concepts about dropout from Brazilian higher education in the table below:

Author	Year	Concept
MEC	1997	Definitive departure from the original graduation without completion, or the difference between freshmen and seniors, after a complete generation
Gaioso (<i>apud</i> Baggi e Lopes, 2011)	2005	Interruption of the study cycle
Silva-Filho <i>et al.</i>	2007	Annual dropout, whose average is calculated from the number of students enrolled in an educational institution or course who did not conclude and also did not enroll in the following year (or in the following semester) and 2) total dropout, which considers the totality of students who entered a course or educational institution and did not obtain a degree by the end of the completion period. It is the complement of what is called the "title index"
Santos e Silva	2011	Withdrawal of the student who leaves the university without completing the course
Gilioli	2016	Dropout from the course or micro-dropout, dropout from the institution or meso-dropout, and dropout from higher education or macro-dropout
INEP	2016	Early departure, before the end of the year, series or cycle, due to withdrawal (regardless of the reason)
Santos	2017	Semantic (or meaning) evasion, cultural (or representation) evasion, methodological (or indicator) evasion

Source: Own elaboration.

Given the above, when we contextualize the issue of evasion, it is necessary to reflect more deeply on the specific reasons why students from a certain institution of higher education drop out of their undergraduate courses. We emphasize that the research carried out at the national level is centered on case studies that cover states, institutions, courses or categories of students, seeking to understand the reasons linked to dropout in those spaces. Broader works, which present a specifically Brazilian approach or reviews of the bibliography in this field, are more difficult to find (COIMBRA; SILVA; COSTA, 2021). However, such studies are also important for us to understand the specific context in which dropout emerges, bearing in mind the existing regional differences in our country, which end up reflecting on university organization and, consequently, on the process of student dropout in higher education.

Studies carried out over the last decade point to different factors that contribute to dropout and that, for many times, do not mean the disconnection with higher education, but only reflect an impulsive decision and without connection to new choices (BARDAGI; HUTZ, 2009).

In addition to those studies, we have others that point to more specific factors, such as: academic difficulties, lack of an organized reception for freshmen, the non-availability of guidance in the first semesters of the course, below-average academic performance, the relationship between professor /student, family and financial difficulties and, finally, the

incompatibility between work hours and study hours. All of this, of course, contributes to student dropout from a course (ANDRIOLA; ANDRIOLA; MOURA, 2006; SILVA-FILHO, 2007).

Likewise, Sadoyma *et al.* (2020) points out that the reasons linked to evasion in higher education are diverse, and include personal factors, difficulties in reconciling work and studies, defining the course on impulse or convenience and lack of vocation, skills and interest in the course of choice. Likewise, Silva *et al.* (2022) considers that evasion is linked to a series of factors and covers students from different social, economic and cultural spheres.

Evasion is also evident in different ways according to the area of knowledge and modality. One can take as an example, with regard more specifically to evasion in teaching courses, issues related to the lack of a discourse that values and encourages the teaching career in basic education. This ends up reflecting on the student's choice to migrate to another course in a different area. In addition, the vocational factor is included, as many students enroll in undergraduate courses due to the low competition in the selection process, which lowers the grade for access to these courses, that is, attending a bachelor's degree, most of the time, is not the first choice of young high school graduates. Garcia *et al.* (2021) also identified that in exact sciences courses, dropout rates are higher when compared to other areas of knowledge.

In this sense, based on the example of the lack of encouragement for teaching degrees, it is up to higher education institutions to think of strategies that enable young entrants to understand the advantages that some peculiarities of teaching courses can offer, valuing the breadth of knowledge acquired and transmitted for degrees, so lacking in professionals working in basic education.

We believe in view of what it has been exposed, corroborating with Castro's (2012) ideas, a deeper reflection is necessary for elaboration of a theoretical model that covers the different characteristics of our higher education institutions and peculiarities of profile of our students, since international models, normally used by our scholars, tend to reflect the local reality.

It is evident, therefore, that phenomenon must be seen and considered from different factors and perspectives that take into account, mainly, the student's profile and the area of knowledge chosen to enter the university career, among other specific characteristics of each higher education institution.

4 Conclusion

This work presented important national studies, in addition to the main theoretical models on dropout, developed at an international level, demonstrating how the theme has been discussed and treated by researchers over the last decades, presenting the complexity in defining a model theoretical that contemplates all the peculiarities, that involve the evasion of university students from their courses without the proper conclusion.

Theoretical models carried out internationally since the mid-1970s seek to understand and conceptualize evasion. They also seek, as we have seen, to understand this phenomenon from the perspective of factors that lead to dropping out of courses, Vicent Tinto being considered the pioneer of these studies, which served as a basis for the development of later theoretical models.

In Brazil, the concern with evasion in higher education became evident from the 1990s onwards, being marked mainly by the expansion of public universities and the expansion of vacancies at this level of education from the 2000s onwards. National surveys, for the most part, are case studies that portray the reality of dropout in a given institution, course or teaching area, sometimes considering factors that lead to student dropout in isolation.

Studies also seek to conceptualize the term, which it is commonly seen as synonymous with abandonment, withdrawal or even academic failure. In any case, those terms present, in essence, the same meaning: definitive departure of the student from the course of origin, to which he is linked, without the due conclusion, and this exit may be a migration to another course or different institution, or it could be leaving the higher education system itself, which occurs when the student does not continue with the academic life. Furthermore, the most recent studies point to the characterization of evasion based on the reasons that influence the student to drop out of the course, which range from institutional to personal reasons.

We believe, therefore, the studies developed so far are fundamental for understanding the dropout phenomenon in Brazilian higher education. Furthermore, we believe new steps need to be taken on that path, in order to consolidate broader theoretical models, which understand the specificities linked to the evasion of Brazilian university students, thus contributing to the development of actions that aim to help the permanence of student at this level of education, also contributing to the reduction of dropout rates in higher education institutions.

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