

Educational service and school dropout: an analysis of alternative basic education in Nueva Cajamarca, Peru

Servicio educativo y deserción escolar: un análisis de la Educación Básica Alternativa en Nueva Cajamarca, Perú

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ABSTRACT

Objective. To determine the relationship between educational service and school dropout at the “Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores” Alternative Basic Education Center (CEBA, by its Spanish acronym), in the district of Nueva Cajamarca, Peru, in 2024. **Methods.** A quantitative study based on basic research, with a correlational and cross-sectional design. The population consisted of 300 students from the institution, and the sample included 166 students selected through simple probabilistic sampling, spanning the initial, intermediate, and advanced levels. A Likert-scale questionnaire was used for data collection, and Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was employed for inferential analysis. **Results.** The levels of the “educational service” variable were: low (2.41%), good (33.73%), and high (63.86%), while the levels of the “school dropout” variable were: low (6.63%), medium (87.95%), and high (5.42%). These results indicate general acceptance of educational services, although improvements in teaching quality are needed. The relationship between “educational service” and “school dropout” was negative, very weak, and statistically significant ($\rho = -0.192$, $p = 0.013 < 0.05$). **Conclusions.** There is a significant relationship between educational service and school dropout at the “Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores” CEBA. Moreover, the “pedagogy” dimension was identified as one of the contributing factors to school dropout.

Keywords: educational service; school dropout; reliability; empathy; family condition; pedagogy; economic condition.

RESUMEN

Objetivo. Determinar la relación entre el servicio educativo y la deserción escolar en el Centro de Educación Básica Alternativa (CEBA) “Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores”, en el distrito de Nueva Cajamarca (Perú), 2024. **Métodos.** Estudio de enfoque cuantitativo, a partir de una investigación de tipo básica, nivel correlacional y transversal. La población estuvo conformada por 300 estudiantes de la institución, mientras que la muestra fue de 166 estudiantes elegidos mediante el muestreo probabilístico simple, comprendidos en los niveles inicial, intermedio y avanzado. El instrumento para el recojo de datos empleados fue el cuestionario en la modalidad de escala de Likert. Para el análisis inferencial se usó el coeficiente correlación de Spearman. **Resultados.** Los niveles de la variable “servicio educativo” fueron: bajo (2,41 %), bueno (33,73 %) y alto (63,86 %); en cuanto a la variable “deserción escolar” fue: bajo (6,63 %), medio (87,95 %) y alto (5,42 %). Estos resultados permiten observar la aceptación de los servicios educativos, pero con la necesidad de atención en el servicio de enseñanza. La relación entre las variables “servicio educativo” y “deserción escolar” fue negativo, muy bajo y significativo ($\rho = -0,192$, $p = 0,013 < 0,05$). **Conclusiones.** Existe relación significativa entre servicio educativo y deserción escolar en del CEBA “Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores”, así mismo, la dimensión “pedagogía” fue considerada como uno de los factores en la deserción escolar

Palabras clave: servicio educativo; deserción escolar; fiabilidad; empatía; condición familiar; pedagogía; condición económica.

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INTRODUCCION

Educational services in a competitive world have a crucial impact, as young people can prepare for the labor market by excelling in both technical and soft skills, even with the aid of developed tools and models that could help enhance educational services. Several countries in Latin America reflect the quality of educational services through dimensions such as care and good management (Chamoly, 2021). Educational services are provided through organized educational and administrative activities aimed at achieving specific objectives (Ministry of Education [MINEDU], 2021).

In this context, international studies on school dropout define it as student absenteeism after having registered and participated for a certain period (Gaviria & Uribe, 2006). According to Barrios and Barrios (2022), dropout can be motivated by various factors: personal, social, cultural, economic, and political. International organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also affirm that school dropout among youth aged 15 to 18 is due to structural deficiencies in the system (Guzmán & Moctezuma, 2023).

At the national level, MINEDU (2021) states that 6.3% of students drop out of school due to various circumstances. Out of every 100 students aged 17 to 18, 22 do not finish secondary education; and for every 100 young people aged 13 to 19, 5 drop out of school (CARE, 2023). Various studies conducted in cities such as Ica indicate that school dropout can be observed through non-compliance with academic activities and the lack of guidance from teachers (Barrios & Barrios, 2022). These findings reveal that teachers need training on various documents, such as the didactic guides for Alternative Basic Education (EBA, by its Spanish acronym). Similarly, in the city of Tacna, it is evident that students stop attending classes due to several factors, such as poor infrastructure, lack of teacher training, and family, economic, and social issues, among others (Mamani Churra & Núñez Eguiluz, 2021).

At the regional level, Ramos (2022) argues that teacher performance and the quality of educational service are highly and significantly positively correlated. Meanwhile, Barrera (2023), in his research on educational service models and school dropout, states that there is a significant relationship between the variables "educational service" and "school dropout". Likewise, Paredes et al. (2023) indicate that the quality of educational service is achieved to some extent in different schools.

School dropout at the "Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores" Alternative Basic Education Center (CEBA, by its Spanish acronym) in Nueva Cajamarca, San Martín (Peru) is reflected in high levels of student absenteeism driven by multiple factors. The institution has 300 enrolled students over the age of fifteen; however, to date, 8% of them have dropped out. These figures concern the school authorities, who urgently require the intervention of national, regional, and local authorities, including the Local Educational Management Unit itself.

This research gains relevance for several reasons, among them the pursuit of a quality educational service that improves education in Peru. In this regard, it is important to identify various deficiencies in the educational institution, such as infrastructure, teacher training, and even traditional teaching methods. Theoretically, the study is based on the need for a quality educational service. From this perspective, several factors have been identified that must be addressed to help improve the quality of education.

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between educational service and school dropout among students at "Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores" CEBA, in the district of Nueva Cajamarca (Peru), in 2024. Furthermore, it aimed to analyze the levels of the variables — educational service and school dropout — as well as the relationship among their respective dimensions.

METHODS

Study type and area

The study followed a quantitative approach and was classified as basic research, as it sought solely to discover new knowledge about the variables under study (Ñaupas et al., 2018), in addition to deepening the understanding of the relationship between these variables. The research design was non-experimental, with a correlational and cross-sectional scope. The study was conducted at "Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores" CEBA, located in the district of Nueva Cajamarca (Peru), during the first semester of 2024.

Population and sample

The study population consisted of 300 students from three academic cycles: basic, intermediate, and advanced. The selected sample included 166 students from all three academic cycles. The selection was based on inclusion criteria: students enrolled in any of the three cycles, and aged over 14 years. The exclusion

criteria were: students who were not enrolled, those who were absent at the time of the instrument's application, and those who could not read or write. The sampling technique used was simple probabilistic sampling, calculated using a formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total sample of 166 students.

Variables and data collection instruments

The variables in this study were "educational service" and "school dropout." The first variable was measured using a questionnaire titled "educational service," which included 4 dimensions and 19 items. The rating scale was: low (19–44), medium (44–69), and high (69–95). The validation process was carried out by three expert judges in the field, and a pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability score of 0.711, thus indicating that the instrument was reliable.

The second variable was measured using a questionnaire titled "school dropout," comprising 24 items. The rating scale applied was: low (24–56), medium (56–88), and high (88–120). The indicators included: parenting methods, family cohesion, family environment, lack of resources, low socioeconomic background, influence of educational planning, teaching methodology, and implementation of changes aimed at improving the learning process. This second instrument was also validated by three expert judges, and the pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.852, confirming its reliability. Both instruments were adapted from previous studies on educational service and school dropout (Brio & Emérita, 2021). No instrument was used for collecting general data.

Finally, the study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the institution where the research was conducted.

Data collection techniques and procedures

The technique used was a survey, which allowed for the collection of data from a specific group or sample on a particular topic (Arias, 2016). The data were collected at the institution after obtaining prior authorization from the school principal. Each questionnaire took approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete. Students were consulted beforehand through an informed consent process, which allowed the researchers to provide them with orientation about the study before filling out the questionnaire. The collected data were processed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tabular format.

Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out using both descriptive and inferential statistics. First, data were presented through frequency distribution tables and figures. Then, inferential statistics were used to test the hypothesis. Data processing was conducted using SPSS software, version 25, which allowed for a structured presentation of the data in tables for the respective analysis of the study variables and their dimensions.

Ethical considerations

The study was conducted in adherence to ethical standards, with careful consideration given to scientific integrity, including respect, responsibility, impartiality, and fairness. Student participation was voluntary, and the anonymity of their responses was guaranteed.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results for the variable "educational service." The majority of participants, 63.86% (106), perceived a high level of service, while a minority, 33.73% (56), perceived a medium level, and only 2.41% (4) perceived a low level. Regarding the dimensions, similar results were observed. For the tangible elements dimension, 46.39% (77) of students perceived a high

Table 1
Educational service among students of the "Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores" CEBA, Nueva Cajamarca district, 2024

Variable and dimensions	n = 166	
	fi	%
Educational service		
Low	4	2,41
Medium	56	33,73
High	106	63,86
Dimensión elementos tangibles		
Low	14	8,43
Medium	75	45,18
High	77	46,39
Dimensión fiabilidad		
Low	4	2,41
Medium	83	50,00
High	79	47,59
Dimensión capacidad de respuesta		
Low	28	16,87
Medium	60	36,14
High	78	46,99
Safety and empathy dimension		
Low	12	7,23
Medium	53	31,93
High	101	60,84

Table 2
School dropout among students of "Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores" CEBA, Nueva Cajamarca district, 2024

Variable and dimensions School dropout	n = 166	
	fi	%
Low	11	6,63
Medium	146	87,95
High	9	5,42
Family condition dimension		
Low	27	16,27
Medium	129	77,71
High	10	6,02
Economic condition dimension		
Low	45	27,11
Medium	107	64,46
High	14	8,43
Pedagogy dimension		
Low	23	13,86
Medium	133	80,12
High	10	6,02

level, 45.18% (75) a medium level, and 8.43% (14) a low level. In the reliability dimension, the majority remained at a medium level, 50% (83); at a high level, 47.59% (79); and only 2.41% (4) at a low level. In the responsiveness dimension, most students were considered to be at a high level, 46.99% (78), a medium level, 36.14% (60), and a low level, 16.87% (28). For the safety and empathy dimension, 60.84% (101) reached a high level, 31.93% (53) a medium level, and only 7.23% (12) were at a low level. These results indicate that most students had a positive perception of the educational service provided through their learning activities. Nonetheless, the

Table 4
Relationship between "educational service" and the dimensions of "school dropout" among students in the sample

Variables	School dropout	
	Spearman-Rho	p-value
Educational service	-0.192	0.013
Tangible elements dimension	-0.230	0.003
Reliability dimension	-0.103	0.186
Responsiveness dimension	-0.131	0.091
Safety and empathy dimension	-0.248	0.001

Table 3
Verification of the normal distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for "educational service" and "school dropout", as well as their respective dimensions

Variables and dimensions	Statistic	p-value
Educational service	0.080	0.011*
Tangible elements dimension	0.105	0.000
Reliability dimension	0.117	0.000*
Responsiveness dimension	0.167	0.000*
Safety and empathy dimension	0.111	0.000*
School dropout	0.107	0.000*
Family condition dimension	0.119	0.000*
Economic condition dimension	0.134	0.000*
Pedagogy dimension	0.121	0.000*

existence of students reporting areas needing attention was also evident.

Table 2 shows the results for the variable "school dropout." A large majority of students, 87.95% (146), reported the presence of school dropout, which may be due to different factors. Regarding the dimensions, for family condition, 77.71% (129) of students fell within a medium dropout rate, possibly due to socioeconomic, emotional, and psychological factors; 16.27% (27) at a low level, and only 6.02% (10) at a high level. In the economic condition dimension, the majority of students—64.46% (107)—showed a medium level of dropout, likely due to financial difficulties. Regarding the pedagogy dimension, the vast majority, 80.12% (133), expressed the impression that high-quality teaching and learning processes are necessary.

Inferential statistics were used for hypothesis testing. Initially, the normality of the data was analyzed (n = 166), using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (see Table 3). The p-values for the variables and their dimensions were all below 0.05, indicating non-normal distribution of the data; consequently, Spearman's correlation was used as a non-parametric test.

In Table 4, the results on the relationship between "educational service" and "school dropout" are presented. A significant negative correlation was found between the two variables. However, in the case of the reliability dimension, the correlation was not significant, with a p-value of 0.186 (> 0.05). In contrast, the remaining dimensions showed statistically significant relationships.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study highlight the importance of educational services in an Alternative Basic Education Center, as they enable students to complete their secondary education. Moreover, these services support the development of vocational and entrepreneurial skills, which are essential for pursuing technical or higher education. As Reyes (2018) states, services are considered reliable when they are delivered correctly and meet the expectations of the client—that is, the student, the family, and the community. Therefore, the components of good service also include interest and visual aspects; in other words, detailed attention and good service (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004).

This study aimed to establish the general objective of determining the relationship between educational services and school dropout. The results suggest a statistically significant yet weak negative correlation, hence supporting the research hypothesis and rejecting the null hypothesis. These findings are consistent with the studies by Barrios and Barrios (2022), who assert that teaching quality is related to school dropout. Ramos (2022) also emphasizes that teacher performance and service quality are crucial, as well-trained teachers are able to deliver high-quality instruction. These results suggest significant implications, but both studies stress the need to improve educational services to reduce dropout rates. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent students from abandoning school. According to theoretical foundations, Viñas (2010) affirms that providing educational services requires trained, guided, and evaluated teachers in order to improve education. Moreover, for a service to be considered high quality, each institution must clearly define its objectives and goals. Based on the results, the relationship is perceived as moderate.

The analysis of the educational service outcomes at the CEBA shows that the majority of students value the educational services, with many reaching high levels of satisfaction. Nevertheless, there are also results indicating a medium level, where most students drop out due to various factors. The findings further emphasize the pedagogical environment, followed by family and economic factors. Ramírez (2010) and Arauco et al. (2020) argue that beyond these, there are also internal and external factors, ranging from social environment to personal context.

Regarding the relationship between the variables “educational service” and “school dropout”, the results reveal a significant correlation among the dimensions

of “tangible elements”, “responsiveness”, and “safety and empathy”, with the exception of the “reliability” dimension. These findings suggest that the presence of quality educational services is associated with lower school dropout rates at the CEBA. Along the same lines, Ramos (2022) notes that school absenteeism is linked to work-related factors, such as incompatible schedules. Similarly, Avilés (2022) asserts that the variables quality service and student satisfaction are significantly related. He also found significant relationships among the dimensions of infrastructure, pedagogical skills, respectful treatment, and teaching-learning processes. These results demonstrate that several factors influence students’ school attendance. Nonetheless, the study shows that the most impactful factor contributing to school dropout is pedagogy, followed by family factors.

In agreement with this, Salce (2020) indicates that low teacher performance due to lack of training or professional development reinforces the tendency for students to drop out. Nonetheless, Najarro and Maroto (2024) argue that didactic experiences in adult education are essential, as they contribute to improving teaching and learning processes.

Therefore, the findings of this study reveal that the educational services provided to students at the “Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores” CEBA offer, to some extent, opportunities for learners of different ages to continue their studies and successfully complete an important stage of their education, enabling them to pursue higher education—an outcome that reflects a strong spirit of perseverance.

Nevertheless, several limitations were identified, such as economic and family issues, and difficulty in accessing information for background research. These and other constraints hinder students’ ability to continue and complete their studies. Under this perspective, greater attention from educational authorities is required to prevent school dropout and frustration during the final stage of education.

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained in this study demonstrate a significant relationship between educational service and school dropout. Likewise, the majority of students at the “Manuel Fidencio Hidalgo Flores” CEBA held positive views of the educational services provided, although it is important to note that the highest rates of absenteeism or school dropout were associated with pedagogical factors. The findings reveal that,

in order to ensure the provision of high-quality educational services, several factors are required: well-trained teachers, adequate infrastructure, access to technology, nutrition services, health services, and recreational opportunities. Additionally, there is a need for commitment from authorities, such as the Ministry of Education, regional and local governments. Teachers therefore have an ethical responsibility to engage in ongoing professional development, ensuring that students achieve meaningful and lasting learning outcomes.

Recommendation

It is recommended that school principals carry out studies or research on educational service and school dropout in order to address the needs of vulnerable groups, reduce school abandonment, and improve educational quality. Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers review the present study to gain greater insight and empowerment in understanding and improving the services offered to students. Conducting such research will allow for the identification of the causes of school dropout and the formulation of effective strategies to help students continue their education.

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Authorship contribution

MEMS: Conceptualization, investigation and project administration.
LMDH: Results analysis, discussion, and final review of the manuscript.
HJMN: Methodology and formal analysis.
JHMD: Validation, supervision and writing - original draft.

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