

# The Motivational Factors of Choice of Distance Education: a Approach of a Presential Suport Pole of a Higher Education Institution

## *Os Fatores Motivacionais de Escolha do Ensino a Distância: uma Abordagem sobre um Polo de Apoio Presencial de uma Instituição de Ensino Superior*

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### Abstract

The factors that motivate students in teaching in distance learning have been widely debated in the education. In this context, the present article approaches the theme with regard to motivational factors in the perception of students of a classroom support pole of a distance learning university, with the purpose of identifying the demographic profile and motivational factors that led these students to choose this type of teaching, taking into account the teaching institution and the classroom support center. Methodologically, an exploratory, descriptive and quantitative research was carried out, using data collection through the application of a questionnaire to students, using the Likert scale as answer options, later analyzed using statistical methods and characterized the sample with the crossing of the information. The results indicate that the students of the face-to-face support center, have demographic characteristics of a young and working-age sample, motivated by distance learning due to the flexibility of their schedules, the values of the courses and the opportunity for professional promotion in the area that act. Thus, it is concluded that the main motivational factor for choosing distance learning are personal decisions that are closely linked to time and governed by new trends in the labor market.

**Keywords:** Distance learning. Face-to-face centers. Students. Motivational factors.



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## **Os Fatores Motivacionais de Escolha do Ensino a Distância: uma Abordagem sobre um Polo de Apoio Presencial de uma Instituição de Ensino Superior**

### *Resumo*

*Os fatores que motivam o estudante no ensino na modalidade a distância (EaD) vêm sendo amplamente debatidos na Educação. Nesse contexto, o presente artigo aborda a temática no que se refere aos fatores motivacionais na percepção dos estudantes de um polo de apoio presencial de uma universidade de ensino a distância, com o propósito de identificar o perfil demográfico e os fatores motivacionais que levaram esses alunos a optar por essa modalidade de ensino, levando-se em consideração a instituição de ensino e o polo de apoio presencial. Metodologicamente, realizou-se uma pesquisa exploratória, descritiva e quantitativa, utilizando-se da coleta de dados por meio da aplicação de um questionário aos estudantes, utilizando-se da escala Likert como opções de respostas, posteriormente analisadas com a utilização de métodos estatísticos que caracterizou a amostra com o cruzamento das informações. Os resultados apontam que os estudantes do polo de apoio presencial possuem as características demográficas de uma amostra jovem e em idade laboral, motivados pelo ensino a distância devido à flexibilidade de seus horários, os valores dos cursos e a oportunidade de promoção profissional na área em que atuam. Dessa forma, conclui-se que o principal fator motivacional para a escolha do ensino a distância são decisões pessoais que estão intimamente ligadas ao tempo e regidas pelas novas tendências do mercado de trabalho.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Ensino a distância. Polos presenciais. Estudantes. Fatores motivacionais.*

## 1. Introduction

Distance learning (Distance Learning) emerges as a way to provide new paths and pedagogical experiences. The context of the virtual classroom assumes a new design of space and time, where virtual learning environments (VLE) emerge able to welcome different students, modifying the dissemination of knowledge and learning (MOLEIRINHO; MALHEIRO; MORGADO, 2013). In view of these changes, the modality of distance learning – with its conception of more open teaching – is offered as an innovation in terms of Education, due to characteristics such as the flexibility of its programs, the agility of its administrative mechanisms and, fundamentally, the emphasis on students' autonomy in relation to the choice of places and times of study (RUSSO, 2016).

Taking this process into account, the demands of the borderless economy brought radical changes in social coexistence, creating new paradigms to adjust to the labor market. That's where the change in the general audience of graduations comes from. Today, those who had already interrupted their studies can return to the teaching process and, in many cases, this return has become imperative, in order to maintain the jobs due to the technological transformations evidenced. Thus, a good portion of this public ends up opting for distance learning (ROLIM; SCARAMUZZA, 2016). Therefore, understanding the importance of distance learning helps in understanding the relationships between the educational processes and the labor market.

Despite the facilities presented by the Distance Learning, this is not enough to make institutions and support centers in person (PAPs) attractive. The need to evaluate the motivational factors of these students is part of the strategies for attracting new students. In this context, the object of analysis of this research are the students of a face-to-face support center (PAP), from a university located in a city in the Northwest region of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. The center of face-to-face support is the place duly accredited by the Ministry of Education, proper for the decentralized development of pedagogical and administrative activities related to distance courses and programs. It is in the pole that the student has the activities of face-to-face tutoring, library, laboratories, evaluations (exams, exams, etc.). Therefore, the PAP makes possible an interaction between the university, which is geographically distant, and the student.

Based on these premises, it is necessary to research, evaluating students in the light of consumer behavior, since they are consumers of PAP services and are distributed among undergraduate and graduate courses. Consumer behavior is a complex theme and an interdisciplinary area that involves concepts and methodological tools from different areas of knowledge, such as psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, semiotics, demography and history (TEIXEIRA, 2010). According to McCarthy and Perreault (1997), many variables influence the consumer's purchasing behavior and are different for each product and/or service and target market. Thus, it is necessary to analyze the main factors that directly influence consumer behavior, such as cultural, social, personal, psychological factors (MOURA, 2017) and market or economic factors.

In view of these considerations, it was intended to investigate the motivational factors of teaching choice in the DL modality of students from a face-to-face support center of a university that offers undergraduate and graduate Studies, with a view to generating contributions to the institution in supporting the process of defining strategies that can enhance the maintenance of students, as well as attracting new students, with the focus of contributing to the Distance and teaching improvements. The article is structured with the theoretical precepts that supported the research, the methodology of the research adopted, the results obtained and, finally, the final considerations of the work.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature that supports the argumentation of this article is organized into two main topics: 2.1 the basic assumptions of distance learning: addressing the use of technologies and changes in the labor market; 2.2 the motivational factors of students who opt for DL: synthesizing the motivational factors of the students.

### 2.1. The basic assumptions of distance learning

Distance learning, as we see today, began to draw in the 1980s, with the emergence of the microcomputer, bringing significant transformations in learning. The applicability of the computer has become as multiple as it is varied, moving through different areas. Over the last three decades, it is easy to perceive the transformations in the concepts of learning, due to the diligence of the social aspects disseminated by computers and that have driven globalization, technologically accelerating human communication (ROLIM; SCARAMUZZA, 2016). Thus, the need to be present or not is linked to the student's social need to want to learn more, to solve their doubts and to position themselves before knowledge (RICARDO, 2019). The great challenge was to evolve from the pedagogical methodologies used, regardless of the technologies that supported them, building educational perspectives originated by social contexts (MOLEIRINHO; MALHEIRO; MORGADO, 2013). Social contexts are mainly related to the labor market, industrialization and behavior of individuals.

Thus, when viewed from the perspective of behavior, the market demands influenced and directed private universities to more competitive modalities, where students are maintainers of these institutions,

making the student a consumer, because, at the same time that he consumes a service, consumes the products included in this service, which makes the educational environment provide a double behavior of the consumer. One of them is when the student has his/her wishes and desires fulfilled without prejudice to his/her learning and a course consuming a basic education service; and the other behavior is when the student enjoys library, secretariat, infrastructure, consuming an additional education service (SCHINAIDER; FAGUNDES; SCHINAIDER, 2016). And this statement becomes the foundation, both for Teaching And for face-to-face teaching.

Naturally, taking into account the behavior of individuals, distance learning gained prominence in relation to face-to-face teaching; the decentralized transmission of knowledge provides a new experience to students and teachers, and is able to reach a large audience, while maintaining low-cost operations (ROLIM; SCARAMUZZA, 2016), which makes the tuition of these universities accessible to private universities in person. Thus, researchers believe that distance learning presents a valid answer to a more equitable higher education approach, where everyone can, according to their motivations and needs, continue their studies, thus contributing to their own sense of independence, integration and active participation in social life (MOLEIRINHO; MALHEIRO; MORGADO, 2013), even though social relations are on the margins of this type of teaching, being flexibility and optimization of time its main precepts in the justification of reaching a significant number of students.

DL numbers have been increasing since its inception. According to the 2019 Census of Higher Education, there was a significant increase in distance (18%) in relation to the face-to-face modality (2%) (INEP, 2019). A relevant data of the research is the indicator that the age group of students of distance learning courses is higher than that of students of face-to-face courses. While in face-to-face courses the average age is 26 years, in the distance courses she is 33 years. The percentage of the population with higher education by age group is 16% up to 34 years and 11% up to 64 years. This makes it clear that distance learning has become a more relevant opportunity than face-to-face courses for older people (ROLIM; SCARAMUZZA, 2016). Another census data is the percentages of gender participation in distance learning (INEP, 2018). Women represent 12% of higher education students and men 11%. These numbers are justified, because in the first years of the modality in higher education, it was basically focused on the training of professionals related to the areas of Education, a job occupied predominantly by women, but it is already possible to notice an expansion of the areas of concentration of the courses, as is the case of the areas of engineering (ASSUMPÇÃO; Hamada; CASTRO, 2018), predominantly occupied by men in their field of activity.

## 2.2. The motivational factors of students who opt for DL

In addition to demographic characteristics, the student who studies at DL has disciplinary characteristics and self-management of their studies in order to fulfill the pedagogical actions required by the courses, which can be considered as important motivational factors. Motivational factors form a general model of behavior in which external (culture, demographic, family, etc.) and internal (perception, learning, personality, emotions, attitudes, etc.) influences that lead to the formation of a self-image and lifestyle (HAWKINS; MOTHERSBAUGH; BEST, 2007). The main external influence is culture, because by growing up in a society, human beings acquire basic values, perceptions, desires and behaviors - which, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2007), guide our consumption habits and preferences throughout life. The main internal influence is learning. Learning is the central aspect of the psychological factor of motivation; for this reason, pedagogical actions always move their efforts to teach something.

The process presents several factors, such as individual differences, environmental influences and psychological indicators, which can affect behavior (ENGEL; blackwell; MINIARD, 2013), and are the same when inserted in the academic environment. It is a process that offers tangible goods; an example of this is through teaching materials. According to Rolim and Scaramuzza (2016), the materials should offer dynamic formative possibilities, capable of expanding the student's freedom to experiment, test and

re-elaborate knowledge, imprinting concrete meaning in the possible applications of the competencies to be achieved, thus generating perceptions and motivational mechanisms. What goes according to what Kotler and Keller (2006) claim, that the perception of motivation depends on physical stimuli and the relationship of these stimuli with the environment and the internal conditions of the person, so that he receives these influences positively, generating a definitive choice.

Thus, studies that evidence these influences show that the flexibility provided by the DL modality was the main reason for the choice, because it favors the reconciliation between studies and the student's routine (SCHLIKMANN et al., 2008). Another factor pointed out by Souza's studies (2012) found that the value of tuition has a strong influence on the option of the teaching modality. In other studies, Sun et al. (2008) state that the virtual learning environment offered by the DL was cited by most university students as motivation to study in this modality. This shows that the student, in his/her role as a consumer, is always looking in the market for something that meets their needs and desires (BINOTTO et al., 2014) and making learning.

Other factors that are motivated by students are convenience and ease for those who live far from large urban centers and have an extensive work scale. Peters (1989) studies suggest that distance learning is a product of industrial and consumer society. The author compared distance learning with industrial production, identifying common characteristics and stating that the success of this type of teaching is explained by values similar to those of the consumer society, where "time is money" and a great proportion of well-being.

Therefore, when these students are effective as consumers, one can analyze them for the same purchasing motivations, in a market that grows sharply in the country, in which the offer of services and products makes universities competing with each other, and, as in any company, the interest is the generation of profit. In sum, this behavior, according to Schiffman and Kanuk (2000), is influenced by five factors: marketing, cultural, social, personal and psychological.

### 3. Methodology

The research was carried out through an exploratory approach and focuses on a descriptive methodology, supported by the data obtained in a qualitative (bibliography) and quantitative (survey) research, focusing on a field study, which constitutes a provocative instance of the study of mediations that concentrate the possibility of explaining concrete reality (FRANCO, 1990). For this reason, it has as natural environment and direct source of data the Face Support Center of a distance institution located in the Northwest region of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Exploratory research is those that seek a proximity to the reality of the object studied and, according to Berni and Fernandes (2012), are carried out from the experiences by free observation of phenomena to reach general propositions, which is called inductive or empiricism.

On the other hand, descriptive research, according to Gil (1996), aims to describe a given population or phenomenon or establish relationships between variables. Data collection was based on a quantitative research, in which the researcher observes the phenomenon from the outside, without engaging with the research object. It was done making use of objective and tangible variables in a deductive way with no degree of subjectivity (VERGARA, 2009). The resource used was the survey, or survey, which has as characteristic the interest of producing quantitative descriptions of a population, making use of a predefined instrument (SOARES; ARDIGÓ; MARCOS FILHO, 2017). This type of questionnaire is based on an interrogation, and for this research, questions were asked about their demographic data and their behavior as a student, choice of course and involvement with the institution, from the point of view of their motivations as consumers of the products and services offered.

Before the application of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with three students belonging to the same sample of the research. The objective was to evaluate functional aspects, such as pertinence, organization, clarity of issues, in order to correct and improve any problems before definitive application (IRAOSI, 2006). After the pilot test, about 218 questionnaires were applied, and only 112 returned answered. Of these, 11 were cancelled because they were not filled out correctly and 101 were considered valid. The research period was from July 6, 2019 to September 23, 2019. To measure the students' motivations, the scale used was Likert, which, according to Malhorta (2001), is considered a scale of measurement with five categories of answers, ranging from totally disagree to totally agree, requiring the interviewees to indicate a degree of agreement, with a series of statements related to stimulus objects. Thus, the questionnaire was structured aiming at standardization in data collection. Data analysis was performed with the help of statistical software. The analysis procedures used were: frequency distribution and analysis of means. The SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Science) method was used to evaluate contrasts. The tables inserted in the body of the text were produced from the data researched, followed by the crossing of these to achieve the results and provide the students of the institution with a typology regarding demographic data and their predominance, profiling them and the motivational factors involved in the process of choosing distance learning.

#### 4. The Institution and Sample Characterization

Since 2000, the institution has been active in private higher education, being one of the pioneers in distance learning, serving students in more than 500 face-to-face support centers throughout the country. According to the Quality References for Distance Higher Education, in the PAP are carried out face-to-face activities, provided for by law. Thus, the PAP is the gateway for students to the institution. When it characterizes these students, the institution is able to invest in pedagogical processes for the collection of new enrollments and expansion of its business.

The age of the interviewees was between 30 and 49 years, obtaining a representativeness of 59%, characteristic of a relatively adult sample and working age. The profile of this student is that of those who usually evaluate the flexibility of the DL course itself, because, as he has a job, the distance course facilitates the progress of his teaching (SCHINAIDER; FAGUNDES; SCHINAIDER, 2016) without harming their work activities. Regarding gender, the male represented 57%, characterizing a more representative male sample in the PAP. Regarding marital status, 48% of the sample reported being single. Regarding occupation, 43% said they were employees of private companies, which characterizes that more than half of the students work and have income. And as for income, 71% answered they had an income of up to 3 minimum wages, justifying the demand for affordable prices.

According to data from the Technical Summary of the Census of Higher Education (INEP, 2014), female participation in higher education exceeds that of men. In distance learning courses, female participation is even higher (ASSUMPÇÃO; Hamada; CASTRO, 2018). Other census data show that the majority of distance learning students are people who have the so-called "accumulated life experience", explained by Peters (1989) as married people responsible for the support of the family. For the author, teaching needed to adjust to the postmodern and post-industrial era. These changes appeared in the sectors of society with more individualized technologies, more decentralized decision-making and personal values focused on quality of life, achievement, learning and interdependence. However, in pap, most students differ from this data and lifestyle characteristics - which demonstrate the importance of drawing this student profile and dedicating themselves to it to understand their needs and expectations (GONÇALVES, 2007).

The data regarding the characterization of the sample are described in Table 1.



**Table 1:** Sample Characteristics

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
Under 18 years old	1	1,00%
Between 18 and 29 years old	36	35,60%
Between 30 and 49 years old	60	59,40%
Between 50 and 69 years old	4	4,00%
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	43	42,60%
Male	58	57,40%
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	49	48,50%
Married	41	40,60%
Other	9	8,90%
Stable union	2	2,00%
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	4	4,00%
Student	9	8,90%
Civil servant	35	34,70%
Private company employee	43	42,60%
Businessman	3	3,00%
As	7	6,90%
Income (minimum wages)	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 3 salaries	72	71,30%
Between 4 and 6 salaries	23	22,80%
Between 7 and 9 salaries	5	5,00%
Between 10 and 15 salaries	1	1,00%

Source: Survey data, 2019.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2007), behaviors are influenced by different factors, whether cultural, social, personal, psychological or marketing. Because they are very broad factors, they are easily studied together. Because of this, it is possible to cross-reference the data with the age group of the respondents and the motivations that led them to study in the AAD modality. The evaluation was in line with the data collected in the demographic profile. Since the respondents are between 30 and 49 years old and work in private companies, the vast majority of answers (93) about their motivations present the flexibility of time, followed by the values of the courses, with 74 answers, which also characterizes the sample that has an income of 1 to 3 salaries. The crossing also demonstrates the promotion and professional rise with 35 responses, corroborating the interest of students in qualifying for the job market.

Table 2 shows the crossing of the data in relation to motivational factors and the age group of the respondents.

**Table 2:** Motivational factors x Age group

Motivational Factors	Age group				Total
	<18	18- 29	30 - 49	50 - 69	
Schedule Flexibility	1	34	54	4	<b>93</b>
Course values	1	29	42	2	<b>74</b>
Professional promotion	0	12	21	2	<b>35</b>
Course duration	1	10	18	3	<b>32</b>
Professional achievement	0	14	18	0	<b>32</b>
Personal fulfillment	0	11	19	1	<b>31</b>
Time	0	8	15	0	<b>23</b>
Prestige of the Institution	0	7	13	1	<b>21</b>
PAP Location	0	5	13	1	<b>19</b>
Complete studies	1	4	9	0	<b>14</b>
Enjoy studying alone	0	7	4	2	<b>13</b>
Money	0	2	5	0	<b>7</b>
Children/Family	0	1	6	0	<b>7</b>
Relationships within the Institution	0	0	3	0	<b>3</b>
Simplicity of the place	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Meet new people	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

Source: Survey data, 2019.

Knowing who the PAP student is, what he thinks, what he believes, what his judgments about himself and others, what his position on the social scale, age, income, lifestyle, as well as his reaction to the stimuli present at the time of the decision to take the course, are fundamental in the incessant search for the understanding of these students. PAP students make it clear that their motivations are linked to the pressures of modern society, especially work relationships. It is in this context that the modality of Teaching DL, with its flexibility, becomes the key piece that leads to motivational factors, stimulating the dissemination of knowledge.

## 4.1. Motivational factors influencing PAP students

### 4.1.1. Personal factors

Personal factors are linked to the moments and experiences in which people integrate and that culminate in interfering in their habits and decisions (MOURA, 2017). Therefore, when most students declared themselves single, aged over 30 years, they demonstrated that the traditional family composed of husband, wife and two children is present in a much smaller percentage of homes than in the past. Additionally, life cycle stages are more important for the analysis of these motivations. These internships are part of personal factors, since they are intrinsically linked to personality, self-image, lifestyle and value (TEIXEIRA, 2010). Thus, the students received a set of statements about the choice of the course.

Data analysis revealed that a large part of the students (43%) totally agreed with the statement that it was his dream to study the chosen course, which involves a great deal of personal motivation. A percentage of 47% totally agreed that the choice of the course was because they were already working in the area.



42% of students fully agreed that they want to graduate in the area of the chosen course, to have a better salary. A percentage of 37% totally disagreed with the statement that they are not yet sure if they will work in the area of the chosen course. 43% of the students totally disagreed with the statement that they already have another training in the area of the chosen course. The predominant mean in the analysis is that 35% of the sample totally agreed with the statements presented.

Table 3 represents the poll numbers and their percentages.

**Table 3:** Students' Personal Factors

As for the course you chose to attend	Totally Disagree	Partially Disagree	Indifferent	Partially Agree	Totally Agree
It was my dream to study about this course	7,92%	3,96%	15,84%	28,71%	43,56%
I chose this course because I work in the area	13,86%	3,96%	10,89%	23,76%	47,52%
I want to graduate in the area to get better salary	9,90%	6,93%	14,85%	25,74%	42,57%
I'm still not sure I'm going to work in the area.	36,63%	16,83%	14,85%	18,81%	12,87%
I already have another background in the area	43,56%	5,94%	8,91%	12,87%	28,71%
<b>Average</b>	<b>22,38%</b>	<b>7,52%</b>	<b>13,07%</b>	<b>21,98%</b>	<b>35,05%</b>

Source: Survey data, 2019.

Which, in a result, meets the thought that the desired final state is motivated by a goal? Objectives are the results sought by motivated behavior. All behavior is goal-oriented (SCHIFFMAN; KANUK, 2000). Therefore, when students fully agree that "it was my dream to study about this course", they totally disagree that "I'm still not sure if I'm going to work in the area", demonstrating that the initial motivation needs to correspond with a final goal to be accepted.

#### 4.1.2. Psychological factors

For Kotler and Keller (2006), the psychological factors are: motivation, learning, beliefs, attitudes and perception. The main aspect of this factor is learning, which influences the individual's behavior. Learning consists of changes in a person's behavior, resulting from experience. Much of human behavior is learned. Learning theorists believe that it is born from the interaction between impulses, stimuli, signals, responses and reinforcements. The dedication to studies as a motivational factor is related to these interactions. As for dedication or non-dedication to studies, students demonstrate their attitudes. Attitudes are learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects consistently favorably or unfavorably (SHETH, 2001), and thus change their behavior.

Of the students interviewed, 30% partially agreed that they study daily for at least 1 hour. 41% of students partially agreed that they study on weekends, holidays or days off. More than 50% of students totally disagreed that they study only for presentations or when they go to the polo. They totally disagreed, 45% of the students with the statement that they study only for the face-to-face exams. And 50% of students totally disagreed that they study only when doing online assessments. The predominant average was 35%, in which the sample totally disagreed with the statements, which demonstrates that the students dedicate themselves to the proposed activities, not only aiming at being approved, but affecting their learning.

Table 4 represents all data in percentages, as well as their determining averages.

**Table 4:** Psychological factors of students

As for your dedication to studies	Totally Disagree	Partially Disagree	Indifferent	Partially Agree	Totally Agree
I study daily at least one hour a day	21,78%	17,82%	13,86%	29,70%	16,83%
Study on weekends, holidays or days off	6,93%	10,89%	12,87%	41,58%	27,72%
I study only for presentations or when I go to the pole	50,50%	11,88%	15,84%	15,84%	5,94%
Study only for face-to-face tests	45,54%	13,86%	10,89%	19,80%	9,90%
Study only when doing online assessments	50,50%	14,85%	9,90%	16,83%	7,92%
<b>Average</b>	<b>35,05%</b>	<b>13,86%</b>	<b>12,67%</b>	<b>24,75%</b>	<b>13,66%</b>

Source: Survey data, 2019.

Learning is only effective through action (i.e., dedication or not to studies). So when people act, they learn. Learning, for Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (2013), is the action by which experience results in changes in knowledge and behavior.

#### 4.1.3. Market factors

With the advancement of means of transport and new technologies, the student wants to establish exchanges and relationships at the time that suits him and where he wishes (TEIXEIRA, 2010). This globalized world approach is part of the market factors: anything external to the student and influences their motivational state needs to be analyzed hard. Thus, external difficulties, such as market factors, were addressed as requirements for students to continue their studies. External influences greatly determine the behavior of students, influencing their motivations, choices and decisions (COSTA et al., 2010).

Within the statement group, 56% of the students totally disagreed that the shift to the PAP would be an external difficulty. More than 61% also strongly disagreed with the fact that access to the computer or internet was an external difficulty. Some 37% strongly disagreed that the financial situation would be an external difficulty. 30%, with the fact that their working hours would be in the group of external difficulties. And 54% totally disagreed that the difficulty in adapting to the AVA would be an external difficulty. The predominant mean in these statements was that 48% of the sample totally disagreed with the statements proposed as factors of external difficulties, which shows that the students identified that the PAP is close to their homes and that they have technological resources to study.

Table 5 represents all data in percentages, as well as their determining means.

**Table 5:** Student market factors

	Totally Disagree	Partially Disagree	Indifferent	Partially Agree	Totally Agree
As for the external difficulties you face in staying studying	56,44%	10,89%	16,83%	9,90%	5,94%
Displacement to the center of face-to-face support	61,39%	6,93%	14,85%	9,90%	6,93%
Access to the computer or the internet	36,63%	15,84%	19,80%	19,80%	7,92%
Financial	29,70%	16,83%	15,84%	20,79%	16,83%
Working hours	54,46%	17,82%	13,86%	8,91%	4,95%
Difficulty with AVA	47,72%	13,66%	16,24%	13,86%	8,51%

Source: Survey data, 2019.

The market factor is an intrinsic factor of the environment in which the student is inserted. According to Steenkamp (1993, p. 402), this factor has sociocultural and economic issues as characteristics. Therefore, its analysis becomes fundamental, since the student cannot consume the PAP services without the displacement to the same or without the resources of information and communication technologies.

#### 4.1.6. Social factors

According to Kotler (1998), the social factor exerts the broadest and deepest influence on people, as they are deeply driven by their reference groups, which exposes them to new behaviors and lifestyles. Groups make pressures that can affect choices. The groups are also influenced by aspiration or ascension groups (KOTLER; KELLER, 2006) that are related to the personal ambitions of each individual. Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) affirm that the human being has needs that motivate him, such as self-realization, esteem, safety and physiological, as well as the perception and attitudes in the most diverse behaviors, all related to social interactions. The students were analyzed in how the social factors motivated their choice of distance learning.

The scale had a set of 14 statements; the 3 statements that obtained the highest number of answers were: 57% of the students totally agreed that they chose the EaD because they would like to “study in a way that I manage my time”. Already 52% totally agreed that flexibility is the main factor. Of the students who answered, 48% totally agreed that the “possibility of defining routines and study goals” is a personal factor of choice for THE. The predominant average in this set of statements was 35% to totally agree, which is in line with the that the personal factors related to flexibility motivate students much more than reference groups or pressure in choosing Distance Learning. This result is closely linked to labor relations and modern consumer society.

Table 6 represents the data in percentages, as well as their determining means.

**Table 6:** Students' Social Factors

What motivates you to study in DL mode	Totally Disagree	Partially Disagree	Indifferent	Partially Agree	Totally Agree
It was my personal dream	30,69%	9,90%	23,76%	18,81%	6,83%
Family influence	46,53%	4,95%	25,74%	14,85%	7,92%
Work issues	10,89%	2,97%	8,91%	36,63%	40,59%
I want a better salary	10,89%	4,95%	15,84%	25,74%	42,57%
I look for a stable career	7,92%	4,95%	18,81%	28,71%	39,60%
Improve communication and writing	15,84%	4,95%	23,76%	29,70%	25,74%
New lifestyle	14,85%	2,97%	22,77%	31,68%	27,72%
Flexibility	3,96%	2,97%	11,88%	28,71%	52,48%
Willingness to learn in virtual environment	12,87%	2,97%	23,76%	39,60%	20,79%
Possibility of self-learning	5,94%	1,98%	9,90%	48,51%	33,66%
Study in a way that I manage my time	1,98%	0,99%	5,94%	33,66%	57,43%
Manage my stress level	11,88%	3,96%	17,82%	38,61%	27,72%
Possibility to define my routines and study goals	2,97%	0,99%	8,91%	38,61%	48,51%
Responsibility	1,98%	1,98%	14,85%	35,64%	45,54%
<b>Average</b>	<b>12,80%</b>	<b>3,68%</b>	<b>16,62%</b>	<b>32,10%</b>	<b>34,80%</b>

Source: Sourvey data, 2019.

Affiliation and social interaction represent, perhaps, the most differentiating traits of the human condition, and the group constitutes the basis of all life in society (KARSAKLIAN, 2008). Although the statements present questions of personal organization, they connect with the groups. Students of the DL modality are not isolated from their relationships and influences, and when motivated by goals, time, responsibility and even stress, they are influenced by interactions imposed by society, and society is nothing more than the association of people who relate to each other.

#### 4.1.7. Cultural factors

Study habits have changed substantially in recent decades with the advancement of the Internet, forming a new culture. The influence of culture on human acts is now widely recognized, and most advanced approaches to behavior integrate, in one way or another, the cultural factor (TEIXEIRA, 2010). In this case, an analysis of contemporary cultural factors was used to analyze the students. In the statement of lack of support in the company where I work, 41% of the students totally disagreed. When asked about the statement of lack of ability to use THE as a cultural factor, 57% of the students totally disagreed. Regarding economic and financial difficulties, 39% of the students totally disagreed. They also totally disagreed that lack of time would be a factor in modern culture, 30% of students. On the other, 44% of the students totally disagreed that the feeling of isolation during the course is a cultural factor for THE. The lack of face-to-face moments of debate with colleagues generated 35% of the students' responses who totally disagreed with this statement.

Thus, 41% of pap students totally disagreed with the group of statements about the factors to study in THE and PAP. These results demonstrate that THE is a system of values that express a new cultural interaction and its desired and inserted mode of functioning in daily life (TEIXEIRA, 2010).

Table 7 represents all sample data in percentage, as well as their predominant means.

**Table 7:** Cultural factors of students

What discourages you from studying in DL mode	Totally Disagree	Partially Disagree	Indifferent	Partially Agree	Totally Agree
Lack of support in the company where I work	41,58%	7,92%	29,70%	11,88%	8,91%
Lack of ability to use AVA	57,43%	10,89%	21,78%	5,94%	3,96%
Economic and financial difficulties	38,61%	13,86%	23,76%	13,86%	9,90%
Lack of time	29,70%	14,85%	15,84%	20,79%	18,81%
Feeling of isolation during the course	44,55%	10,89%	22,77%	10,89%	10,89%
Lack of face-to-face moments of discussions with colleagues	34,65%	7,92%	24,75%	17,82%	14,85%
Average	<b>41,09%</b>	<b>11,06%</b>	<b>23,10%</b>	<b>13,53%</b>	<b>11,22%</b>

Source: Surveu data, 2019.

Blackwel, Miniard and Engel (2013, p. 326) point out that "culture has been defined as a set of patterns of social behavior that are symbolically transmitted by language and other means to members of a society." In this sense, the cultural values of modern society permeate new experiences, encompassing the labor market, new technologies, economy, available time and even lack of social interaction. Thus, analyzing students in the light of modern culture individualizes the process, verifying their perspective in relation to the changes of the world and the needs that arose with them.

## 5. Conclusion

This article sought to trace the demographic profile and analyze the motivational factors of students from a face-to-face support center of an DL educational institution. Its main objective was to conduct research investigating these students. The context in which the research was conducted was due to the great growth of DL and the need to analyze this phenomenon from the perspective of the profile of these students, analyzing their age, gender, workplace and income. The analysis of the demographic profile showed that the center of face-to-face support consists of students aged between 30 and 49 years, male, single, private company employees with income of up to three minimum wages. Most of the answers about their motivations refer to the flexibility of time, followed by the values of the courses, promotion and professional ascent and duration of the course - which confirms in studies conducted and described in the analysis made: that students seek alternatives for the maintenance of their jobs and professional growth.

The research also analyzed students based on motivational factors. The factors that influence behaviors are diverse and include cultural, social, personal, and psychological and market factors. When asked about the chosen course, the students stated that the reason was because they worked in the area, confirming that the work relationships are majority in terms of personal motivations. As for their dedication to studies, the students answered not to study only for presentations of works or when they go to the

pole, which psychologically demonstrates that they seek the effectiveness of learning, the main factor to continue consuming pap services. The students said they had access to the computer and the Internet to carry out their academic activities, showing that the Internet has changed paradigms and can no longer be considered an external or marketing difficulty for those seeking improvement. Flexibility again appears as a motivation for students to join the DL, demonstrating that the modality exists on the margins of social relations. The students stated that they had total ability to use the VLE, corroborating that the culture of the Internet and the contemporary world is present and are already learned as a rite or habit of daily life. Thus, it can be concluded that the factor that most predominantly stands out in this relationship is the social factor, which integrates in its group of statements the flexibility of this type of teaching, being present in several interactions during the research.

In this case, students do not feel isolated, as they have more time for other activities and social interactions, including interacting with technology. However, the greatest contribution of this work is in the pedagogical aspect, since the knowledge of the student's characteristics is a sine qua non condition for the development of a pedagogical planning pertinent to the student's reality. In this sense, it is understood that the study conducted on the student enrolled in the face-to-face support center can bring important subsidies for the establishment of new teaching mechanisms by pedagogical coordinators. At the end of the study, it is believed that further research can be carried out in order to contribute even more to the search for objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that, in addition to this, the study be applied again within a certain period of time in the same center of face-to-face support, with the purpose of comparing the results obtained and making the appropriate changes in relation to the research.

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