

THE ROLE OF ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS IN SECONDARY STUDENTS OF ODEMIRA

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Abstract

Odemira is the most extensive municipality in Portugal (1721Km²) and is seen as a low density region because of its territorial dispersion and low population density (15.10 inhab/km² | 26036 inhab. total). In the area of Education, despite the improvements in recent years, Odemira still presents indicators below the regional and national averages, such as the illiteracy rate (15.6% in 2011, when the national average was 5.2%), population with higher education (7%, against a national average of 15.1%), and "young population" (i.e. 30-34 years) with higher education (13.1%, when the national average is 28.6%).

This context brings particularities and challenges to how the county regards, thinks about and manages the "Education" and is "Educational Territory". Also influences the Local Education Plan (PEL) and his role, in parallel with the Observatory of Educational Policies of the Region of Odemira, in the research, planning and implementation of the educational policy in Odemira.

One of PEL's objective is to support and promote the integration of young population from Odemira in the higher education through activities (i.e. study visits and summer camps in Universities) and scholarships. To go further in this objective we have study 285 students from secondary schools of Odemira, and crossed their levels of engagement with the school (measured with the "Questionnaire of Student Engagement with the School") with their expectations of higher education (measured with the trial version of the "Expectations of Higher Education Scale").

This paper seek to present and discuss the results of this study, and also their impacts in the definition and implementation of informed, concerted and coherent responses and educational policies, aiming to improve the rate of young population with higher education and other indicators on education/training of the population of Odemira.

Keywords: Student Engagement with the School, High Education Expectations, Educational Policies, Observatory of Educational Policies of the Region of Odemira.

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