

26.5.2026

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Title

Does the economic crisis have an influence on the higher education dropout rate? / Graca Leao Fernandes and Margarida Chagas Lopes

Publication year

2016

Source/Footnote

In: European journal of higher education. - 6 (2016) 4, S. 402 - 416

Inventory number

44831

Keywords

Ausland : Portugal : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Hochschule und Staat : allgemein

Abstract

This research aims to identify the effects of the economic crisis on higher education (HE) dropout rates at Lisbon School of Economics and Management (ISEG) – Universidade de Lisboa, after having controlled for individual characteristics, family background, High School and HE trajectories. Our main hypothesis is that the economic crisis induces higher dropout rates. The research emphasizes that, in the context of the European crisis, social, economic and political context should be taken into account in the dropout analysis model, together with university and student behaviour determinants. To analyse the impact of the economic crisis on dropout rates, we use longitudinal data from the ISEG database, and apply statistical methodologies such as Chi-square tests for independence, and t-tests for the equality of means and proportions. Our main results point to the fact that the economic and social crisis has significantly affected the dropout rate of Portuguese students. Dropout during the crisis period spared neither younger students nor those with better High School trajectories. Moreover, during the crisis period, Portuguese students dropped out earlier during their HE trajectory.

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We believe that our conclusions can be extended to other European countries within a crisis context..(HRK / Abstract übernommen)