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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ECONOMICAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED TO DROP OUT OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

Dropping out is a phenomenon presented at different educational levels that make up the National Education System in Mexico. The economic factor is one of the main causes contributing dropping outs. As a result, this research's main goal has to do with analyzing economic aspects as the main factor that contributes to dropping outs at upper levels in the Faculty of Educational Sciences in the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen, in the municipality of Carmen, Campeche, Mexico.

Key words:

Inequality, Droppingouts.

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INTRODUCTION

There are various issues surrounding educational system in Mexico, one of them is dropping out rates. This phenomenon is present at all levels of education and can be caused by a number of factors such as: "Personal economy, family or academic problems or situations" (INEE, 2010-2011). However, it does not mean that those situations are the unique causes of dropping outs, as this is considered to be a multi-causal phenomenon that affects the entire student population. Within the growth schemes that human being is born with and that uses to become a social being, education is essential, since "it is a socialization process where they develop physical and intellectual abilities, and skills and forms of behavior that are ordered with a social purpose" (De Vries, *et al* 2011, p. 31). However, education is interrupted when students drop out for various reasons and this in turn has an impact on the socio-economic, political and cultural life of a city or country. However, for both political and cultural life, dropping out of school within the university system is a failure of the student, but the reality is that not only is responsibility of the student, but also of his/her family, the school he/she is attending, and the society as a whole. In Mexico in the year 2010 the 81.5 % of young people who were studying the professional level considered that concluding career studies would help them to get a good job, the 76.8% to earn money, the 73.5% to solve

problems and 71% to start business. However, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), claims that only 25% of those who enrolled in the higher education achieved to graduate (La Jornada/10/2013). On the other hand, the state of Campeche during the 2013-2014 school year registered a total of 30, 966 young people who entered the upper level of education, of whom only 5,305 concluded their studies and only 4,425 5,305 graduated (Statistical Yearbook of Campeche, 2015). In that sense, it is important to point out that students complete their professional studies may have greater access to social mobility and to improve their living conditions, however, the dropout rate at this time is running out with the expectations that many young people have of building themselves a better future. Therefore, this research analyzes the relationship that exists between the family economic situation and the dropout rate of students who are enrolled in high levels of education in the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen (Unacar). According to the Secretaría de Educación Pública in Mexico (2010), the university dropout rate fluctuated between 7.5% and 8.5% over the past 15 years (News universia.net/11/2013). It was also found out that the greatest amount of school drop-outs takes place during the first year of university studies. For that reason, this work considers that the first semesters of the career are the most difficult to take, so that students who live in unfavorable economic conditions may be in danger of dropping out.

Theoretical framework

Dropping out of school is meant as "the desertion of school and of the studies carried out by students due a numerous reasons

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that may be: economy situation, personal, family, social condition, etc." (Dictionary of educational sciences, 1995, p. 391) In the 1980s, in Mexico, the problem of school drop-outs, "was due basically to three main factors: low average scores in high school, marital status and the need students had to combine studies with any job activity" (ANUIES, 2001). Subsequently, other researches have claimed that school drop-out is the consequence of "personal issues that students experience: economy, family and vocation" Tinto (1992), Bean (1990) and Cabrera (1992). In the same way De Vries, *et al* (2011), mentions that "the educational capital of the family affects the economic conditions of a student, this in turn creates dropout". Therefore it can be said that the educational level of a student's parents affects their child's possibility of studying. For González (2006), "the economic condition of a family is a factor that contributes to the dropout and as a consequence it affects university quality". To sum up, Silas (2005) affirms that the young deserters (who do not conclude their studies), "have less opportunities in the labor field, all this affects in the family economy and social, as the wealth of a country is not measured in gold or oil, but in the knowledge of its people." On the other hand, Schwartzman (2004), mentions that "poverty and inequality are factors that have a significant influence on the school drop-outs, since a large part of this problem is due to the conditions of poverty of the students" (p. 35). Ladrón de Guevara (2000), quoted by Covadonga (2001) says "students belonging to economically disadvantaged families are lower in intellectual capacities, with the slower pace of work so that there are more likely to abandon their studies" (p.12). In the same vein, Gordon (1999), "The socio-economic origin can be regarded as one of the explanatory factors for the low performance and dropout" (p.4). For students from disadvantaged homes situation, the power to study is a challenge they have to face day to day, this due to the few economic resources that are destined for their studies, aspects that favor the dropout rate.

Objectives of the Research

General objective

To Analyze family economic aspect as one of the main factors that contribute to dropouts rate among students who are enrolled in higher education level in the Faculty of Educational Sciences in the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen, Campeche, Mexico.

Specific objectives

1. To analyze the economic difficulties confronting students who live in precarious conditions.
2. To know the approximate percentage of students who could drop out because of economic problems within the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen.

Methodology and instruments

This research work was developed under a descriptive quantitative approach. It was carried out in the Faculty of Educational Sciences (DES-DAEH) in the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen (UNACAR), which is situated in the town of Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche, Mexico. This institution had, during the school year 2015, a total enrollment of 312 students, 65 male and 247 female. The size of the

sample for the study was 109 students enrolled in the first, third and fifth semester of the Bachelor's Degree in Education. It is worth mentioning that this representative sample was mostly female population. On the other hand, the average age of the participants was between 18 and 25 years old. It is important to point out that for the research work, as a first step, it was necessary to design a survey, which contained a total of 34 multiple-choice reagents. This instrument, data collector, addressed the following variables: general data, socio-economic, family and school situation of the students. Subsequently, a pilot test of the instrument was carried out for its validation. A sample of 44 students of third semester of the Bachelor's Degree in Education was used.

On the other hand, the procedure for data collection was conducted in the following manner: students were addressed and requested to participate in this research. The instrument was applied within the facilities of the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen at an approximate driving time of 30 minutes per group. Once these data was performed the analysis of results was made, it was necessary to make use of the software SPSS V. 20, which made it possible to carry out a descriptive statistical analysis, and the development of different types of graphs was also made (bars, cake, histograms). The purpose was to identify and represent an overview of the phenomenon under study (see Figure 1).

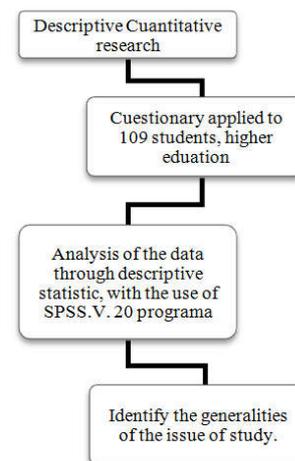


Figure 1. Methodology of the investigation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results obtained from the interpretation of the data from a sample of 109 students out of a total population of 312 of the Faculty of Educational Sciences (FCE) of the UNACAR.

As to the characteristics of the methodological design, the following is highlighted:

Data collection:	109 surveys were applied.
Unit of analysis:	Students between the ages of 18 and 25 year old.
The unit of observation:	Students of the unacar-Carmen.
Selection of sample:	Probability sample.
Collection Mode:	Survey.
Geographic coverage:	Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche.
Date of data collection:	From June to July 2015

Some of the general data obtained were the age range of the total number of students, which is located between 18 and 25 years, in the same way it was identified that the 98% of the total of the sample are women, while 2% are men, and it is mostly with female population. The results indicate that 70% of students live with their parents, while 14% are living with relatives, the 8% live with their couple in a relationship and the remaining 8% live alone. With regard to marital status, the 92% of the students pointed out that they are unmarried, while 5% mentioned being married and the 3% indicate is in a relationship. In the same way, it was determined that the young people who are married or living in a free relationship (8%) are already parents. One of the aspects to be considered in this work is the educational capital which influences the economic background of students, as the economic inequality that exists in Mexico has had an impact on the quality of family life and therefore is a determining factor in the school life of these young people (Sources, 2015). Taking into consideration the above, the educational level of parents is identified so that the total of the sample shows that the 9% indicate both parents did not have access school education, the 31% indicated they got the elementary school level, the 23% got secondary school, the 20% got higher school level, and only the 17% completed a bachelor's degree (see figure 2). With regard to the occupation of the father in the family, it was noted that the 56% are employed in the labor areas, 19% are merchants, the 14% do work related to the oil industry and 11% work as fishermen. With regard to the occupation of the mothers, it was found that 78% are housewives, the 11% are also part of the work forces, the 8% are merchants and the 3 per cent work in the oil industry.

For De Vries, *et al* (2011), the low family educational capital influences school dropouts rate in two senses, as lower economic capital, there is usually greater economic problems and as consequence, the student is forced to get a job. On the opposite, parents who have completed a career or technical career, have a better-paying job, this is they have a higher family educational capital. This does not ensure permanence; in cases children tend to abandon school to study another career or to attend to a university outside the community.

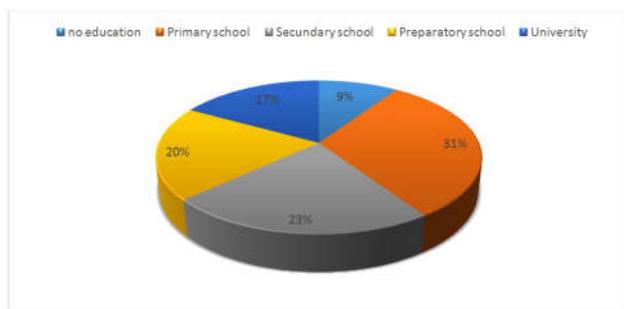


Figure 2. Educational level of parents

The economy precariousness that these students have to face within the educational context could be identified. 75% of the students mentioned their expenses availability is between \$21 and \$50. However, spending a day at the university exceeds \$50 pesos, since they have to cover transportation, food, photocopies and printing expenses. They mentioned they often have organized their money and only spend the minimum amount of money. In the same way, the economy precariousness in which they are immersed is also reflected in the conditions of housing, as 58% of these young people

reported no to have adequate space to do their school work. The conditions of adversity can force students to leave school; this is due to the lack of economic resources to enable them to finance their studies. In the second school period in 2010 there were 104, 152 young people between the ages of 14 and 19 years in Campeche, of which only the 57.13% studies and it is true that the 1.01% (608) noted that young people are involved, it is significant of a reality that the country for those who wish to continue studying (INEGI, 2010). However, this research identified that the 44% of young people have to combine school and working activities to be able to cover school expenses, so they are working part-time to receive a low paid salary (see figure 3).

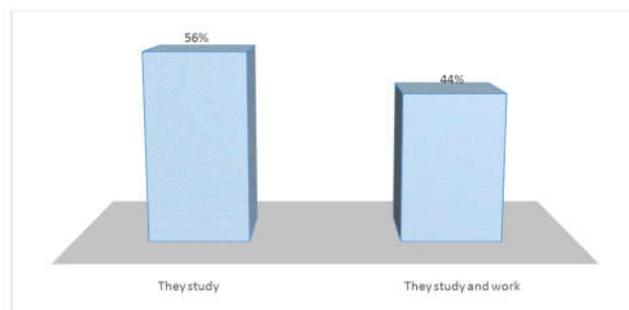


Figure 3. Percentage of students combining school and working activities

Coleman (1961), affirms that since a student uses a time to work rather than to develop their student activities, his or her performance at school impairs, it is a disadvantage (p.27). So the employment situation of a college student is one of the factors that explain school failure (Holes, Red Wine 1992; 1988). Students, who have to combine study and working activities, sometimes are forced to lower their performance in school and, as a consequence, they abandon them, various activities generate physical and mental fatigue. What it is interesting is that these young people by combining both school and working activities, they are demonstrating the desire to fulfill their expectations. On the other hand, when students were asked to indicates how they selected the school degree they are study, 64% stated that they selected it by themselves on the understanding of likes and dislikes, 19% pointed out that they decided it throughout vocational tests, 14% mention that their election was made bases on the analysis that there was no more degree choices and the remaining 3% indicated that the career choice was imposed by their parents (see figure 4).

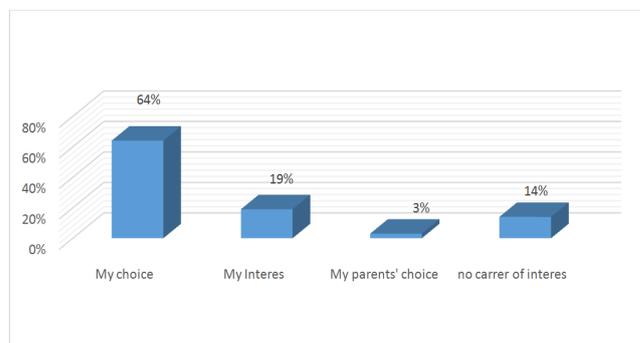


Figure 4. School degree choices and reasons

However, despite the fact that the majority of the students chose the race none of them is exempted of dropping out of school as it was identified that the 78% of the sample mentioned with lack of economic resources has impeded their

studies, due to in some of the cases they have had to miss classes, lack of economic resources have impeded to attend college. The non-attendance at school due to the lack of economy resources has generated disapproval of subjects in a 68 per cent of these young students.

Finally the 97% of the students consider the economic situation as one of the main causes of school dropouts. Students who have economic problems can, at any given time, think of stopping university education and choose to engage in working activities. In this regard, it was able to identify that the 42% of the total sample who have had economic difficulties throughout his career have thought of leaving their university education (see figure 5).

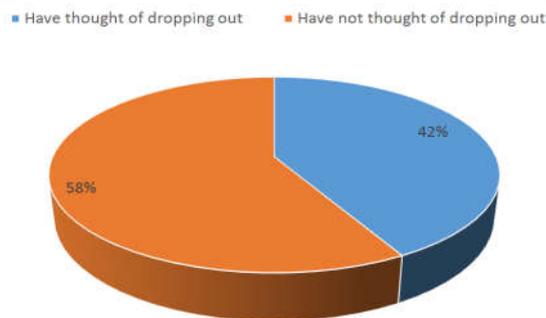


Figure 5. Percentage of students who have had economic difficulties throughout his career and who have thought about abandoning their studies

In the same way, students consider they would improve their school performance and as consequence they could complete their professional career if the institution could awarded more scholarships.

Conclusion

In this section, according to the analysis of results before presented, it is concluded that for the 97% of the students the economic aspects are factors that end with the school retention. Therefore, a student with low economic resources has to face a precarious condition that hinder their studies, these can be: the lack of study environmental space at home, the difficulties to cover the school costs attending classes (transportation, food). What is more, students have problems to acquire the appropriate school materials for the completion of their tasks, so that these situation force them to combine school and working activities, devoting little time to tasks, which is reflected in the low school attendances, in low school grades, course fails and finally it can lead to dropping out of school. There is the possibility that the 42% of the students, who have had economic difficulties throughout the career, drop out of the school, as a consequence of not sustaining their professional education. Low family income disadvantages life conditions of all members of a family. In this regard, some students mentioned that the money they get from their family to pay their expenses is insufficient. It is necessary to understand that the extra-curricular conditions influence students' performance, especially when it is the family economy. There are statistical data that indicate many young people leave their studies because of economic problems. Therefore, it is important to consider that the economic situation is one of the main causes that affect the student population, those that live in precarious family conditions, since in many cases this leads them to decision on dropping out of the school. It would be desirable for the educational institution to implement a

program of aid that benefits young students who have economic difficulties to continue with their studies, where they had the benefit of receiving economic support for transportation, food and educational goods, with the aim of providing students with more possibilities to conclude their higher academic education.

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