

Article

A Qualitative Study on Barriers in Learning Opportunities in Ecuadorian Higher Education

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Abstract: The university context is increasingly complex and diverse. Students' individual circumstances in particular, whether personal or relating to family and work, are increasingly challenging. They are affecting their academic development or even leading to them dropping out of university. The objective of this study was to identify the obstacles to the completion of university studies based on students' perspectives. Adopting a qualitative approach, we analysed the narratives of randomly selected students at UTE University of Santo Domingo (Ecuador). The main barriers identified by the students were the lack of reconciliation between academic and/or work life and family, as well as schedule incompatibilities—making it difficult for them to attend class. Participants also noted that teachers usually failed to incorporate curricular adaptations according to students' personal or professional circumstances, which prevented them from experiencing a normal learning process like their classmates. To conclude, factors that continue to interfere with students' university trajectories include the following: insufficient financial resources, family reconciliation issues, and lack of institutional support. Higher Education Institutions should therefore promote strategies and/or provide resources that guarantee equal opportunities for university students and contribute to the development of lifelong learning.

Keywords: dropout; discussion group; higher education; university



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1. Introduction

It is possible to observe, in hindsight, how universities change over time, responding to the political, economic, and cultural systems of the societies in which they develop. Personal and academic difficulties do not appear suddenly, they gradually emerge during institutional admission and learning processes. In their first years, students begin to identify a lack of abilities and aptitudes that prevent them from acquiring basic knowledge and advancing in their degree. In parallel, they undergo socioeconomic difficulties, have insufficient time for the family as well as for culture and study, and lack institutional support [1]. A significant association has also been found between dropout and the variables analysed, i.e., the education received by the student's institution, student study level, student high school group, and lastly, whether the studied subject was among the student's pre-enrolment preferences [1]. The latter factors entail complications that will affect academic performance and even lead the student to drop out [2–4]. Student issues can affect their personal and academic development. Their problems do not owe solely to a single factor, but rather to a combination of variables, which may or may not be related to each other. Thus, for example, the birth of a child, marriage, or the illness of a family member [5] may also have an impact on the student's well-being. This phenomenon seems to be widespread in the university system, cutting across not only Ecuadorian universities, but also Latin American, North American, and European ones, in both public and private

institutions. In this context, in order to function successfully, universities are responsible for the students' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and autonomy.

Some studies in the Latin American context indicate that high dropout rates among university students may be influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, or personal situations, and in many cases combine with each other [6] or those related to study habits, teaching practices, educational program, motivation, university environment, and academic support [7]. In the European context, similar factors have also been identified, such as extra-academic factors, work incompatibility, lack of motivation [2], the definition of an inadequate entry profile [8], the birth of a child, marriage, or illness of a family member [9], the management of knowing how to make better use of time with learning-related activities [10], or income inequality [11]. Other research argues that academic processes can change due to some unforeseen event [12], social class, migratory status [13], the financial commitments made by educational loan holders to support their careers [14], socioeconomic background and institutional factors [15], family and socioeconomic conditions as responsible for the livelihood of their families [16], and the regulatory processes involved in training can all shape intentions to change a career [17].

Recently, the study conducted by [13] in a literature review showed the existence of these variables in student dropout and evidenced, therefore, that the individual factors of student academic dropout are interrelated and constitute a complex system as defined by the reference model posed by Tinto (cited by [12]): "Considering the dropout problem, it is very important to have in mind that the more relevant are the variables that define the modules, and better defined are the processes which deal with those variables, the better will be the outcome of a computational system that implements the simulation of a dropout/persevere process conducted by a student (p. 52)".

The reviewed statistics reveal that dropout rates are alarming worldwide, as confirmed by [18] in their analysis of different countries. For example, the dropout rate is 35% in the United Kingdom, 38% in Mexico, 53% in the United States, and 55% in Italy. Spain, the United States, and France present a similar outlook, with definitive dropout rates fluctuating between 30% and 50%. In the case of Germany, dropout rates range from 20% to 25%, and in Finland, they are 10%. Latin America is also affected: Colombia has a dropout rate of approximately 45%, Uruguay between 25% and 50%, and over 50% in Peru, the neighbouring country, during the first two academic cycles. Empirically, therefore, the problem is significantly concentrated in the first four study semesters [2,19]. In Ecuador, the figure is around 40%, due to a lack of financial resources, family-work-study situations, poor academic background, and lack of orientation towards desired studies, among others.

Several works have contributed to the research in the field of student problems [20–23]. They refer to access factors (gender, socioeconomic level, institutional resources, etc.), process (study habits, family support, school environment, methodological styles, etc.), and product (school retention, academic performance). The authors of [6] agree that these situations (socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, or personal) can be combined. For example, cognitive processes enrich the student trajectory and personal well-being, provided that self-regulation strategies are being followed. The research generally shows a correlation between dropout and other individual, academic, socioeconomic, and institutional factors [18]. Some works have confirmed the problems affecting student fathers and mothers, due to the absence of any specific regulation on work and family reconciliation. The latter causes inequalities for women, who, for biological reasons, go through gestation and infant care stages [24].

Other studies such as that of [25] have concluded that the causes owe to the "interaction of personal and contextual factors" (p. 12). In this sense, age, academic influence, and the family situation of younger students living with their parents should be considered. For their part, students aged over 24 years must assume different (family, work, and academic) roles. According to [5], these aspects generate student-work-family contradictions that students experience even before starting university. Such student-family incompatibilities are accentuated in the case of women [26]—e.g., when they have no one to leave their young

child with. These family and student responsibilities are a possible cause of academic self-limitation, and even university dropout. Therefore, possible reconciliation solutions must rest on a combination of cultural, social, and economic factors and they require specific regulations. Indeed, the needs and difficulties of female students differ from that of male students [26].

Dropout has become one of the major problems affecting students, families, and institutions in Higher Education [18]. Ecuador is no exception. Pregnant women are commonly found in classrooms, or students who are already mothers before entering university. Some students are working or need work, others are on a scholarship and come from far way or from broken families, with insufficient income to support them. Some students present poor studying habits and scarce basic knowledge—owing to an education system that requires additional support so that it can regulate, fund, and deliver services based on a comprehensive education structure [27]. These difficult circumstances have arisen despite the financial efforts made over the last decade and the increased subsidies given to the education domain.

According to figures from the Council of Education (CES), a total of 736,000 university students were enrolled in Ecuador in 2015, of which 2200 students belonged to UTE Santo Domingo University, spread over the two faculties of Administrative Sciences and Engineering Sciences. Over this period, the completion efficiency rate over the normal four-year study period (SICAF UTE Platform) was 19.7%. To explore this approach further, the cohort retention rate between 2013 and 2017 at UTE University Santo Domingo was correlated with an indicator that is frequently used to measure and recognise the academic quality of Ecuador's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

These types of situations are socially as well as culturally localised and are the result of socioeconomic and educational policies. Students should not be obliged to abandon their academic trajectory for any reason. The decision should be voluntary, since the state should guarantee the completion of studies within the standard period, adopting alternative measures that could reduce temporary or definitive dropout rates. In addition to these analyses, it is worth noting that personal or academic difficulties vary according to each institution's characteristics. A major student difficulty, sociocultural and socioeconomic factors, is reflected at Santo Domingo UTE, the educational institution object of the present study. Yet there may be other variables related to dropout, so it is relevant to explore other possible causes of temporary or definitive dropout. Taking into consideration this environment, the objective of this study was to analyse the main difficulties identified by university students throughout their academic development, such as barriers to the normal development of their student activities. To this end, the study had the following specific objectives: (1) to review the state of the art and to describe and understand the causes of student problems; (2) to identify the factors hindering the development of university studies at UTE University, based on students' perspectives on the teaching–learning process; and (3) to propose general recommendations, such as good practices that contribute in a feasible and practical way to improving student permanence.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Context and Participants

Based on this multidisciplinary approach, the university students' comments revealed the main factors hindering university studies or the situations that cause temporary or definitive dropout. Previously, the researchers contacted the participants from different disciplines who voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview, and the decision was made not to organise the groups in disciplinary groups or study levels because we wanted to compare different reflections and suggestions within each group.

The focus group was composed of 18 students, of whom 61.11% were women, and 38.89% men, aged between 20 and 24 years. They all voluntarily agreed to complete the interview. The two faculties of Engineering and Administrative Sciences of UTE University of Santo Domingo (Ecuador) participated in the discussion group with students enrolled

in Electromechanics, Environmental, Agroindustry, Automotive Engineering, Finance, Business, Foreign Trade, and Marketing. Participants regularly attended subject sessions. Most of the participants came from private schools, in some cases they were students who did not reach the required score requested by the public education system and opted to choose a private institution such as UTE University. Of the 18 students who attended, there were 5 who had suspended the continuity of their academic training for various reasons, with the case of 2 students culminating the first semester decided to withdraw, 2 of them at the end of the fourth period, and another student in the middle of the course; some re-joined after two years, others at the next regular period, while 3 participants decided to change to another career. The other 12 students regularly attended the university. The participants were enrolled at night, and were from high and middle social strata—when we refer to high social level, we associate variables such as: fixed income, parents' educational level, housing characteristics, and household services, while the low level is given by the relationship between household income and expenses. Below this category, there is a greater risk of dropping out (temporal or definitive); apparently the age and maturity of the person may also play a role in the same phenomenon. The socioeconomic characteristics of the study participants were relevant for selecting them as students presented problems related to the reconciliation between academic and/or work life and family life, as well as schedule incompatibilities. These were considered as factors or obstacles that made it difficult for them to attend class on a regular basis and one of the factors that influences the possible student dropout temporarily or definitively in Higher Education.

2.2. Instruments

To collect the data, a semi-structured interview was administered. It was composed of fourteen questions and an open answer question, which allowed participants to deepen their thoughts and university experience. The discussion group centred on the difficulties or obstacles encountered by university students in their studies. To this end, four thematic blocks were presented: (a) reasons for student dropout; (b) personal, professional, or teaching/learning difficulties in their academic development at the university; (c) support or resources to overcome difficulties; (d) proposals or suggestions to ensure study continuity for students who cannot ensure permanence.

The focus group interviews with students of different subjects facilitated the work dynamics in each environment. Indeed, different viewpoints could be achieved via each participant's interventions and analyses, through discussions on student perceptions of certain realities. In this case, these realities consisted of the personal and academic difficulties they faced during their university education as well as their permanence in their educational institution. The group discussion also addressed their thoughts and feelings before these processes up until the completion of their studies [28] Audio recordings of the focus group interviews were made after having requested the participants' prior permission, guaranteeing their anonymity, and in accordance with the ethical standards in considering the professional conduct of education researchers.

2.3. Procedure

A coherence matrix was elaborated based on student answers and the codes were defined following an iterative reading. This coding was subsequently validated by educational research experts through a triangulation technique. Finally, based on the coding matrix, we analysed the narratives by organising the emerging codes and grouping those that led to the same interpretation.

Using the AQUAD [29] qualitative analysis programme, we encoded the data and created tables by categories. The qualitative process was completed through quantification, based on calculating the absolute frequency (%AF) percentage of the codes. To guarantee the participants' anonymity, we identified them using an alphanumeric code: E00.

3. Results

Three categories emerged from the coding process during the results analysis:

1. Institutional obstacles.
2. Sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that undermine academic development.
3. Suggestions of improvement to address difficulties during the university studies.

The results are presented in the tables, sorted by category code.

The students' observations allowed the identification of a number of limitations or obstacles to their academic development at university. The narrative analysis generated nine codes which were grouped into Category 1. They are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Category 1 codes. Institutional obstacles.

Codes	%AF
1.1 Institutional organisation	7.55%
1.2 Incompatible schedules	15.09%
1.3 Teacher training/methodology update	15.09%
1.4 Lack of teacher interaction and empathy	5.66%
1.5 Lack of resources and support for students	11.32%
1.6 Scholarships	1.89%
1.7 Tuition fees	33.96%
1.8 Insufficient guidance	7.55%
1.9 Academic work	1.89%
Total	100%

The most widespread narrative referred to high tuition fees (Code 1.7), which students must pay each semester, obliging them to work: "(...) for me it is the increase in debt, my financial situation is not so easy now" (E01). The normal class attendance schedules (Code 1.2) were another factor. They forced university students to opt for a set schedule: "I had problems with the evening schedules" (E17), which hindered normal class attendance. In addition, the schedule was chosen giving priority to students with the best academic records in order of semester averages, without contemplating giving priority of choice to students with no means of mobility: "... It is because the university is far, we finished at ten in the evening, and it was very difficult to get back home..." (E10).

Regarding Code 1.3, participants expressed some disagreement with the student-centred methodology. Indeed, interactive classes following multiple strategies and new generation innovations would be necessary to motivate them and to develop their abilities in accordance with their styles and the ways in which they learn. "... I think it would be a good thing that teachers renew their way of transmitting knowledge and reaching students" (E08).

Another limiting factor they considered (Code 1.5) was the lack of resources and services to students: "Teachers have the knowledge, but if the university does not provide the resources, how are they expected to teach properly" (E05). In addition, getting closer to students, good communication, and accompaniment in the learning process would lead to ever improving results: "all students should be interviewed, to know whether they have a scholarship, there should be a follow up, their situation should be known . . ." (E09).

Some students aspired to a certain autonomy or sought new horizons, which were not always favourable, due to the traditional studies on offer. The students' new perspectives and positions were not taken into account—so they somewhat accept the only alternatives allowed by the system (Code 1.8): "... there is no one to encourage us, to help us discover studies that we would be interested in. Most of the time, it's because they don't want us to go to other universities and so they oblige us to continue here, close to home" (E10).

Other narratives presented different perspectives (Code 1.1): "in the first semesters, there are two or three empty hours during which you have to wait and you do not know what to do" (E07); "timely communication, that is really lacking at the university" (E17);

“when the Fedeute delivered textbooks, it would be in the morning, and there were none left for us in the evening” (E15).

Table 2 shows the codes that emerged in Category 2 about the sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that undermine academic development in students.

Table 2. Category 2 codes. Leisure and cultural factors.

Codes	%AF
2.1 Family relationship	16.67%
2.2 Insufficient household income	16.67%
2.3 No limitations	18.75%
2.4 Work and family space–time organisation	45.83%
2.5 Parents’ educational level	2.08%
Total	100%

In Ecuador, family ties have weakened, as experienced by some university students. They lack family support, guidance, and motivation. Feelings and communication have dwindled, triggering multiple difficulties for students. Participants expressed the desire to be independent, or to start a new family, to be autonomous, and to make their own decisions (Code 2.1): “we receive no encouragement at home” (E10). These dysfunctions are undoubtedly visible in the separation of children, or the passing of children to the care of other family members due to work needs. This hinders normal study development due to a lack of time for the family, work, and ultimately studying. Students ultimately neglect tasks and fail to engage in other academic activities. These narratives mostly fell under Code 2.4: “(...) in my case I stopped studying because I started a family” (E08); “(...) work takes a lot of time and does not leave time for tasks—and I neglect my studies” (E06).

Another risk factor was related to financial resources. Maintenance and tuition costs were observed to be above the average family income. This fact was a major cause of student dropout. The narratives were grouped under Code 2.2., as illustrated in the following excerpts: “... I think it’s the lack of financial resources” (E09). “Here, in Santo Domingo, few people can pay the tuition fees of a private university, they can pay perhaps until the first and second semesters, then they have no way of continuing to pay and they leave” (E06).

Conversely, one group of narratives did not mention limitations, suggesting the existence of financial and family stability as well as permanence in the institution and graduation (Code 2.3: no limitations): “I aspire to being a good professional, I love what I’m studying” (E16).

A less significant share of participants referred to their parents’ educational level (Code 2.5), but this was another cause of dropout, because there was no awareness process regarding study–family compatibility. “I think it’s an advantage that parents have some level of education” (E09).

A number of changes related to the above were found to be necessary to improve the academic development of UTE University studies. Changes included facilitating the teaching–learning process within the classrooms, methodological innovations, timely communication, personal commitment, and teacher–student interactions, thus allowing students to progress in their academic studies without major difficulties. These aspects were included in Category 3, the codes of which are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Category 3 codes. Proposals for improvement.

Codes	%AF
3.1 Early childhood education	1.16%
3.2 Choice of schedules	10.53%
3.3 Flexible payments	22.22%
3.4 Provision of materials	3.51%
3.5 Timely communication	25.44%
3.6 Methodological innovation	23.68%
3.7 Integration	2.34%
3.8 Personal commitment	11.12%
Total	100%

Code 3.5 was the most widespread. It represented students' demands for efficient information flow through different internal and external channels: "(...) we need to be better informed. Sometimes we find something out through someone else, but we are not sure whether the information is accurate, there are different channels, the information is not complete—which is what happened in English. Everyone interpreted the information differently, some of us were left out of the exam, timely information was missing" (E14).

The theme of financial means was grouped under Code 3.2. Students commented on tuition payments and how students with limited resources were in a delicate situation, finding it difficult to access Higher Education. Another barrier for this group was the reduced likelihood of obtaining student loans: they had a limited capacity to pay, precisely due to their low socioeconomic level, or because of a poorer financial history in terms of reliability. Ecuadorian policy in the education domain is precisely directed towards increasing social equity. Therefore, mechanisms that help students with insufficient income must exist to ensure study permanence: "Here, in Santo Domingo, few people can pay the tuition fees of a private university, they can pay perhaps until the first and second semesters, then they have no way of continuing to pay and they leave" (E06).

Another substantial factor that was revealed corresponded to Code 3.6. Participants demanded that teachers insert new comprehensive and active strategies during the teaching–learning process to help students learn and develop academic and study skills: "Certain teachers know a lot but they do not know how to teach" (E11); "Some students have 6 h of class a day, so attention levels can be counted in minutes, but if the teacher makes the class more dynamic, most will better acquire knowledge" (E07).

Providing resources or materials as a support tool in the classroom (Code 3.4) was also regarded as important, as resources were considered necessary to develop and strengthen the teaching–learning process. "Teachers have the knowledge, but if the university does not provide the necessary resources, how are they expected to teach properly" (E18). The need to increase interactive classroom time and laboratory support materials was also recognised in this section.

Participants expressed the importance of personal commitment (Code 3.8). On the one hand, such a commitment appeared to be common sense that was adopted by each student. They used it as an argument, and this led to categories that distinguished commitment and non-commitment. The factor that students are highly diverse is well-known, and the complexity of the situations and problems they present requires multidisciplinary and comprehensive faculty support. Directors should also strive to activate resources to build students' commitment to learn: "Striving more to solve problems together, to get closer and talk to the authorities" (E13). Another factor identified in the narratives was the importance of being committed to studies in an autonomous and collaborative way: "If we do not engage personally in our studies, there is no point in the university providing us with what we are asking for" (E02). These testimonies show that a true commitment is possible: "To engage more in our studies, to meet and study with classmates and help each other. Sometimes certain classmates understand the lessons better and we ask them for help. We

understand better when classmates explain, because sometimes the teacher does not have time to explain clearly in the classroom" (E10).

Another important factor valued by participants was schedule flexibility (Code 3.3). Indeed, the faculty must understand that some students are combining studies with work. They should elaborate strategies that facilitate their educational process: "A major limitation is time, a working student has to adapt to the university's available schedules and meet both work and study obligations. This weighs on students and it is stressful, you can see students' burden of responsibility" (E06).

Moreover, the focus group represented a call for necessary schedule modifications based on practical experience. In this way, the schedule topic emerged as an anchor in students' daily lives: "For me, the problem is how schedules change, first there are morning classes, then afternoon classes, then evening classes, so you can't get a job" (E08). Comments regarding schedule availability (schedules must be flexible, there must be no conflicting schedules, they must be maintained) generally referred to students' work situation rather than to their daily living experiences. The participants affirmed that neither the sociocultural environment, the family, their job, nor the HEIs facilitated study-work-family conciliation. Yet in this domain, the Institution must assume its function, effectiveness, and efficiency: "It was quite difficult for me to manage my conflicting schedules and not be able to follow the continuous curricular modality" (E07). In a changing society, assuming new roles and responsibilities is a question of common sense. Pressures to assume a range of responsibilities regarding given situations affect certain student groups.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In the first category, the analyses showed a high representativeness of tuition fees: scarce household financial means becomes an obstacle, influencing the decision to drop out temporarily or definitively—the authorities must take this factor into account in the future [28].

Schedule incompatibility determines how study, work, and family are managed. Other factors included teacher training and methodological updating, the culture of innovation and the teaching staff, as well as institutional characteristics, marking differences between "who we are" and "what we do". Universities should offer alternatives to students, and innovate by implementing active methodologies, updating the curriculum, and adopting new study modalities enabling students to combine work-family with academic training [24,30].

Cases were identified in this work in which space-time organisation patterns represented a key factor, that could generate a healthy learning environment. Space-time patterns also represented an element of retention and permanence because teachers and students sometimes feel overwhelmed by the many functions and tasks they must perform. That is why most students in this study are requesting more attention from the authorities and teachers. They are aware of the demands relating to studies, work, and family, and it is necessary to implement organisational space-time strategies, allowing the combination of these three dimensions [31].

To conclude, offering payment facilities for tuition fees, ensuring timely communication, and implementing methodological innovations would all entail positive outcomes [32]. Students, in turn, would improve and strengthen their academic skills. It is necessary to evaluate the process through indicators reflecting progress in relation to learning process effectiveness and university permanence [33]. The need to develop educational and curricular innovations in the daily classroom was identified, together with the need to improve process organisation, teachers' work dynamics in practice, and the professional culture through innovation techniques. Such initiatives imply altering existing conceptions and attitudes in order to modify teaching methodologies or interventions and to thus improve teaching and learning processes [34].

The student focus group on personal and academic performance allowed the confirmation of implementing active methodologies, in which students act as the main agents in their educational process [35], is effective. Indeed, they have a more significant impact on

their learning, and lead to greater teacher competence and academic training. Especially notable were factors such as each student's interest and intrinsic motivation [7], added to vocations that were linked to social interests and practices, including family communication, healthy relationships, student experience intensity, study habits, the school day, motivation, cooperation availability, and the family's subjective disposition. All these elements had an impact on students' commitment to their studies.

Participants also proposed to pursue the development of new methodologies for a continuous semester across all subjects in the two current university faculties. This would therefore imply updating teaching processes in increasingly diverse contexts [36], providing payment facilities and reconsidering tuition fees, as well as a reorganisation to offer flexible schedules. In this way, it would be possible to ensure a closer follow-up, favour collaborative learning, prevent personal difficulties, significantly improve academic performance, and lastly, reduce dropout rates [37].

Social, economic, and cultural transformations lead to increasing the diversity of university students. In some cases, students' personal, family, and work circumstances stifle the optimal development of their university education. The student voices heard in this study reflected such situations. It is therefore necessary to ensure ongoing teacher training so that professors are able to adapt to new student circumstances and learning processes. The university must adapt to the new times, investigate what the new needs are, and respond to them, especially the university population that responds to different socio-family, socio-professional, and socioeconomic profiles. This student heterogeneity causes inequalities in access and follow-up to classes and therefore does not guarantee the role of Higher Education in promoting lifelong learning. Consequently, it is essential that university teachers be innovative, that they contribute new, concrete, and socially beneficial projects with the support of other professionals who help solve students' personal and academic difficulties—thus favouring a study–work–family triangle balance where necessary. In this sense, Higher Education Institutions must promote educational policies that guarantee the equal opportunities for these new and diverse university student populations, so that they progress in their academic and professional development and engage in lifelong learning.

As with any study in the social sciences, it is worth describing some limitations. One of the limitations of the study was the absence of studies on university student temporary or definitive dropout, which currently in university contexts many of these students who are over thirty years of age enter university with family responsibilities and work responsibilities, and this can generate problems of student–family–work conciliation and that is why currently the scientific literature in the educational field is generating research projects to make this problem visible. Another limitation of this study was that the sample was not very large and its results cannot be generalised. That is why the possibility of carrying out more similar studies is raised, expanding the sample to have a broader vision, with the possibility of including a variety of participants in other university contexts. In this way, different perspectives would be addressed, comparing the experiences of each other on the risk of dropping out of their studies, both temporarily and definitively. On the other hand, in a focus group it is complex to integrate a larger number of participants to have a representative sample, due to the overlapping of schedules and extracurricular activities, and only the students of the careers with whom we are close in terms of learning processes were invited, leaving aside other participants whose efforts were not carried out in a coordinated manner to allow this meeting. It would also be interesting to include the voices of teachers and academic leaders to make the problems visible from the academic and administrative point of view. Despite these limitations, this study has generated some considerations that are recommended for future studies: to continue investigating permanence strategies from the first year of the career, applying instruments to know the socioeconomic, cultural, and family level and to identify students at risk of dropping out (temporarily or definitively), guiding them to reconcile their time, their economic resources, and their family. In short, we propose the need to find new methodologies centred on the

student to favour educational indicators and adapting teaching to the new social contexts of university students to ensure lifelong learning.

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