Dropping out of a TEFL Program: A Study on Internal Factors

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Abstract

The current explanatory-qualitative study focuses on individual factors as a cause of the dropping out phenomenon of a specific undergraduate program. The topic of higher education students' desertion has received considerable attention, since it is a serious problem in Colombia. This study wants to understand why in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language program (TEFL) over 25% of the admitted, drop out of the program at some point. This research reviews the literature on dropping out and brings comparative data from two TEFL programs in Bogotá, Colombia. According to (Hummel, 2014), these factors play an important role when learning a second language: intelligence, aptitude, attitudes, motivation, personality, learning style, cognitive style, and learning strategies. This investigation focuses on attitudes, motivation, and language learning strategies. Based on these three factors this work addresses13 cases that typify the university desertion and examines each case based on ex classmates who interrupted their bachelor's degree in the last four years. The information gathered using action – research method through surveys was crucial to find constant causes and propose solutions to program management along with the faculty.

Keywords: Internal factors, foreign language, learning strategies, attitudes, motivation, dropout, undergraduate programs.

Resumen

El presente estudio cualitativo y explicativo se centra en los factores individuales como una causa del problema de deserción de los estudiantes universitarios. Este fenómeno ha recibido una considerable atención, ya que parece ser una constante, independientemente del programa y universidad en Colombia. El estudio propone entender por qué en un programa de Enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (LE), más del 25% de los admitidos abandonan el programa en algún momento. La investigación parte de la premisa de que el problema de la deserción podría resolverse desde la pedagogía. Este estudio revisa la literatura sobre la deserción y aporta datos comparativos de otros dos programas de LE, en Bogotá - Colombia. Según (Hummel, 2014), los factores internos y de carácter afectivo desempeñan un papel importante en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, i.e. la condición aptitudinal, las actitudes, la motivación, la personalidad, el estilo de aprendizaje, el estilo cognitivo y las estrategias de aprendizaje. Para la presente investigación, se consideraron las actitudes, la motivación y las estrategias de aprendizaje. Este trabajo aborda 13 casos que tipifican la deserción universitaria, examinando cada uno de los 13 casos basado en experiencias de ex compañeros de clase que interrumpieron su licenciatura en los últimos cuatro años. La información reunida usando investigación – acción a través de encuestas y entrevistas fue decisiva para encontrar causas constantes y así proponer soluciones a los administradores del programa junto con la facultad.

Palabras clave: Factores internos, lengua extranjera, estrategias de aprendizaje, actitud, motivación, deserción, programas de pregrado.

Introduction

The present monographic dissertation examines internal factors as an aspect that influences the problem of dropping out from university careers, especially from English Teaching Programs. This issue is relevant since dropping out is a worldwide worry and one of the most important problems Colombia education faces every day.

This inquiry puts under study the national policies of education. Even though, the definition of student desertion is still under discussion, there is a consensus taken abandonment as a meaning of it. This can be explained by different categories: socioeconomic, individual, institutional and academic variables (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2009).

Considering the information above, Hummel's Individual Differences (ID) theory states 7 variables: intelligence, aptitude, attitudes, motivation, personality, learning style, cognitive style, and learning strategies. This work examines only 3 individual differences namely, attitudes, motivation, and language learning strategies. These factors are possible causes that could lead to responding to the research question. The findings in the data analysis demonstrates the influence of these factors.

Undergraduate students in their learning process suffer high levels of stress and depression when they are not able to reach a proper proficiency level in the second language. This happens, because they are not *motivated*, do not feel familiarized or comfortable with any *language learning strategy* or comfy with the evaluation of the L2 teacher, or the evaluation of the L2 course. According to Gardner, the mentioned variables belong to the *attitudes* factor.

Due to the literature review results and data analysis results discussed in the statement of the problem section, it is firmly believe this paper is important to help higher education system in

their effort to figure out which are the dropping out causes and to keep people in the education path.

In fact, one of the main problems Colombian higher education system faces is the high levels of academic dropout in the undergraduate careers. According to the Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Colombia, Natalia Ariza Ramírez, about 600.000 students who annually graduate from high school, 45% succeed in entering higher education and of these, about half graduate, (Oliveros, 2016).

According to the Determinants of Desertion 2014 report of Universidad de Los Andes, "desertion reveals the inefficiency of the higher education system, because it cannot keep all the incoming students, limits the expansion of higher education coverage and delays the formation of human capital quality in the country". (Andes, 2014, p. 7)

Besides, "student dropout is a phenomenon with multiple negative impacts both for students and universities and for the region and society" (Peña & Cardona, 2013, p. 1) and not just because of the money it costs for the state. Although a bigger concern is the social impact people without higher education is bringing for their lives and the development of the society in the 21st century.

Statement of the Problem

This paper explains the statement of the problem based on the dropout phenomenon. The purpose of this section is to present this phenomenon throughout this monographic paper by presenting some reliable supports. It is evidenced a complex issue when analyzing a Colombian Institutional Report of desertion by Bienestar Institucional. This report contributes to this inquiry to reflect on university desertion in a public university in Bogotá.

(Giovagnoli, 2002) defines dropping out as the: situation encountered by students when aspiring to but not managing to complete their educational project (p. 14), following a similar idea (Ernest Pascarella, 1983) in his student integration model says that the difficulties faced by students arise when they do not get fully involved in university life.

The university dropout is a serious issue that affects the social, cultural, and economic aspects of a society. The government should work harder to overcome social gaps that this problem is reflecting in Colombia. The educational advances on technology and investigation reflects the level of progress of a country. Colombia, a third-country world, allows its government to forget the importance of investing in the educational field. This happens when the budget allocated by the government to the public universities is not enough. The university desertion is not the only theme that has not received the attention it deserves. However, this inquiry contributes to the educational field by discussing the major causes that lead students to drop out.

The public universities are facing a big challenge to expand university campuses and improve its infrastructure conditions. This happens because of the demand of the university quotas are incrementing day by day. In this sense, the achievement to be admitted to a public university is considered for many a merit. Thereby, the non-admitted are being excluded to get a better life

quality for themselves and their families. A Colombian thinker states that *the education is considered a social elevator* (Zuleta, 1985), which brings better life's quality opportunities.

Now, what happens with the ones who once studying decided to desert from their educational path? The causes could be very varied, and it is noticeable say that one of these causes could be the lack of money. Nevertheless, not in others, other students deal with high academic standards, which affects their motivation towards their bachelor's degree. Their perspective changes and their attitude are not the best when failing subjects. Sometimes, this occurs due to students are not familiarized with any learning strategy. As a result, they do not ask for help and prefer leaving their dreams incomplete.

To support internal factors but not economic ones a study designed with the post-doc method called "Etiología de un sueño o el abandono de la universidad por parte de los estudiantes por factores no académicos" shows that plenty dropouts at Universidad Autónoma de Colombia had nothing to do with financial aspects. The most relevant factors are such as the human quality of teachers, academic quality of programs, and a university environment that repressed students' cultural manifestations, the previous factors constitute strong reasons for their disappointment (Manrique, 1997).

This paper puts under study an institutional inform by Bienestar Institucional. This department area contributes to an integral development and a permanent improvement for better life quality of the entire members of the university. Being SPADIES (Sistema para la Prevención de la Deserción en las Instituciones de Educación Superior) the department in charge of reporting this data to Bienestar Institucional. The report presents an overall perspective regarding the number of students who dropped in a TEFL program at the Distrital University. The data

collected dates from 2010 to the first semester of 2015. These graphics published in 2016 are reliable support for inquiring about the university dropout.

According to a blog from the National University, the number of students admitted at Distrital University is around 87 per semester. In contrast, SPADIES graphics show that just half of the undergraduates finish the program from all the incoming students at the end of a TEFL program. Furthermore, these graphics evidence that university desertion increases as much as students advance semester by semester. To find constant causes that lead students to dropping out at college the authors develop a data research with students from two public universities The data collect instruments are two printed surveys and an online one for students who interrupted their careers in the last four years. The first two surveys are applying to students at risk to drop out.

As is mentioned previously, the university rate of desertion increases by advancing the semesters. The inform reports the following findings: for 1st semester is on average 7.72% that is to say, 6 students, in the 5th semester the dropout is on average 29.35% of 23 students and in 10th semester 50% of 39 students (chart 1 & chart 2).

Chart 1

SPADIES consolidated: in percentages

Cohorte	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2010-1	1,28%	5,13%	8,97%	12,82%	26,92%	37,18%	38,46%	43,59%	47,44%	48,72%	52,56%
2010-2	1,28%	8,97%	12,82%	25,64%	33,33%	38,46%	46,15%	48,72%	48,72%	51,28%	
2011-1	1,28%	3,85%	11,54%	14,10%	14,10%	19,23%	19,23%	20,51%	21,79%		
2011-2	8,00%	9,33%	21,33%	30,67%	38,67%	41,33%	45,33%	52,00%			
2012-1	0,00%	3,85%	19,23%	21,79%	25,64%	30,77%	32,05%				
2012-2	6,49%	16,88%	27,27%	35,06%	37,66%	40,26%					
2013-1	11,39%	15,19%	18,99%	21,52%	29,11%						
2013-2	14,44%	24,44%	28,89%	31,11%							
2014-1	21,13%	23,94%	32,39%								
2014-2	7,32%	17,07%									
2015-1	12,33%										

Note: Taken by SPADIES on April in 2016. *Chart 1.* SPADIES consolidated: in percentages.

Chart 2

SPADIES consolidated: *in quantity*

Cohorte	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2010-1	1	4	7	10	21	29	30	34	37	38	41
2010-2	1	7	10	20	26	30	36	38	38	40	
2011-1	1	3	9	11	11	15	15	16	17		
2011-2	6	7	16	23	29	31	34	39			
2012-1	0	3	15	17	20	24	25				
2012-2	5	13	21	27	29	31					
2013-1	9	12	15	17	23						
2013-2	13	22	26	28							
2014-1	15	17	23								
2014-2	6	14									
2015-1	9										

Note: Taken by SPADIES on April in 2016. *Chart 1.* SPADIES consolidated: in quantity.

In the same way, the data collected from a pilot survey in two public universities in TELF programs reveals important facts. The surveyed population is between 19 and 27 years old and

between the seventh and ninth semester. The results show that there is a need to implement an intervention by the universities through a retention plan of follow-up since their admission. As the second choice, economic support or student loans are other options to reduce desertion rates. Finally, others consider that the university must have flexible schedules. Meanwhile, a few students reckon that the institutions must improve the selection filters when admitting new students. (See results in figure 1).

Figure 1

Students' perceptions on how to reduce desertion rates

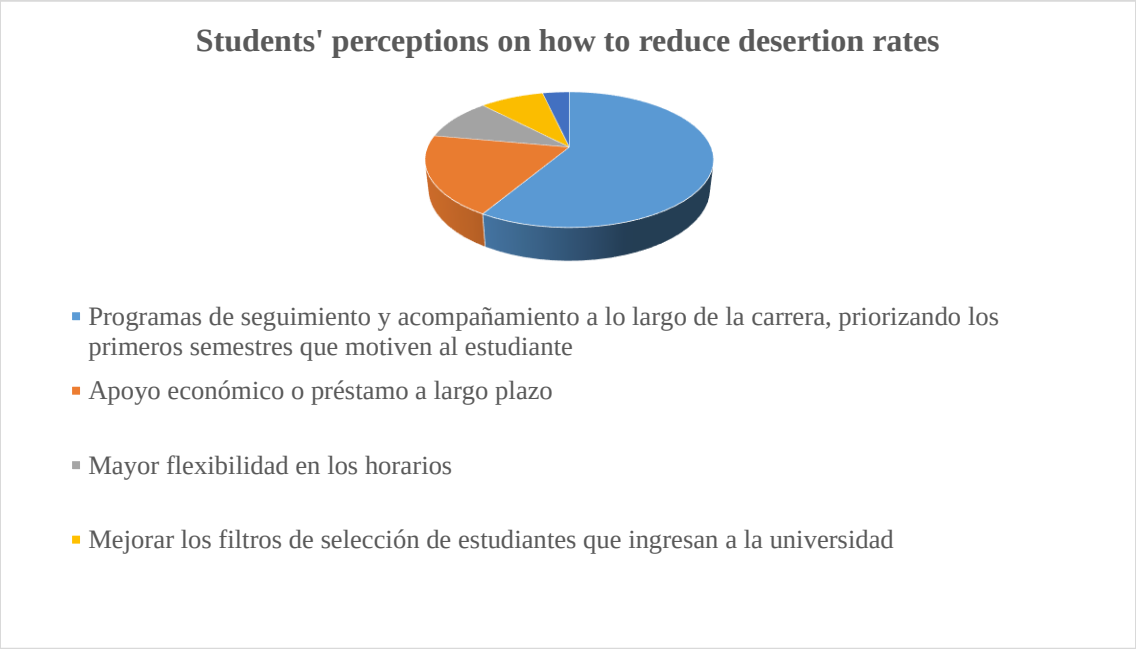


Figure 1. Students' perceptions on how to reduce desertion rates

The most relevant dropout causes are the Academic Standards with the highest score, then, followed by the disagreement with the teaching methodology and teacher assessment in a L2 course. The third score is the nonconformity with the curriculum. The two final facts are the work factor and lack of time. (See results in figure 2).

Figure 2

Causes of desertion

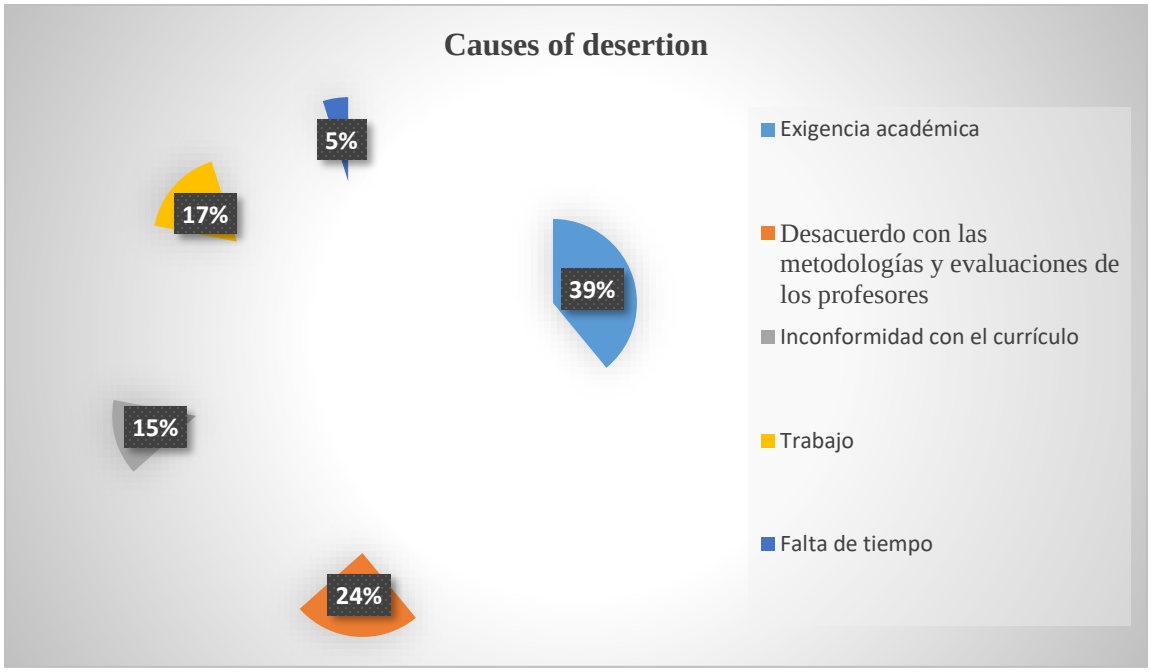


Figure 2. Causes of desertion

Likewise, (Giron & González, 2005) exposes that the first three semesters are the most critical period for students in the Economics Program. Nearly 95% dropouts are because of the poor academic performance, which happens during these semesters.

Within academic performance are students' attitudes towards the classes and likewise the motivation to keep studying. Also, the learning strategies used by the professor, vocation, personal expectations, the adaptability to university life might affect students' performance.

The education is and must be a challenge for the next governments in order to Colombia could offer to its citizens better-living conditions and a promising future. The big changes come from small plans and that is why this work is giving the first step. This work pretends to suggest

possible solutions for university dropout. Especially, it focusses on the causes of abandonment of TEFL programs. The purpose of these solutions could lead students to finish their bachelor's degrees successfully. Besides, it includes a model of a retention plan as a suggestion to universities.

Research question

- What are the most relevant causes of university dropout of two TEFL Programs?

General objective

- To determine the most relevant causes of dropout at National University and at Distrital University in TEFL programs.

Specific objectives

- To examine a bibliographic review regarding the desertion phenomenon.
- To address the major national policies about university dropout.
- To develop a data research in two public institutions.
- To propose a model retention plan to the educational field.

Justification

The justification of this proposal centers on problems that could be solved through pedagogy implementing a retention model plan, which attempts to find explanations and propose solutions to program management along with the faculty. Besides this, the literature review and the information gathered using action – research method through online and paper-based surveys are helpful to collect supporting data by contributing to the development of this research.

The monographic document intents to respond why in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language program (TEFL) over 25% of the admitted people drop the program at some point. This study purposes to examine the main causes of the desertion problem, taking into account the little importance it has received over the years in the educational field. From this point, the authors examine the impact and the results obtained through the retention model among the focus group. Based on this, the implementation of this model might be proposed to other TEFL programs in public universities.

Consequently, the information above shows a big concern for education in general, especially in public universities where the undergraduates have fewer chances to break down the status quo.

From a general perspective, the dropping out contributes to increase the social barriers between the ones who cannot access to the educational system and between the ones who can have the privilege to get better incomes contributing to Colombia’s economy. Non-education increases poverty rates.

Literature Review

The coming next research reports show different variables that can cause a person to drop out of his or her university studies. Notwithstanding, economic or financial factors are predominant in some studies, others as the following, reveal the importance of internal factors.

One of the internal factors is the motivation that comes from teachers, parents and the same partners to encourage them to continue in the path of education, as well as the importance of attitudes toward the L2 and learning strategies. Besides, it was discovered that retention plans lower attrition rates in higher education.

(Puentes, 2009) *Deserción y retención estudiantil en los programas de pregrado de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*.

This mixed research shows all type of variables that can cause desertion in the Universidad Javeriana. This work is divided into 2 stages: one exploratory, where it is explored statistically the topic of dropping out and it is evaluated through SPADIES and the second one named descriptive – explicative in which it is determined the causes and variables of this issue through a research population of 310 students. Besides, it evaluates the usefulness of aid programs offered by the university.

This study enriches the literature review and more than that, it helps the authors of this work to have a guideline on how to do a retention plan. Also, it provides clear examples for the design of surveys.

(Vanhournout, Gijbels, Coertjens, Donche, & Petegem, 2012). *Student's persistence and academic success in a first-year professional bachelor program: The influence of students' learning strategies and academic motivation.* Hindawi Publishing Corporation.

This qualitative study shows the connection between motivation and learning strategies to predict persistence and academic success in higher education. To establish such relationship, 873 students (87%) participated in the data gathering at the start of the year and 408 students (46%) filled in a questionnaire at the end of the academic year, they were first year students enrolled in a professional bachelor program in teacher education in Belgium.

The results on persistence indicate that lack of regulation and motivation at the start of the year are significant predictors. For academic success, results showed that relating and structuring, lack of regulation, and lack of motivation at the end of the year are meaningful factors to take into account. Moreover, it demonstrates that learning strategies and motivation have a moderate explanatory value regarding academic success and persistence.

The earlier mentioned information provides to this study new knowledge about motivation and the perspective of lack of motivation in the first year of college.

(Neçe, 2014) *Humor, loneliness, and acceptance: Predictors of university drop out intentions*. Procedia.

It is presented here, a research with a population of 164 university students (125 female and 39 male) with an average age of 21. These students were from the departments of psychology, mathematics, English literature and translation and interpretation.

This qualitative study collected data through interviews and a questionnaire divided into a psychological sense of school membership scale, a loneliness scale and a brief COPE, this last one understood as a measure of strategies used for coping or regulating cognitions in response to stressors. The study indicates that the intention to drop out was better predicted by non-academic

factors as: grade level, acceptance dimension of sense of school membership, loneliness and use of humor.

The aforementioned dissertation contributes to this work with great information about students' motivation, one of the pillars of this thesis. The discussion of Neçe's investigation shows the importance of being part of the university community and believe that there is an accepting atmosphere. However, when students feel rejected, and different from the other members of the university community they might think about leaving the university.

(Yehudit, 2015). *The Contribution of Teacher-Student Relationships to Perseverance, Dropout Prevention, and Motivation for Change Students' Attitudes in "Second Chance" High School*.

This qualitative report highlights the importance of teacher-student relationship being the teachers the ones who influence the final decisions of students and contribute to the students' chance of motivation. The population involved in this study are students who study at the "second chance" high school and their teachers.

This article is valuable because it establishes teachers as people who can influence students' decisions. The motivation teachers give to students, the relationships teachers have with them, and the environment created inside the classroom are decisive factors at the moment of dropping out.

(Lippke, 2012) *Who am I supposed to let down? The caring work and emotional practices of vocational educational training teachers working with potential drop-out students*. Journal of Workplace Learning, Vol. 24 Issue

The objective of this eight research is to explore the emotional aspects of teachers' vocation, and to present a preliminary analysis of the notion of care as socially situated within the educational system. This qualitative study took from August 2010 to February 2011. The population involves students at four different departments at a VET (vocational educational training) college in the Northern part of Denmark.

In this way, this paper is important because it provides as results empirical insights into the emotional practices and the management of emotions related to prevention of dropout within an educational setting. Furthermore, it identifies a need for further critical examination of the emotional aspects of teachers' working life.

All previous reports coincide in assigning importance to internal factors that cause students to drop out of higher education and the importance of a retention plan to lower attrition rates.

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses its attention on internal factors which can affect directly university students' decision to leave their studies and to lose the opportunity to overcome a social and educational status. Therefore, this section will examine two principal constructs.

In the first construct named: Principal causes behind desertion, it is discussed 3 individual differences which are: attitudes, motivation, and language learning strategies. On the other hand, this study examines the second construct based on the dropping out phenomenon which is described as one of the major problems found in higher education, according to an institutional report of desertion. (See Table 1 & 2).

Principal causes behind desertion

The principal causes behind desertion in this study are based on three out of seven *Individual Differences* defined by Hummel. In this way, this construct is divided into three concepts: attitudes, motivation, and learning strategies building up this first construct discussed in this section.

Attitude is usually demarcated as a disposition or tendency to react positively or negatively towards a certain thing such as an idea, object, person, or situation. Therefore, the leaning of a second language implies that students assume positive or negative attitudes towards the target language. Additionally, another study discloses that students´ beliefs and attitudes towards language learning may differ based on cultural background and previous experiences (Truitt, 1995). Hence, the positive or negative attitudes do not appear accidentally due to reasons behind them as the background of a language learner.

It is important to consider that undesirable experiences cause poor attitudes and a lack of motivation (Hashemiana & Heidarib, 2013). Meanwhile, (Gardner R. , 1985) asserts that attitudes can play an important role affecting the motivation in learning the target language. He defines the term of motivation in one construct which is divided into three aspects: the effort to learn the language, the desire to learn the language, and the attitudes assumed for the learner in the learning process (p. 50).

According to Kumaravadivelu external factors such as the environmental factor and the pedagogical ones can contribute to the development of a person to learn a language. The environmental factors contain “social, cultural, political and economic imperatives that shape the L2 educational milieu” (kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 36). The pedagogical factor refers to the

interaction between teachers, students, and the learning context which can cause positive or negative attitudes in the learner.

Researchers have found the relevance of positive attitudes when learning a second language. According to (Gardner, 2001), negative attitudes are generated due to a lack of motivation, and when the learners do not feel acquainted, or at ease with any *language learning strategy,* comfy with the evaluation teacher or the assessment of the L2 course. (Byram, 2004, p. 53) asserts: "experience of success influences attitudes to language, country, and people".

In relation to motivation variable, (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) determine motivation as "a concept that explains why people behave as they do". Furthermore, this term is defined as the effort to learn the language (motivational intensity), desire to learn the language, and attitudes assumed for the learner in the learning process according to (Gardner, 2001). He proposes this model reconnoitering the social factors and highlighting how attitudes affect motivation in learning the target language.

Likewise, Hummel's individual differences theory exposes the factors that can play a role in learning a second language, they are the following: intelligence, aptitude, attitudes, motivation, motivation, personality, learning style, cognitive style, and learning strategies (Hummel, 2014).

Motivation is an aspect that directly influences the learner's attitudes in the learning process. On the contrary, when there is no motivation it generates a lack of interest. Another model, which brings more insights to the term of motivation is the Schuman's acculturation model, he asserts that the different cultural and social contexts in which learning an L2 take place may influence how motivation is understood, how it operates and how language learning occurs (Keblawi, 1978).

Relating to the lastly internal factor which is *learning strategies*, Wenden (1985) recalls us, an old proverb that reveals exactly what is the relevance of it, it says: “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”. Thus, this proverb can be seen in action when students are facing a task and they get easily the answers by their professors, then they figured out the problem immediately, but if they are taught the strategies to solve the problem by themselves, they might be empowered upon the management of their own learning.

In addition, Dörnyei establishes a whole classification into three factors: learner-related factors, subject-related factors, and classroom-related factors. The *learner-related* factors are related to learner's anxiety and self-efficacy. Extrinsic, and intrinsic motives are *subject-related* factors. Lastly, the *classroom-related* factors are the ones that concern this investigation. These factors are related to learners’ opinions about class goals, teaching styles, feedback, learner roles and *learning strategies* (Dörnyei, 1994).

Similarly, Yang contributes to the relationship between EFL undergraduates’ beliefs on language learning and the uses of learning strategies, stating that learners’ self-efficacy beliefs were related to the use of all styles of learning strategies. The results show learner beliefs about the target language were detrimental to the learning process, also it resulted in many dissatisfied and frustrated students who could not understand the rationale behind the tasks they carried out in class (Yang, 1999).

Desertion at universities: a problematic phenomenon

Desertion is taken as an abandonment that can be explained by diverse categories such as socioeconomic, individual, institutional, and academic variables (MEN, 2009). In addition to this, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Colombia showed in a desertion report that

about 600.000 students who annually graduate from high school, 45% succeed in entering higher education and of these, about half graduate (Oliveros, 2016).

Undoubtedly, although this *phenomenon* has been a serious problem in Colombia higher education unfortunately has not received the attention it deserves. This fact evidences an implicit social impact that influences the high levels of academic dropout in the undergraduate careers. As a result, SPADIES published an institutional consolidated from a public university, evidencing that in 1st semester 6 students (7.72%) decided to leave the career, in 5th semester 23 students (29.35%) and in 10th semester the 50% of students dropped out (2016).

Indeed, a study from a Bogotá university expresses its nonconformity in regards of the absurd desertion rates. This phenomenon, "reveals the inefficiency of the higher education system, because it cannot keep all the incoming students, limits the expansion of higher education coverage and delays the formation of human capital quality in the country (Andes, 2014). Similarly, researchers assert that “student dropout is a phenomenon with multiple negative impacts both for students and universities and for the region and society” and not just because of the money it costs for the government, but most important the social impact people without higher education are bringing for their lives and the current society (Peña & Cardona, 2013)

In fact, those rates have been involving many social and cultural implications in our society and the way that we live. From this point, the authors of this monograph realize there are many features involved in this *phenomenon*, although we based our work on the *principal causes* which are the most remarkable.

Research Design

First, this section explains the research approach carry out in this monographic paper. Then, it describes the type of research and gives the purpose of it. Next, the leading method research defines skillfully why this work requires this research technique. Afterwards, the most suitable data research instrument contributes to collect the data from the respondents. Once it is defined the research design, it describes the surveyed population. Finally, an analysis of all the results gathered show further information about the phenomenon under study.

The research approach that guides this work is the qualitative technique. The qualitative approach explains the complexity of the different ways of looking at the world of education. Moreover, it allows and gives validity to our research question that comes from a university setting. Similarly, the qualitative method permits us to evaluate and look at the problem of drop out with a different perspective that leads to other solutions (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2009).

The most accurate type of research to conduct this work successfully is explanatory – research. When the focus is on cause-effect relationships, the study can be explanatory explaining which causes produce which effects (Yin, 1994). It builds on exploratory and descriptive research and goes on to identify actual reasons a phenomenon occurs. In this study, the researchers use theories or hypotheses to represent the forces that caused a certain phenomenon. Literature research, survey, focus group and case studies are used to carry out exploratory research. An exploratory research may develop hypotheses, but it does not seek to test them (Darabi, 2007).

This inquiry conducts an action research method and defines it as a "participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities" (Reason and Bradbury. Cited in Miller, Greenwood and Maguire, 2003, p.10). Considering this definition, this work proposes solutions and a plan retention model in benefit of the university community and its members.

This inquiry centers its attention on surveys as the most suitable data research instrument. The Pennsylvania State University defines surveys as a data collector instrument. It uses standardized questionnaires or interviews in order to identify customer expectations, measure satisfactions levels and determine specific areas of improvement (2006). The surveys applied in this research use closed and open questions, multiple-choice, and Likert Scale questions to develop the data research.

The population under study is from public universities in Bogota of two TELF programs. These two groups take part in a pilot survey. The methodology consists by applying a pilot. In total, the undergraduate students are 48: 21 from National University, and 27 from Distrital University. Then, another group at risk to drop out contributes to get further data. This group comes from an upper English class at Distrital University. Now, this group responds to another printed survey about their insights about their personal causes to drop out. Finally, the researchers apply an online survey to 13 former university students who dropped out in the last four years.

The last part in this section is the results from the respondents. The following graphics show and analyze the inquiries asked to the undergraduates. The first graphics belong to the replies

from the pilot survey. Then, it goes the analysis from the students at risk to drop out. At the end, the google survey explains its findings.

Figure 3

Influence factors in desertion rates

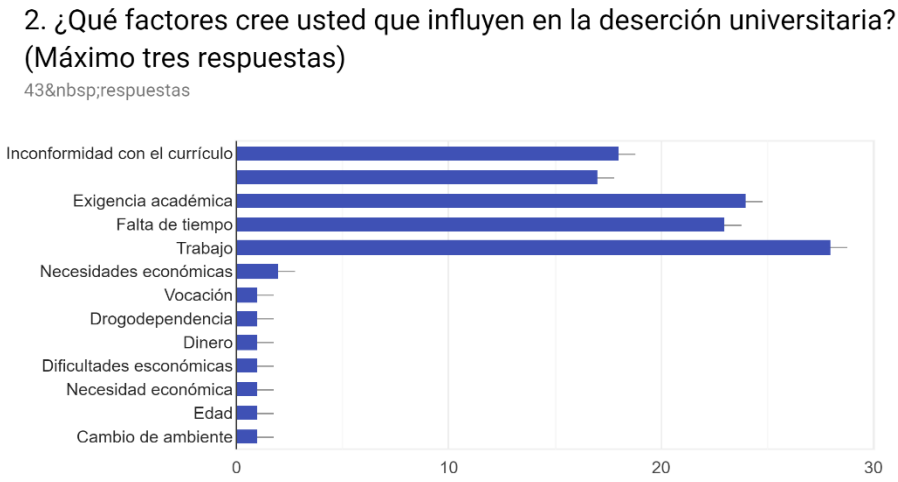


Figure 3. Influence factors in desertion rates.

When inquiring the possible influential factors that can cause students to dropout it is found that most of the surveyed people believe that working and studying at the same time is the factor that most affects in the academic life, also we can interpret that academic exigency, nonconformity with the curriculum and lack of time are crucial components.

Figure 4

Vocational orientation

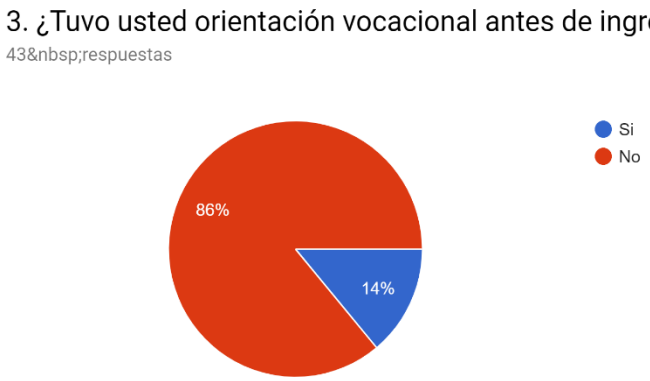


Figure 4. Vocational orientation

This inquiry says: Did you have vocational orientation before submitting to the University? The graphic shows the reality of Colombian scholars; students do not have vocational orientation; universities do not guide students before the admission not even high schools do it before students' graduation. Due to the aspects mentioned before, several students do not choose the right career path and take the decision to dropout since is not something that they are passionate about or it is not useful for their lives.

Figure 5

Considering dropping out

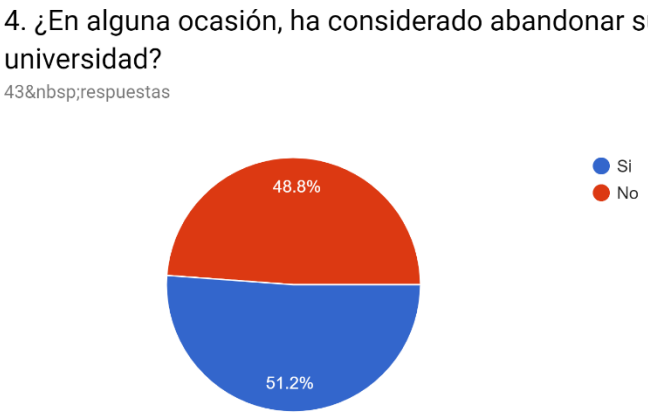


Figure 5. Considering dropping out

Fifth question: Have you ever considered to leave your studies?

Surprisingly, 51.2% of the respondents have considered the possibility of dropping out. To know the why of that issue the authors searched for the general levels of satisfaction which demonstrate most undergraduates (83.7%) are satisfied with them. So, the big question here is why are the considering quitting the studies. To find out the answer, this investigation searches for other variables which readers can see below.

Figure 6

Level of satisfaction



Figure 6. Level of satisfaction

Figure 7

External influences



Figure 7. External influences.

The sixth inquiry is: who chooses your career?

Out of 43 responses, the 83.7% chose “me” as the answer of the inquiry, the 14% chose “me with external influences” and a minimum percentage opted for answering “relatives”, finally nobody chose the “friends” option.

What does it mean? According to the analysis done, students despite not having an appropriate orientation they are choosing their own careers. This is to say, they go with high expectations or non-expectations at all, and in the middle of their educational path decide if that is what they want occasioning the sudden dropouts.

Figure 8

Economic resources

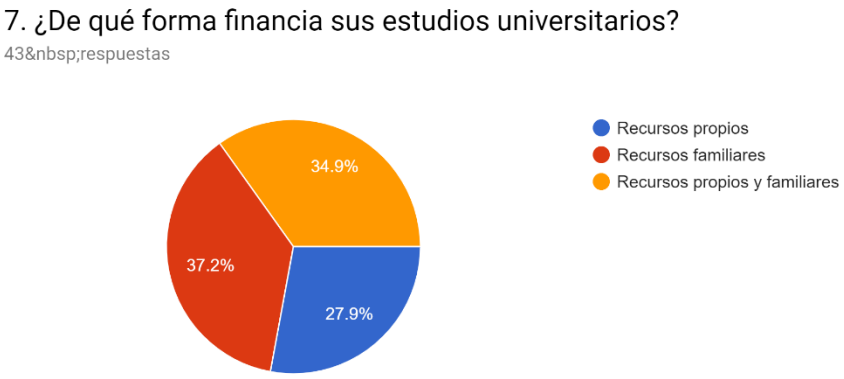


Figure 8. Economic resources.

The seventh variable is: How do you finance your studies? And the eight variable asks for the current status of employment.

The pie chart of the seventh question indicates the different ways students pay for the students, the most notable one with a 37.2% is family resources, followed by family and own resources with 34.9% and not far below the own equity is represented with 27.9%.

In the same side, the nineth and tenth figure, illustrates the current students' status of employment, showing that the highest percentage are students who work and the ones who do not as a notably fact, 100% of undergraduates would not quit their studies if a work opportunity presents to them.

It is comprehensive then, that students mainly in public universities have the need of studying and working at the same time and flexible schedules are a plus.

Figure 9

Current employment status



Figure 9. Current employment status.

Figure 10

Employment issues



Figure 10. Employment issues.

Figure 11

Mates who drop out at a certain point



Figure 11. Mates who drop out at a certain point.

Do you know any partner who has dropped out of the career? The numbers are divided in this way: 65.1% for people who know at least one deserter and 34.9% for people who do not know

any deserter. This indicates this booming phenomenon needs considerable attention and immediate solutions.

Figure 12

Mates who drop out at a certain point

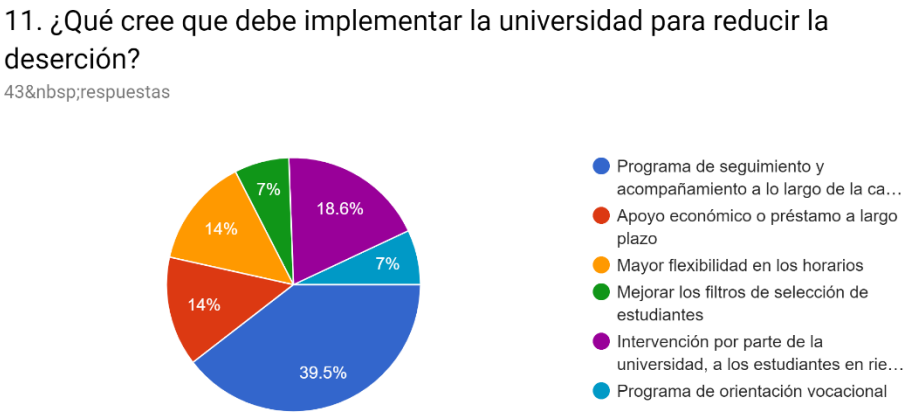


Figure 12. Mates who drop out at a certain point.

What do you think can be implemented to reduce the dropouts? This is a remarkable question, which provides this study with first-hand answers given by freshmen and seniors about improvement opportunities regarding the desertion phenomenon. Being 100% the total, 39.5% is the highest percentage which states the necessity of a follow up program during the whole career. Far below, the pie chart shows the second need students consider vital, this one is about a program to help scholars about to drop out. The third and fourth aspect to consider are economical aids and schedule flexibility, both aspects represented with a 14%. Then, with a 7% it is found two aspects: enrolling up students into a vocational orientation program and better filters for people who want to study there.

Figure 13

University choices

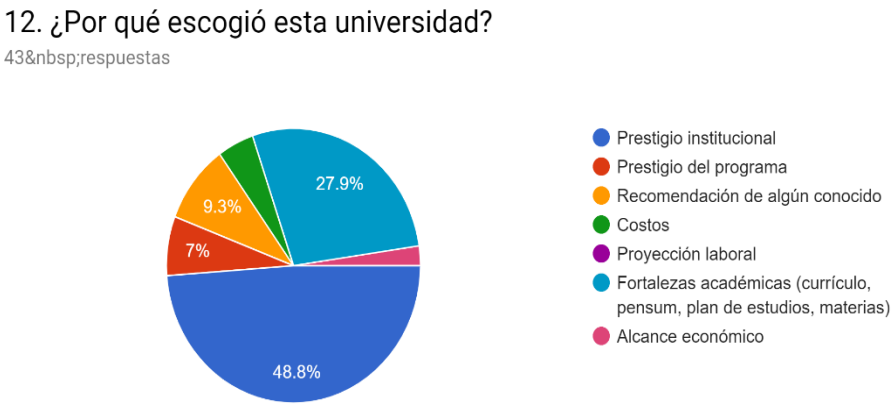


Figure 13. University choices.

Most students (48.8%) chose institutional prestige as the most accurate option for the question: why did you choose this institute? Follow by academic strengths with a 27.9%, other aspects are friend recommendation, career prestige, expenses and economic scope with the lowest percentage.

Figure 14

Accompaniment program at the university

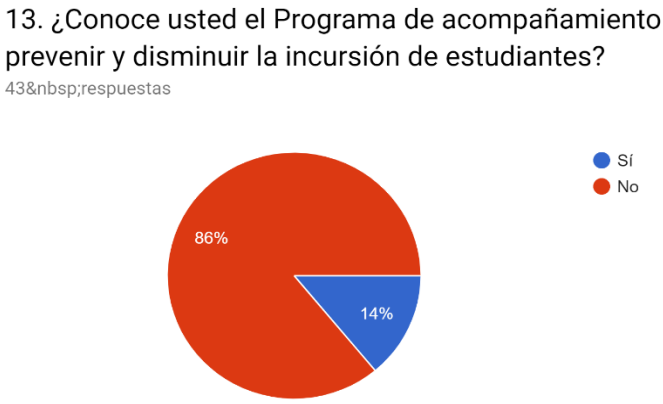


Figure 14. Accompaniment program at the university.

Article eleventh. Destination of the resources. The financial resources from the enrollment of students who register three or more missed subjects, have an average of less than 3.2 or register an academic space for the third or fourth time, are destined to accompaniment programs, tutorials and other strategies. aimed at preventing and reducing the incursion of students into causes of loss of student status (Caldas, 2011). This information is not known for many, just 14% of students are aware of it.

Figure 15

Relevant causes when dropping out



Figure 15. Relevant causes when dropping out.

The most influential aspects that can lead a student to become a deserter are the constant repetition of subjects, the university life stress and lack of interest. They are followed by aspects as: loss the quality as student, bad environment inside the classrooms and bad relationship between student-student and student-teacher as well as being sick or being pregnant. These last two with the lowest percentages, which indicates they are not a common factor to dropout.

Figure 16

Current studying status

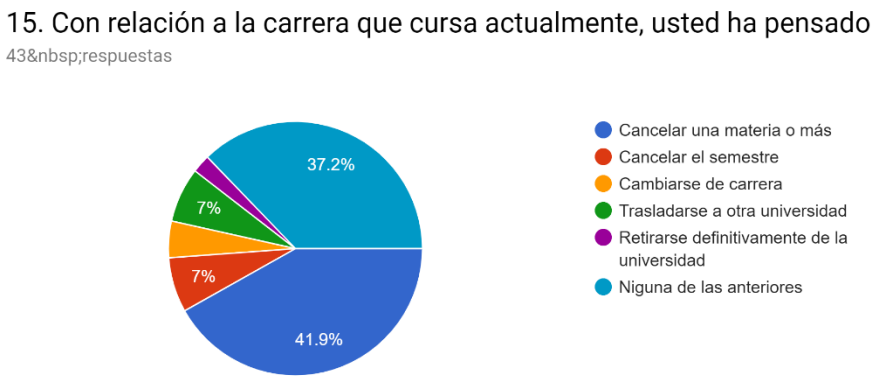


Figure 16. Current studying status.

Regarding students' career, many of them (41.9%) have considered to dropout to one or more subjects, the 37.2% of scholars have not considered the following aspects: dropping out of university, being transferred to another institution, quit the semester nor change of career. What can be inferred here, is the improvement opportunity regarding curriculum and teacher methodology.

Figure 17

Final projects issues

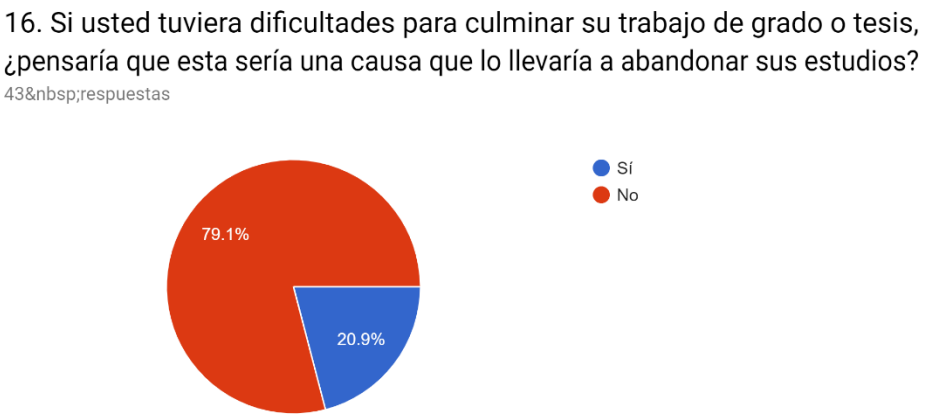


Figure 17. Final projects issues.

To go deeper in this research another survey with 26 students at risk to dropout was applied in a public university with the aim of knowing students' perspectives around the main problematic that is under study in this work. Similarly, the students were asked to answer 9 questions, the population were students from 3rd to 10th semester (as illustrated in the graphic). Thanks to this survey, this investigation has a wide view about the inconveniences, students may have along the career.

Figure 18

Group at risk to drop out

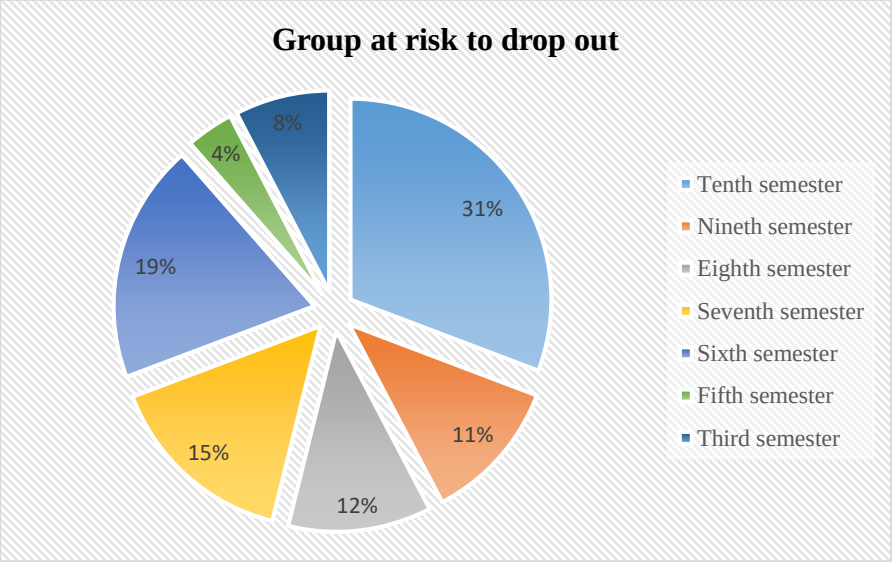


Figure 18. Group at risk to drop out.

The principal cause points out that students' lack of money is a real problem affecting students life, this is represented with a 34% percent, those percentages are equal to students' lack of motivation, personal and familiar issues, career's lack of knowledge with a 15% percent of the surveyed. Other answers highlighted are related to time to work and study at the same time and pregnancies with a percentage of 7. Then, other causes are absence of communication, selecting of the career under pressure, social concerns, the curriculum as well as the program were disappointing and did not cover the hoped expectations, and nonconformity with either public universities or career with just a 3,8 percent.

The most remarkable aspect regarding students' points of view upon dropping out inside the university is that desertion deserves more attention as well as its causes. Other replies are

primarily based on the social and economic impact in the society when denying to others the possibility to get access to high education.

Moreover, most of them concurred about the relevance of implementing university's programs to prevent the desertion because it does not exist an appropriate retention plan to control this phenomenon in their institutions.

The fourth question is: In your experience, in what semester is presented the highest level of dropouts? Why? The 60% of students consider that the higher levels of dropouts are from the 2nd to 4th semester because of the high academic standards established by the university. With 25 percentage students believe that these dropouts happen since the first semester to the fifth due to the school's practicums. Finally, there are others (15% of the population surveyed) who say this phenomenon occurs because of the nonconformity with the chosen program, thus students prefer to stay at the university until they get a better option before dropping out.

It is evidenced that there is an awareness about the high abandon rates presented in the university in programs like Teaching English as a Foreign Language program this is represented with a 76 percentage out of the total of the students surveyed. In the following inquiry, students were asked to give more details about the semesters in which they have perceived a higher level of desertion.

Figure 19

Desertion rates according to students' perspectives

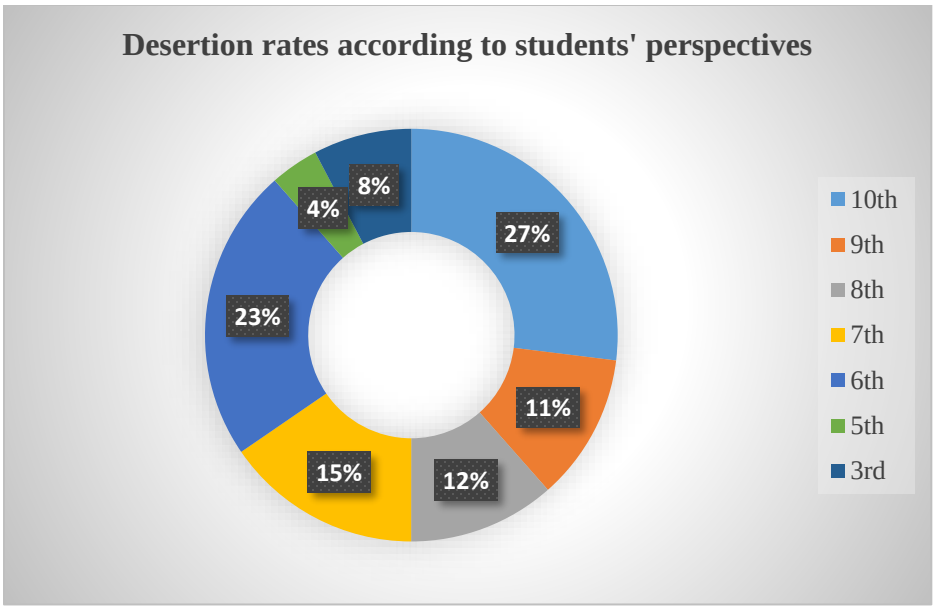


Figure 19. Desertion rates according to students' perspective.

The above image illustrates students' personal experiences about the classmates who decided to drop out at Distrital University. The percentages on the circular graphic show the semesters in which there are more dropouts according to the respondents. As a result, 10th semester gets the highest score of desertion. The sixth question related to the most relevant causes to lead them to drop out their degree, the majority replied: the disagreement with teachers' methodologies and assessment as well as the repetitive loss' subjects.

The seventh question is: How many classmates do you know who not keep studying the career you are taking? The data collected regarding this question shows a high percentage of students who know at least 10 desertion cases equal to a 26 percent out of the total. Equally, another 26 percent said that they know 15 classmate deserters. Then, there is a lower range between those who said 20 with 23%, and those who answered 8 and 6 students along their permanence in the program with 7,6 percentage. Finally, those who know just 2 cases were the 3,8 percent as well as those who replied they know 40 cases.

The eighth inquiry is: Have you ever thought in retiring from university? The survey got 19 answers confirming the possibility of dropping out and 10 saying the opposite. Undergraduates justified their responses mostly based on facts as demotivation and inconformity with the curriculum, teachers' methodology, work field, and inflexible schedules that affect students' mental health. Besides, they justify themselves declaring the existence of a wide difference between the curriculum and real necessities inside classrooms.

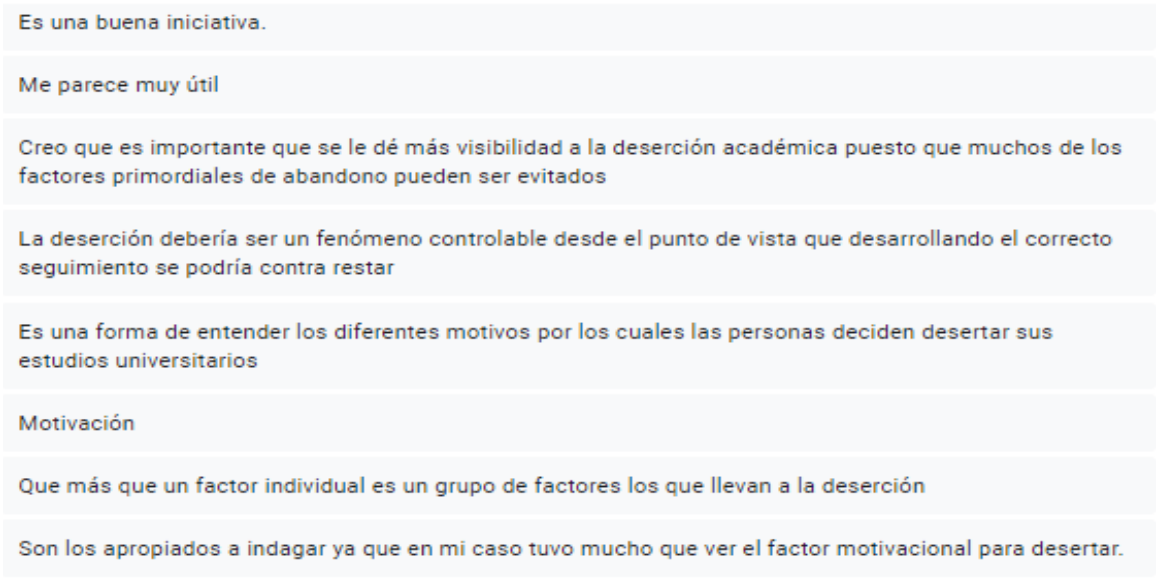
To approach this problem, the students were asked about the most appropriate solution to decrease the current desertion rates at the university. More than half of the students (53,8%) said the university needs campaigns to reduce those rates as well as fliers and online advertising to inform the educational community. Furthermore, others added the idea of having vocational guidance and psychological support.

To finish this section, this study collected data by using an online survey with 13 students who decided to drop out. It was planned to have 30 surveyed people within the focus group, although just 13 students took the online survey. The information collected with the focus group is described below:

The surveys were recorded and uploaded to a google survey to present the gathered data in an understandable and organize way. The survey started with this first question: what was the semester in which you decided to drop out? The answers showed a consistency of dropout cases from first to seventh semester and the fifth semester obtaining the 30% out of the total. When asking the reasons why they took the decision to drop out it is evidenced that the career and the curriculum itself were found disappointing. In fact, it affects directly their attitude and motivation towards the learning and teaching process.

After checking the respondents' answers, this dissertation has strong evidence of the presence of a real problem at public universities in Bogotá, Colombia that must be treated with attention, especially, the motivation factor towards the educational process.

In this part, there is an analysis regarding the replies of 13 ex-students who decided to drop out of a TEFL career at the Distrital University. The first question asks about their first insights when considering the internal factors as causes to drop out. In general, there is an agreement by exploring all the causes that might lead students not to keep studying. Also, they say that the desertion phenomenon deserves more attention. For these individuals the motivational factor is the most remarkable cause. The below image illustrates some of their answers:



The next figure shows 84% percentage of agreement that the motivational factor, their attitudes towards the target language and the lack of any learning strategy might influence their decision not to continue their degree.

Figure 20

Disappointing aspects of the career

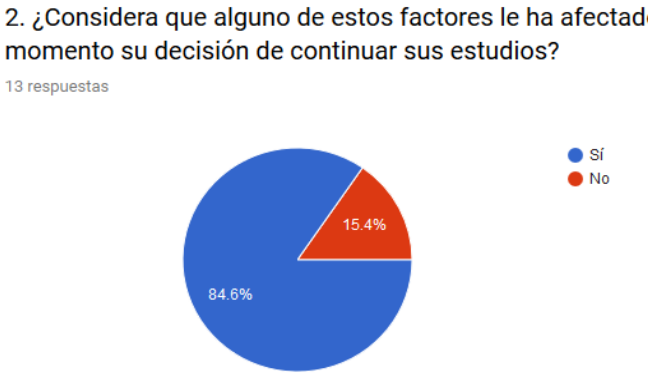


Figure 20. Disappointing aspects of the career.

The 21st figure illustrates 84% of certainty when the respondents affirm to know someone who deserted because of one of the three main factors mentioned in the previous question.

Figure 21

Factors that may influence students' desertion

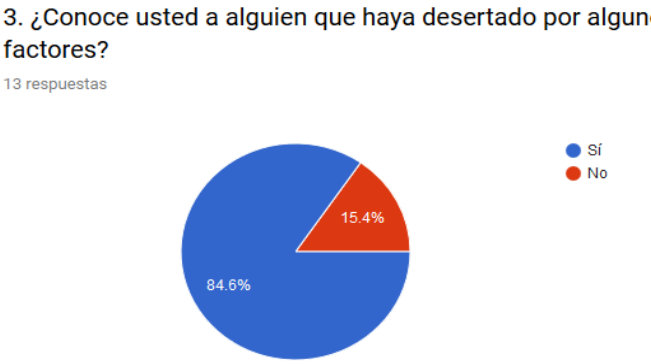


Figure 21. Factors that may influence students' desertion.

The fourth question says if they consider relevant having a good attitude towards the acquisition of a second language. All the undergraduates agree with this statement. Then, the fifth one states if their attitude is not the best in class, it might delay their learning process in the target language. Again, all the students respond affirmatively.

The figures from 22nd to 26th show the respondent's opinion by using a Likert scale. When selecting 5 stands to reason that a specific cause is truly relevant or on the contrary when selecting 1 for the least relevant. The personal motivation cause gets in its majority a score of 4 which means that the motivation could lead them to drop out.

The seventh question states the disagreement with teachers' methodologies and assessment that gets a score of 4 as well. The difficulty to get over frustrated and stressful situations gets 3 which means that this cause is not very relevant, but it could be considered important. The subject's students must repeat because they lost them are the most significant cause for the surveyed students according to the 25th figure. A lack of learning strategies towards the L2 is the last cause that gets a score of 3 out of 5 possible points.

Figure 22

Personal motivation

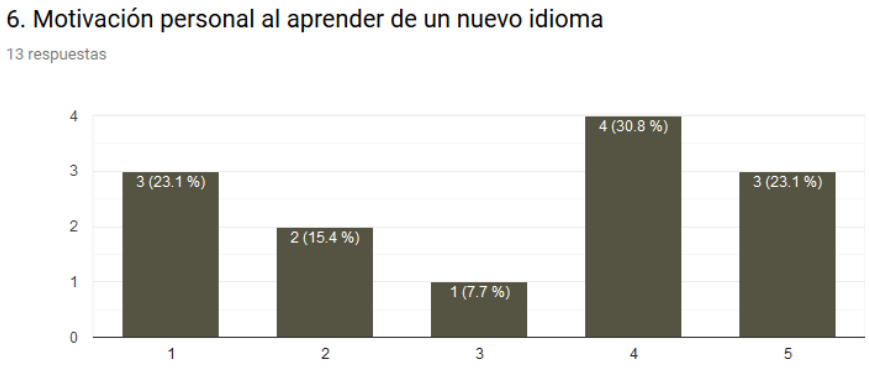


Figure 22. Personal motivation.

Figure 23

Disagreement with teachers' methodologies and assessment

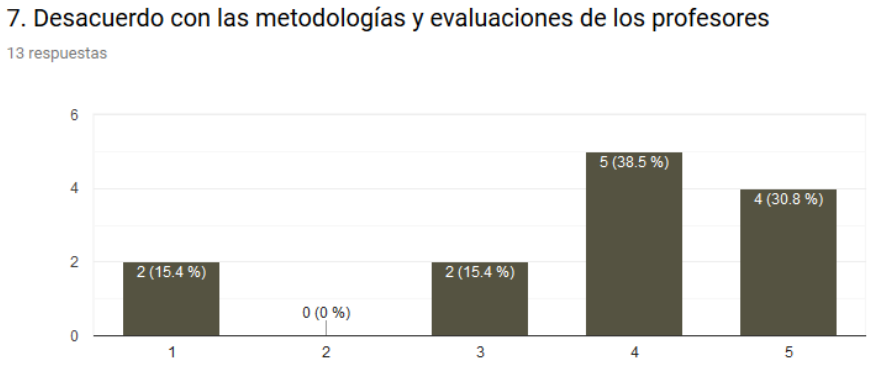


Figure 23. Disagreement with teachers' methodologies and assessment.

Figure 24

Difficulty to get over frustrated and stressful situations

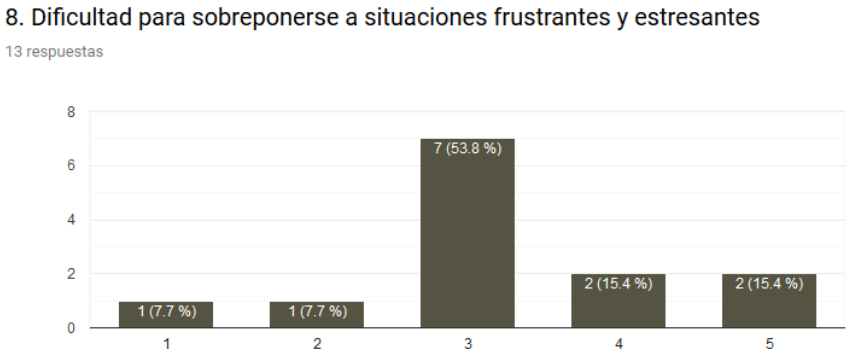


Figure 24. Difficulty to get over frustated and stressful situations.

Figure 25

Repetitive loss' subjects

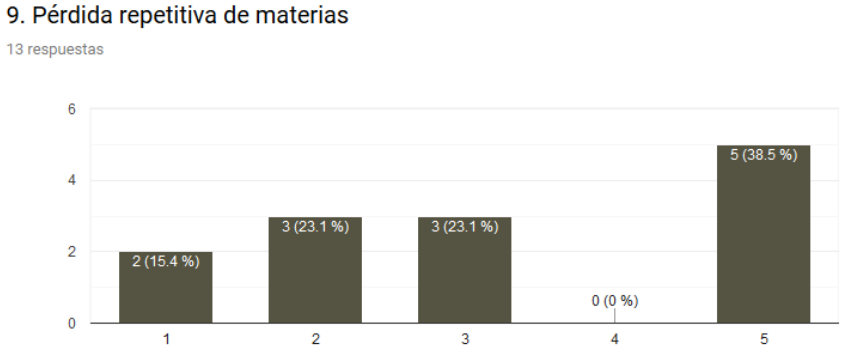


Figure 25. Repetitive loss' subjects.

Figure 26

A lack of learning strategies towards the L2

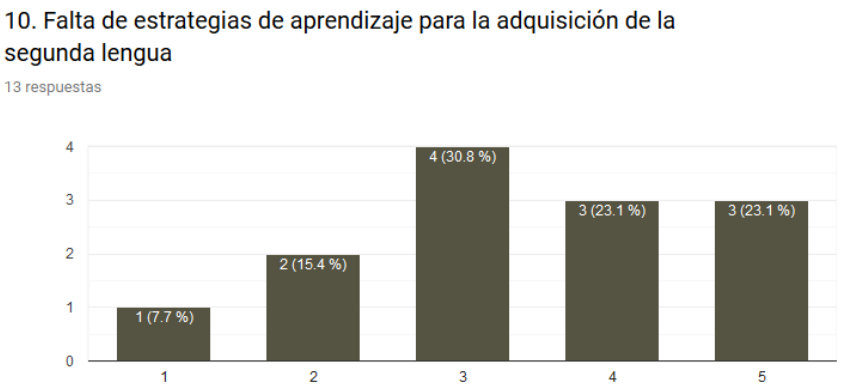


Figure 26. A lack of learning strategies towards the L2.

Figure 27

Disagreement with the curriculum

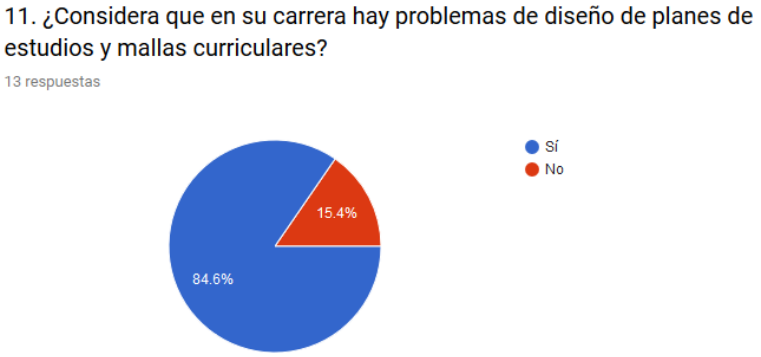


Figure 27. Disagreement with the curriculum.

Do you consider the curriculum at your university is a poor curriculum?

Nearly all scholars answered in an affirmative way, considering issues at the moment of creating the curriculum and not providing students with all the advantages studies plan should

have. On the other hand, a 15.4% considered the curriculum is appropriate. What is shocking is the number of students who would quit because of a poor curriculum (76.9%), this according to the question: Would you desert because of a poor curriculum? in figure N°28.

Figure 28

Curriculum aspects



Figure 28. Curriculum aspects.

Instructional Design

Instructional design is the systematic development of instructional specifications and it analyses learning needs with the purpose of creating material and solutions for the research question. In this case, the instructional designed is based on the creation and development of retention plan model.

Theoretical Framework of the Retention Plan Model

When talking about higher education, one of its problems is the phenomenon of dropping out, which not only brings negative economic consequences such as unemployment, which consequently brings lack of opportunities, crime and social decompensation for the society but at the same time imbalances in the students' lives who present frustration due to their professional and salary aspirations (Báez, Pedraza, & Moreno, 2011).

"Retention", according to the RAE is the action and effect of retaining (Real Academia Española, 2014). In the university field, retention is understood as the actions carried out and taken by the university cloisters with the only purpose its students finish with success their careers.

For the development of this plan, it is important to mention Tinto's model which is the basement of this proposal. Tinto's theory has five categories which constructs interacts to determine student's dropout decision. In many respects the three primary principles of Tinto´s model are to describe processes whereby institutions of higher education were committed to the students they serve, that they were committed to the students to the education of all, and thirdly that they were committed to the development of supportive social and educational communities in which all students are integrated as competent members.

Another important aspect taken out from the survey conclusions, is the need to offer the student the possibility of having an accompaniment during their process. In this regard, Seidman (1993, cited in Vásquez et al., 2008, p. 115), certifies that the post-admission guide makes a positive impact on the permanence of the student. Consequently, Billson & Brooks in 1987, affirm that student participation becomes more visible, when there is a large institutional support, increasing retention and permanence of students.

Besides, this plan was also based on an study who group into five categories the needed support for students in order to overcome the difficulties at the time of studying, which are: a) programs of recruitment and admission, b) financial support programs, c) academic service programs, d) curriculum and instructional programs, and e) student service programs (Swail, Perna, & Redd, 2003)

As this work concentrates on internal factors and gives relevance to them, it is not considered the category *b) financial support programs* proposed by the last authors. This, with the purpose of giving a complete idea of how keeping students into the educational system if the causes of dropping out are not financial problems.

Pedagogical Foundations of the Retention Plan Model.

The pedagogical foundations in which this monographic work is based are the following:

- The improvement of the curriculum can engage students and have them motivated in their studies if they see the link between the theory and the practice (Sacristán & Pérez, 1991)
- The institutional framework of the school system must adapt to “the growing demands (high curricular standards, external evaluations with consequences for students, teachers

and managers) together with the development of endogenous capacities (autonomous management, staff and resource management and classroom teaching) in the schools" (Hopkins. Cited in Vargas 2015, p.20)".

- Finally, the importance of a monitoring program following Tinto's model which has as main idea the "integration". It declares that whether a student persists or drops out is powerfully predicted by their degree of academic integration, and social integration (1975).

Evidence Proving Dropout Programs are effective.

There is strong evidence that dropout prevention programs reduce dropout rates. There are many types of dropout prevention programs; most types significantly improve outcomes when well implemented.

Many variations of dropout prevention programs are effective. Vocational training and alternative schools have been shown to increase high school completion rates by just over 15%. Social-emotional skills training and college-oriented programming increases rates by at least 10%. Mentoring and counseling, supplemental academic services, school and class restructuring, multiservice efforts, attendance monitoring, and community service programs demonstrate increases of at least 5%, and case management efforts yield increases of 3.6% (CG-TFR Education).

Dropout prevention programs that deliver all intended intervention components and sessions planned for each student produce the best outcomes. Programs that monitor students in caring, personalized learning environments are more effective than less intense interventions. Besides, dropout prevention programs that intervene early and address multiple risk factors also have

stronger effects, although additional research is needed to inform best practices in this area (Freeman & Simonsen, 2015).

When implementing dropout prevention programs, schools can avoid overburdening staff by seeking community partners to provide mentors, services, and career exploration opportunities. Professional development can help teach staff new skills, integrate academic and vocational content, and address students' problems more effectively. Researchers recommend using data to track at-risk students and selecting only the most willing adults to be student advocates (Sciences, 2008).

Overall, dropout prevention programs produce economic benefits to government and society, reducing productivity lost, health care costs, crime, and welfare costs. Program costs vary significantly.

Highly significant student retention experiences in Colombia.

Institution	Description
Universidad Católica de Colombia	Institutional tutoring program for undergraduate students. This program includes two types of tutoring: a) academic tutoring (tac) and guidance tutoring (tor). The first is aimed at students in critical academic situations, from any semester, and the second to students from first to third semester. • Flexibility: foundation of retention in higher education. This experience was presented by the School of Technologies (ucet), located in Chia-Cundinamarca. This project includes academic and administrative flexibility based on the following criteria: autonomous programming by student's part of their curriculum, modular or cycle programming,

	connection between programs, global assessment, skills training for work, and links between basic and secondary education and technological and university education.
Universidad Pedagógica Nacional	This program is based on qualitative and quantitative studies based on the factors associated with attrition and includes the following dimensions: *Institutional* (self-assessment, admission, induction, well-being), *pedagogical* (plenary, Inter-semestral courses, tutorials, academic follow-up to students), and *psychobiological* (health programs, individual counseling, focus groups).
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana	Academic Accompaniment Program (pac). The program aims to provide academic and psychological guidance to students. Activities include are: Students' cognitive training (workshops, conferences, tutoring, support groups); self-strengthening (psychological orientation, academic and family counseling, group intervention); food support; and training in participation and coexistence (research on the subject, scholarships).
Universidad Pontificia Javeriana	Tutoring Program: provides support to each student, through tutorials, in their different processes and situations during the college life. The tutor watches over the integral formation of the student from the ethical-training, disciplinary and communicative competences, provided by their emotional, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and body training.
Universidad EAFIT	Scholarships are awarded for academic stimulation, for stimulation in co-curricular activities, scholarships for employees and family members, complementary scholarships, monitoring program, etc.

Source: Torres Luz (2012), based on Guzmán & Franco (2008, cited at men, 2008a)

Retention Plan Proposal

Based on the information given throughout this monographic work, the current proposal for the retention of students in Colombian higher education considers specific criteria as a guide and orientation for the plan. Some of the criteria aspects are:

First, in the retention plan all the university community must be involved. Universities get better results when the academy is joined looking for the same goal.

Second, to achieve the proper functioning of this action plan, the educational community must have specific tasks distributed among themselves.

Third, the university must have a sense of community and service towards students regardless of age, genre, or career.

Fourth, the actions shall be addressed to all students, even if they are not in risk of dropping out of the career, nevertheless is recommended to have a focus group which includes the most vulnerable students.

Besides, this action plan model recommends dividing the plan into phases:

First Phase: The moment before the admission.

Second Phase: Since the very moment of being admitted.

Third Phase: The first year of studies.

Fourth Phase: Among the whole career.

Likewise, and following the study and recommendations of Swail to implement any retention program, it is necessary to carry out four steps or phases: pre-planning, planning, execution and

monitoring of the program which we consider every university should carry out (Swail, Perna, & Redd, 2003).

First stage: Pre-planning. During this stage the institution must analyze the magnitude and scope of the different aspects related to the retention program; identify the needs of the students; assess the situation and effectiveness of current retention strategies; identify institutional resources that could be used or redirected and identify successful retention strategies on other campuses.

Second stage: Planning. It includes the improvement of the university mission and its objectives; the development of organizational strategies; the identification of the main stakeholders on or off campus and their role in the retention process; evaluation, presentation and discussion of data pre-planning; the development of program components, operation strategies and the development of an execution plan.

Third stage: Execution. It refers to the development of the retention program, in accordance with the plan previously prepared. It is essential for the administration of the program to provide both political and financial support, in order to cover all the unforeseen and difficult circumstances that may arise.

Fourth stage: Monitoring program. During this stage the main activities are: data collection; the analysis of program components and student performance; the dissemination of data to all involved and ensure that the results of the program monitoring are included in the program.

The following charts are created in order to provide strategies to reduce students' dropout in higher education, considering specific features to reduce the dropout rates as consequence of the internal factors.

Strategies Aimed to Diminish Student Dropout in Higher Education.

As a first action, a student development committee, led by teachers and executives categorized and divided by the different departments of the university, should be formed to analyze the cases of possible deserters.

Internal Factors	Definition	Strategies
Attitudes	Gardner (1985, p. 50) asserts that attitudes can play an important role affecting the motivation in learning the target language. And according to Byram (2004), experience of success influences attitudes to language, country, and people" (p.53).	Identification and follow-up programs for students in risk of dropping out because of consumption of psychoactive substances, unplanned pregnancies, violence, among others (men, 2018a)
		Detection and management program of the main characteristics of students' mental health (men, 2018a)
		Program aimed to create bounds between teachers and students, and students - students. This program has the objective of improving relationships and educational environment inside the university.

Internal Factors	Definition	Strategies
Motivation (academic support)	Motivation is an aspect that directly influences the learner's attitudes in the learning process. On the contrary, when there is no motivation it generates a lack of interest.	Tutorials, for students who want to have a reinforce in the topics seen and to potentiate students' abilities.
		Remedial courses, for students with difficulties in academic aspects.
		Group of leaders (students-teachers-administrative) who monitors the students with problems in the academic life.

	Counseling for students in the last semesters who have had difficulties advancing in the career.

Internal Factors	**Definition**	**Strategies**
Learning Strategies	The learner-related factors are related to learner's anxiety and self-efficacy, while he asserts that extrinsic, and intrinsic motives as subject-related factors. Lastly, the classroom-related factors are the ones that concern us, those are stated to learners' opinions upon class goals, teaching styles, feedback, learner roles and learning strategies.	A lectureship about learning methodologies, so students can get to know themselves and will know what the best way of studying is.
		Study techniques workshops. This to give students tools to success by themselves.
		Communication channel so students can have a way to give an opinion to the teacher about the methods and methodologies used in class.
		Workshops for teachers on how evolve classes and keep a rhythm with new generations and the technological resources.

Conclusions

The major purpose of this section is to set comparisons between the beginning of the research, the findings during the data collected and the results of the inquiry. Thus, it is essential to restate the objectives and the goals posed since the desertion problem raises in the authors' minds. The methodology consigned in this work conducted this inquiry successfully to explain the phenomenon under study. For this reason, these final pages show the findings bearing in mind the qualitative approach, the explanatory research, the action research method and the contributions by using surveys to collect the data.

The qualitative approach implies to produce data about specific cases. In this sense, instead of generalizing it uses hypotheses. This approach seeks deeply information to get a better understanding of human being behaviors. The *literature review* supports this idea by exploring the deficiencies that the Educational field might have when there is no intervention to reduce university dropout rates. Furthermore, the respondents' replies show the common concern for a pedagogical intervention to reduce desertion rates.

The qualitative method contributes to address the major national policies about university dropout. The findings conclude that this topic not only contributes to building up the social inequalities but also, Colombia is still under the same economic issues without offering to the population to get better opportunities and better life's qualities.

The *research design* section uses an explanatory research to explore the causes and reasons by providing evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction. In this way, the authors present the major hypothesis when discussing individual factors as the most relevant causes to decide to drop out of a TEFL program. These factors are motivation, student's attitudes towards

the L2 language acquisition and the lack of any learning strategy to get a better understanding of the target language.

The principal aim of a research action method is to generate reflection on a specific issue. Equally, the intention of this method is to improve the practicum and the context through the inquiry process. To achieve that goal the researcher needs to propose possible solutions to address the problem. Based on the findings throughout this work and the actions needed to address this problem a model retention plan is proposed.

The action plan model recommends four phases to keep a track of student's performance. In addition, it includes four steps: pre-planning, planning, execution, and monitoring to identify the students' needs since they are admitted. At the end of the retention model plan, there are some strategies focused on the three factors: attitudes, motivation and learning strategies.

The printed surveys, as well as the online one, aim to develop data research in the two public universities. The dropouts in the pilot survey shows the highest score attributed to the Academic Standards, followed by the disagreement with the teaching methodology and teacher assessment in a L2 course. The third score demonstrates the nonconformity with the curriculum. The two final points highlight the work factor and the lack of time. According to the results, the economic and employment issues are not as relevant as the first three. On the other hand, the principal cause pointed out for the students at risk to drop out is the lack of money with a 34% percent, and then the percentages are equal to students' lack of motivation, personal and familiar issues, and career's lack of knowledge with a 15% percent of the surveyed.

After checking the online survey responses, it is evident that the presence this problem that must be treated with attention, especially the motivation factors. These factors are related to a

disagreement with the career and the curriculum itself. In fact, it affects directly their attitude and motivation towards the learning and teaching process. Besides, the fact of the inflexible schedules that do not allow them working while studying.

As a summary, there is no consensus about what the most relevant causes are because these might vary depending on any specific case. However, it is important to consider all the causes around the desertion problem, even those that are not strictly related to the students' lack of money or time.

The issues around the faculty as a working and studying setting concern to all the members. The importance of this inquiry is to foster awareness of continuous schooling. The educational path should be left half no matters the reason. There is a need to keep on this path by strengthening the social relationships instead of avoiding them. In this sense, the desertion cares to all those who take part in the students learning process. On the one hand, the head teachers who should keep a track of students' permanence. On the other hand, the administration of the faculty who oversee these desertion rates: Bienestar Institucional in the case of the Distrital University.

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