PERSISTENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS

*[*1]Pricila Kohls-Santos and [2]Patricia Estrada Mejía**

[1]PhD in Education, Doctor in Education, Professor and researcher in Universidade Católica de Brasília, Leader of the CNPq Research Group: Technology, Internationalization and Student Permanence – GeTIPE. Department of Education, Universidade Católica de Brasília
[2]Master in Business Administration, researcher in the Group Engineer and Society - Universidad de Antioquia and researcher in the Group Technology, Internationalization and Student Permanence – GeTIPE at Universidade Católica de Brasília. Advisor at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia

---

ABSTRACT

The present article presents the qualitative advances of a quanti-quali type study based on focus groups, and the use of Discursive textual analysis for its processing, analyzes the perspectives of five professors and five students of an institution in the South of Brazil, on the student's persistence in higher education, taking into account, by the factors pointed out in the literature, the issue of involvement as one of the most important aspects in the studies for persistence. However, our analysis also demonstrates a highly significant finding that is the issue of dissociation between higher education systems as a key variable of academic failure. Consequently, this points us to the need for human resources training and continuing professor training for student follow-up. The responses of professors and students allow us to recognize the importance of creating a link between them, in which the students feel recognized from the follow-up of their professors.

INTRODUÇÃO

Higher education in Brazil has been changing its configurations over the last decades. These changes are boosted to some extent by the strong expansion of private higher education and the low investment in public higher education. Although initiatives and investments in public higher education can be found through REUNE and the establishment of Federal Institutes of Education, most of the investments are still in the private sector. Such investment is also due to the growing investment in distance education and the presence of multinational education companies that are gaining market in Brazil.

In this context, talking about persistence in higher education becomes a controversial theme, because on the one hand we have the quality of teaching and on the other the commercial logic of ease of access and massive offers of undergraduate courses. However, disregarding this second point, there is a need to look at the questions of college students when we think of persistence and even more, in teaching practice facing the challenge of keeping students in the institution and the higher education system. In this space, universities are being invited to remain as educational institutions where their core is Education and, at the same time, to keep up with the growing demand

for qualification and diversification of institutions to remain competitors in the globalized market. Altbach (2009, p. 31) states that "the role of universities as institutions devoted primarily to teaching and research may be weakened by the struggle to become relevant in the business world and the labor market". As pointed out by Ortega and Grasset (1930), the University must be in contact with public existence, with historical reality, with the present, being in the midst of today and immersed in it; it is not enough to be in contact with science alone, as it risks stagnation. In the Brazilian context, the National Education Plan (PNE), published by MEC in 2014, has the national goal for higher education to increase the gross enrollment rate by 50% within ten years. The PNE, which has the character of law, is updated every ten years and provides, in the case of public institutions, a 40% increase in the number of enrollments. This target is quite optimistic, but hardly achievable, given the approval of the PEC to freeze public spending (PEC 241/2016). However, even if we do not reach these numbers by 2024, we need to devise strategies to raise student retention rates in higher education and for this to hear the subjects at the heart of this context is of paramount importance. Thus, in this article, a clipping is presented, given the complexity that the theme of persistence embraces, seeking, in teaching practice and

in the presence of the student, elements for reflection on the difficulties and challenges of thinking higher education avoiding reductionism in relation to these authors roll, but rather to understand how we can unite the different perspectives for student persistence in higher education. This is an investigation that is part of research group Interdisciplinary Research Group Technology, Internationalization and Student Permanence that is part of the Network South Brazilian Network of Researchers in Higher Education, linked to the Center for Studies in Higher Education – CEES/PUCRS   which develops research related to the quality of higher education and its ramifications. When it comes to the quality of higher education, this should be one of the main goals of a country, as it is directly associated with the country's development through the production of knowledge. This knowledge is linked to the human, social and economic development of nations. In this sense, different concepts of quality are pointed out for the educational spheres, from the isomorphic conceptions that aim the standardization of processes centered in the evaluation, to the ones that prioritize the search of the quality respecting the diversity or, the conceptions of quality with equity, grounded in the principles of justice, inclusion and ethnic and social equality (MOROSINI, 2009). Considering that quality is, or should be, a transversal axis and foundation of higher education, we approach the theme of student persistence taking into consideration studies by researchers such as Tinto (1987, 2012, 2017), Cabrera (1992), Astin (1991, 2012), Trowler (2010), Coates (2007) who emphasize the issue of involvement as one of the most important aspects in persistence studies. In this sense, the present article aims to explore the relevant aspects for student persistence in higher education, from the perspective of students and professors, in order to signal some possible ways and / or proposals to encourage reflection and actions on this phenome.

Student persistence in higher education: Perspectives on screen: There are different perspectives for student persistence, there is no single definition for this issue, although the term refers to students who enter higher education and continue their studies until the conclusion of the course, there are different dimensions and factors, recommended by different authors, who characterize the phenomenon of student persistence in higher education. An important point to clarify is that even though we understand that the reasons that lead students to stay work as the basis for actions that avoid dropout and vice versa, in this text we will only take the perspective of persistence because we understand that dropout and persistence are not movements simply opposites, each has important approaches and characteristics that cannot be treated simply as adverse. According to Tinto (1987, 2012, 2017) when approaching persistence, institutions and their collaborators need to understand that persistence goes beyond the enrollment and re-enrollment of students at the University, although this is the first and important step for the existence of Higher Education Institutions (HEI), the persistence has to do with the objective of the existence of educational institutions, which is the education of individuals and not simply their schooling. The author states that the analysis of persistence without educational links and objectives should not be of interest to either people or educational institutions. His theory is based on the student's social and academic integration, in which the more integrated and engaged the student is in the institution, the more likely he is to remain in school. Thus, Tinto (1987) states that the more students are involved in common peer learning experiences, whether these are academic or social experiences, they are likely to be more involved in their own learning and invest more time and energy to learn.

Astin (1991, 2012) points out that persistence is closely linked with students' motivation to achieve their academic goals and purposes. In other words, for the author, the positive experience of the students' involvement in academic activities has to do with the satisfaction with the coexistence in the educational institution and with the offer of activities that go beyond the purely curricular ones, because diversified activities can motivate the students' coexistence and the sense of belonging to HEI. Complementing this perspective, Cabrera et al. (2006) highlight that students remain when they realize the social and economic benefit linked to studies. They also point out that

financial conditions have a positive impact not only on student enrollment, but also on participating in extra-class academic and social activities, both within and outside the institution. In their studies, they point out that by realizing future gain, for example, quality of life, improved social status, placement in the job market, students become more engaged in their studies. However, the search for financial resources becomes one of the main barriers at the family level to access university studies, so students from low-income and middle class families are significantly less likely to start a university course and, even less likely to complete a degree. (Cataño et al, 2006). Taking into account that in order to remain students also need to be engaged in their purpose of studying, we present the perspective of engagement as an incentive for student persistence. In this study, we take the terms involvement and engagement as synonyms, since the literal translation of the term engagement into Portuguese does not manifest the different dimensions that the word expresses in the English language, so we will keep the original term engagement in this text as a sense of student involvement, commitment and engagement. Engagement is more than involvement or participation because it requires feelings and meaning making as well as purposeful activity (Trowler, 2010). For Coates (2007), students who have a collaborative style tend to favor the social aspects of university life and work, rather than purely cognitive or individualistic positions of interaction. These students have a level of engagement that goes beyond the individual, their posture is towards engaging and supporting other students in academic integration. It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned authors also point out as important for persistence variables related to aspects prior to the entry into the HEI, such as the quality of previous educational background, socioeconomic conditions, the family context, the student's intentions regarding their studies, the coexistence with professors, as well as the quality of the academic system of the institution as a whole. One individual-type variable that is relevant to academic success is self-concept, as supported by various studies, Purkey (1970), Kifer (1975), Covington and Omelich (1979), Byrne (1984), Hamachek (1987), Markus, Cross and Wurf (1990) or Leondari (1993). Perception and feelings about oneself are determining factors for the academic success of individuals (Urquijo, 2002). Negative self-concept creates a lack of confidence in oneself, leading to a distorted view of oneself, feelings of worthlessness and disability, which may later reflect in poor academic and social performance. (Parra, 2015)

In other words, there are many aspects and actors related to the persistence in higher education, which can be looked at by different points of view and perspectives. For this reason, we propose to analyze the views of students and professors regarding the aspects of persistence, believing that these actors and their involvement are directly related to persistence.

METHODOLOGICAL

The research is characterized as a case study of mixed, qualitative and quantitative approach, aiming to know and better understand the variables related to student persistence in face of the challenges of the emerging context of higher education from the point of view of students and professors. However, in this article, only the results referring to the qualitative stage of the investigation are presented. Thus, after complementing the bibliographic research, the field research was performed, which is "used to obtain information and / or knowledge about a problem, for which an answer is sought" (Lakatos and Marconi, 1992, p. 76). Field research was conducted through focus groups with the participation of professors and students. The focus group strategy was chosen because it provided opportunities for dialogue and interaction among participants, providing the same answers that go beyond those provided for in closed instruments, such as the questionnaire. For in the logic of a focus group, according to Barbour (2009), the participants discuss from their own referential framework and perspective about the proposed theme for discussion. The essence of the focus group is to be constituted with defined objectives, presupposing a greater interaction between the participants and the researcher, which aims to know and collect data on a certain theme from focused discussion and previously defined

script (BARBOUR, 2009). In this sense, in the present study the focus group technique aimed to know the impressions and opinions made in the collective discourse between professors and students of higher education. Thus, the focus group was planned in advance, taking into account the objectives of the study, from the selection of participants, materials used, problems and group moderation. It is noteworthy that this investigation was duly approved by the Research Ethics Committee and it followed the ethical protocols and procedures for carrying out all stages of the investigation. Participants were selected by invitation, being voluntary participation, having as criteria the participation of undergraduate students and undergraduate professors with minimum experience of 4 years of teaching. Participants are professors and students from a public higher education institution in southern Brazil. The script for the focus group was organized taking into account the factors mentioned by Santos (2015, 2017, 2020) for the persistence in higher education, namely: Teaching Practice, Course Quality, Institution Management and Student Dedication. Also, aspects such as academic integration, professional valuation, social and academic integration, financial and economic factors and involvement were considered (Astin, 1991, 2012; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1980, Nora and Cabrera, 1993; Perna and Thomas, 2008; Tinto 1987, 2012, 2017). In this sense, the script was presented to experts who performed content validation (Malhotra, 2006), such validation aims to align the instrument with theoretical assumptions. During the focus group session, the data obtained were recorded and recorded, making the written record of reflections and notes of participants for further analysis of the content under discussion. For data analysis, as it is a qualitative study, we opted for the discursive textual analysis (Moraes and Galiazzi, 2007), in which movements of deconstruction, fragmentation and disorganization of the text were performed to establish new understandings. This process was used in order to organize the data for analysis, as well as to know and visualize the recurrence of terms and inferences of the participants, correlating the data collected with the theory. In order to elucidate the methodological process performed in the present investigation, we present in Figure 1 the methodological path drawn in this investigation.
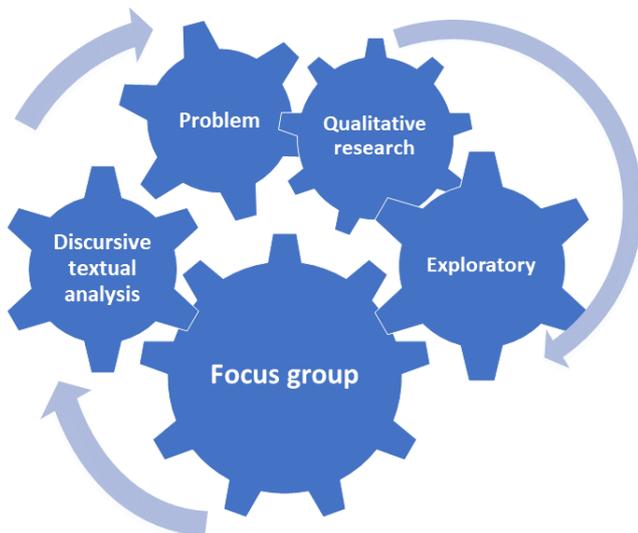

Source: Prepared by the authors

Figure 1. Methodological research route

Once presented the methodological path, with the description of the procedures of data collection and analysis, in the next section we present the discussion of the results.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The investigation made it possible to analyze the perceptions and desires of professors and students regarding student persistence and its intervening factors. Four main factors that are the object of

analysis were identified: the Teaching Practice, the Student, the Institution and the Abyss between basic and higher education. These factors are the categories raised after data analysis. Figure 2 presents the Hierarchy Chart of these categories and their subcategories.
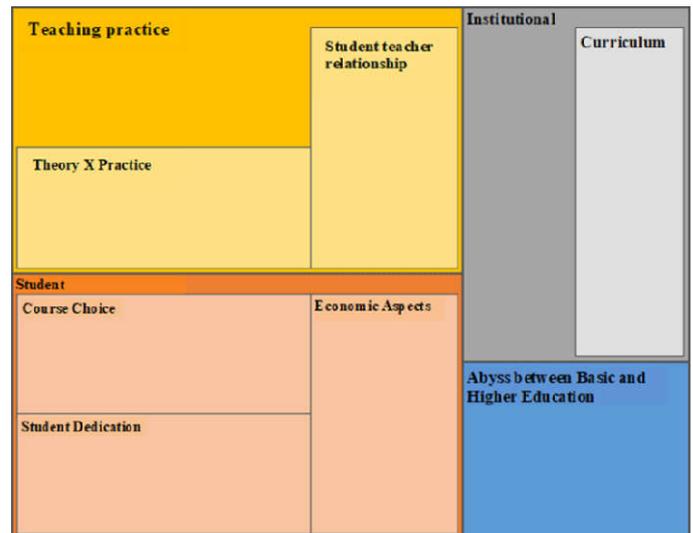
Source: Prepared by the authors

Figure 2. Category Hierarchy Chart

When presenting the graph in Figure 2, it is important to emphasize that it was elaborated with the aid of NVivo software and represents the distribution of participants' inferences regarding each theme. Thus, it is possible to verify a symmetry between the number of inferences related to the Student and the Teaching Practice, categories with greater emphasis on the subjects' speech, followed by the Institutional questions and the Abyss between Basic and Higher Education. In general, when addressing the issue of student persistence, these are recurring aspects most remembered since professors and students play a central role in higher education and in education as a whole.

Teaching Practice: In the context of this investigation the Teaching Practice category is understood by the relationship between the activities, assessments, posture and relationship of professors in teaching and learning actions, whether in the classroom or in a university context that promote or promote student persistence. In this sense, it encompasses both questions raised by students, as well as some notes from the professors themselves, focusing on the professor-student relationship and theory versus practice.

Regarding teaching practice, students comment that most of the time, the professor does not know who the students are, where they come from and if they are understanding what is being worked on. In this regard Student 3 states that "*the student should take care of his grades, his schedules, be able to understand what the professor is talking about and he [professor] doesn't even care about what I understand, it's all different and lonely*".

While one of the professors participating in the focus group dialogues that

> "*The student needs a return, he needs to know that we know they are there and we know their condition. When, in addition to the course materials, the professor points out extra-class material, a video, to deepen the content, he knows he needs to look for it too, needs to deepen his readings, he knows that only what he sees in class is not enough, so we have a student who has a critical eye and we sometimes think he doesn't.*" (Professor 1)

Corroborating Professor 1's speech, Student 5 says that "we have little psychological assistance for professors to help us in order to have student assistance. At the beginning of the course, we are very cut off in our speech, we are underrated by the professors."

From the participants' inferences, we can infer that one of the common characteristics is the lack of dialogue or even the lack of listening by professors, which makes the connection between students and professors difficult. In this sense, it is important to establish a learning community in the classroom, in which all participants have a voice and turn and can expose their concerns, doubts and learning. According to Nóvoa (1997, p.26): "The exchange of experiences and the sharing of knowledge consolidate spaces of mutual formation, in which each professor is called to play simultaneously the role of trainer and trainee". Thus, we see the collaboration between the subjects, especially in the establishment of dialogue between professors and students, as one of the main strategies to reduce the dropout / dropout in higher education and, thus, stimulate the persistence of students. Since this dialogue can be established by the approximation of theory and academic content, with daily practice. For Pérez Gómez (2015), education can be seen as the process by which each individual has the opportunity to, alone or cooperatively, question and reconstruct the effects and influences they received in the socialization process. It means opening and expanding identity; It is, beyond the formative process, a path that transforms. The author adds that "real life requires addressing complex problems, using content and skills in real contexts and motivated by relevant goals or purposes" (Pérez Gómez, 2015, p. 42).

An important question raised by one of the professors about their practice is the need for connection between the course subjects and their content with reality. As Professor 4 comments,

"*We need to work by connecting the various course disciplines to integrate them, helping students understand why they need the content, because otherwise when it has difficulty in one of the contents, it discourages them as well. But to do this we must overcome the barrier of being isolated in our classes without talking to other professors. It is our role as professors to help the immature student make the connection between the contents and their practical applicability.*"

In the search for a better quality for higher education, focusing on teaching practice, the importance of considering the dynamics of knowledge is highlighted, impacted by the interaction between research and practice that shape professor knowledge (Eisner, 2017). Such a stance does not imply giving up the traditional practice of professors, with a directive centered on methods and techniques, but this is added to the knowledge of available tools and resources, as well as an analysis of them with an investigative and innovative look. By this dynamic applications can be identified in teaching practice, enabling the awareness of themselves and what we really know, do not know and what you need to know in order to teach.

As indicated by Professor 3 "*What is the function of teaching? If we indicate that it is empowering students for their social development, we have to assume our responsibility as one that shows the available and possible paths within the surrounding reality.*"In this understanding the teacher would be able to combine the content worked with his students to their daily lives students, creating and recreating a rich knowledge-producing environment in which all are both authors and learners. Gale, Mills, Cross. (2017).

Institutional aspects: In addition to the character of vocational training, "[...] Higher Education Institutions must assume the fact that they are, above all, agencies of human and social development (Bawden, 2013, p. 14). When committing themselves to human and social development, they presuppose, from higher education institutions, a look at their surroundings and what is beyond the university's walls. Supporting this approach is community participation, which is generated by the understanding that not all knowledge and experience reside in academia, and that both specialization and great learning opportunities are also found in non-academic contexts. (Taylor and Parsons, 2011).

The professor's speech reminds us of the importance of higher education institutions offering academic and social support to students as a way to value their presence in the institution and encourage their persistence in studies. "*Another important aspect is the university providing the student with social integration, in addition to academic education. The student must perform activities in laboratories, workshops, scientific initiation, and attend environments of coexistence between professors, students and staff*" (Professor 1)

It should be noted that, from the student's entry into the academic system, each action and / or decision is related to issues arising from the institution subdividing them into formal and informal interaction. Relative to formal interaction is academic achievement that influences academic and social integration, which is linked to institutional goals and commitments and is directly linked to the decision to drop out. Just as interactions with professors, even informally, also have an influence on academic and social integration, and their absence can influence dropout.

Interesting to note the following speech:

"*Everyone here, I believe, knows why they are here and sometimes this is not said to the student, because they have to follow that course plan, or that curriculum, or the connection of one discipline to another. and then someone said that the student does not understand the course until its half. We tell him what the course is? Or do we come and give our discipline? We have to give it some thought.*" (Professor 5)

Which meets another professor's speech by saying that:

"*We have a teaching structure with a model of the last century and we do not rethink this structure, we do not stop to think what really the university, especially in the curriculum structure, needs to think to cope with today's faster-paced contemporary demand. has other demands.*" (Professor 4), and also coincides with what Parra et al. (2015), the role of professors is relevant to the development of students' academic and emotional self-concept, since they can create in students a positive view of themselves and their ability to solve academic assignments, as well as counteracting poor opinion that some teens have when they get to university. This is due to the treatment, information, and judgments with which professors relate to students. It is recommended to include in the pedagogical foundation courses, a module on self-concept, so that the professor reflects on the consequences of their attitudes and language in the relationship with the students. In this regard, Martins and Ribeiro (2017) state that interaction between professor and student is important and also that the feedback should be performed appropriately, not only considering the response time, but also the way in which the evaluation is performed. if there is the possibility of dialogue to discuss the issues raised.

According to Klemenčič and Chirikov (2015) as student learning and development were perceived as closely associated with institutional quality, this has boosted research on student satisfaction and student participation in educational activities. Since students who perceive themselves as belonging are more likely to persist because it leads not only to enhanced motivation but also a willingness to engage others in ways that further persistence. (Tinto, 2017) What is beneficial, on the one hand, can be interpreted as a way of establishing poor institutional quality with the performance of their students, which can be a misconception from the standpoint of student persistence and academic success, as it may incur responsibility for non-persistence and failure only on students.

In this respect one of the students states that

"*Several professors pointed to the issue of disapproval, demotivation and this makes me think about the evaluation process. As students, we often have the idea that proof is decorate and I have all the information with a touch on my phone, why decorate? Maybe an inconsistency in current*

curricula and I don't see college or professors thinking about it". (Student 3)

And another student adds that "*the assessment system is sometimes selective, and sometimes not measuring knowledge, measuring information.*" (Student 1)

For this reason the use of student research data and institutional evaluation by external bodies such as the government is increasing as a way of knowing and measuring the quality of higher education institutions. Whereas institutions themselves can also use this data and the experiences of their students to rethink the University from the perspective of students who are the main purpose actors of higher education institutions. As Tinto (2017, p. 264) points "Only when institutions understand how student perceptions shape decisions to persist and how their actions influence those perceptions can institutions move to impact those decisions in ways that enhance the likelihood of greater persistence while also addressing the continuing gap in college completion between students of different attributes and backgrounds". What students say is valuable information for institutions to rethink their practices and planning, both for student retention and for working with future students.

The student: The student of higher education is the main actor in the context of HEIs, or at least it should be. It is the main actor, since from these depends on the existence of the Universities. We do not mean that only students do higher education, but all educational, management, research and extension actions focus on student education. And that is why we need to keep the focus on students, not forgetting that they have the right to quality education, the right to learning opportunities, but linked to this is their co-responsibility in their training/educational process. When we talk about co-responsibility, we also talk about the concept of student commitment that has become "fundamental to a more contemporary understanding of student experience and to debates about quality improvement" (Callender et al. 2014, p. 31). Thus, student engagement implies interaction, exploration and relevance, and classroom practices anchored in real problems (Taylor and Parsons, 2011). When the question of student commitment was raised, the students, participants of the research, raised aspects related to difficulty in the subjects, failure, financial and emotional aspects. One of these reports that "*The course is difficult and demanding and if students fail in some subject, they lose their family's financial and emotional support most of the time.*" (Student 1) If we add that problems such as abandonment, violence intra-family, addictions and alcoholism are just some of the situations to which they were previously exposed and, in which, studying a university course becomes an escape route. In turn, this family dimension has a negative correlation with depressive symptoms, anxiety and drug use, as described by Musito and Allatt (1994), becoming an early warning against the possibility of staying. Regarding students' financial aspects, Professor 4 states that "Staying at university is more difficult as they have to work to pay for the course." While another student commented on the difficulties faced, "*some of the difficulties students face University admission is economical, as many students are from another city and need to work to stay on course.*"(Student 2) This is a reality in different countries, especially in Brazil where rates of entry into higher education are low and dropout rates are high. Just to illustrate, according to data from the latest Census of Higher Education (2017), each year, about two million students fail to re-enroll, and about 8 million young people who have completed high school in Brazil did not enroll in higher education. But even if we have a large part of the population outside the higher education system, we need to analyze the trajectory of those who can begin their higher education and thus assist them in their persistence and academic success. One of the issues to consider is classroom practice and the experiences that involve the teaching and learning processes. It is necessary to consider the capacities of individuals to carry out joint activities, and the association with 'peers' favors the students' development processes. (Gutiérrez and Quevedo, 2015). In this regard, Thomas and Brown (2011) point to the need for a new learning culture in which the "classroom" is established from around the world, when they state that "the teaching-based approach focuses on teaching

about the world, while the new learning culture focuses on learning through involvement in the world"(p. 37) However, from the speech of one of the professors, it is possible to infer that we still have in our educational institutions, those who tend to a more traditional approach. "*When a student faces a rigorous college selection process, they need to be more committed to the course and dropout is lower. There is the mindset that everything that comes easy goes easy.*"(Professor 1) Such thinking does not take into account the psychological issues and maturity of students upon entering university. It is often not the difficulty of the process that measures student commitment but the awareness of their choice of education when selecting an undergraduate degree. For Professor 5 "*Sometimes [the student] chooses a course for immaturity, one finds that it is not what he wants and changes course. Transfer is a reason for dropping out of universities and that's very bad.*" This is an important question, however, as we can see in the following account, not every evasion should be understood as negative:

"*I can speak from my personal experience which is a picture of this issue. I entered the university with 17 years and had to go through two courses and the job market to find my area of interest, which was Pedagogy. This trajectory could be considered negative, since I left two courses, but I feel completely fulfilled in the final choice I made and I recognize that at 17, this choice was impossible for me and it is also for most teenagers. From this perspective we could not say that dropout is always negative, because for me it was positive.*" (Student 5)

For Tinto (1989, 2012, 2017), it is different behaviors that lead to academic exclusion and voluntary abandonment, because for an external observer can understand that the student, leaving his course, failed to complete his studies, and that same student, can interpret this situation as positive for the achievement of a personal goal. Persisting is another way of speaking of motivation. It is the quality that allows someone to continue in pursuit of a goal even when challenges arise, and the students understand that. (Tinto, 2017b)

The Abyss between Basic and Higher Education: Student persistence is a multi-causal phenomenon that, worldwide, has variables that favor it and others that point out its vulnerabilities. One of which literature considers vulnerability generator is the disarticulation of the education system in which the high school student is not being well prepared to be able to achieve academic success in higher education. The difference between the formation of basic and higher education is a reality and a problem that plagues most of those involved with higher education. Poor teaching and cognitive, emotional and academic autonomy of students is an important point of attention when we talk about student persistence.
In the discussions presented by the study participants, there is a consensus between professors and students that there is a real gulf, especially between high school and undergraduate. For the student, "*the difference between high school and university, in my opinion, a difficulty of my own, we come from a public school, not everyone can get high school in a private school, and there is a big difference between school and graduation*". (Student 2) While Student 1 adds, "*At school we take it, pushing with our bellies, because everything seems easier. I think we are under-demanded and professors do not think we will continue to study after high school.*" In this sense, we realize that the gulf created between high school and higher education has several actors, as well as institutions that fail to understand the changes needed to favor the passage of students to undergraduate, professors who avoid changing their curricula and practices in the classroom. as well as students themselves who do not qualify in their role as students and families who do not fully understand their role in front of their college children.

About this issue, one of the professors points out that

"*High school education does not prepare them adequately and my experience in technical courses makes me believe that all students should attend technical education after high school, as*

this would bring them to the doors of higher education that are more psychologically fit and mature." (Profesor 5)

In this sense, while most institutions have academic support centers and strive to improve problems related to low student retention rates, many professors seek answers to address the growing numbers of students who are not properly prepared and enrolled. in their courses and disciplines, which have a low income and, among these, those who are willing to seek help. (Gabriel, 2008)

However, in the speech of students and professors, we can see that the difficulty is not only in relation to academic skills and abilities and previous training in relation to theoretical knowledge. For the participants state that

> "*The differences between high school and university bring psychological difficulties for students because the content is difficult, requiring autonomy and dedication and in college we have to do it alone and often the family also thinks we don't need help anymore*" (Student 1)
>
> "*Basic education fails to prepare students for the academic environment. Students are not clear about the choice of course and because of their immaturity, they are made to decide according to the preference of their parents or peers. The paternalistic aspect of this teaching does not prepare students for the autonomy required in higher education, where everything is different from what it is used to. This rupture generates uncertainty, drama and feelings of abandonment because the student does not find in the university sectors that can help, both in psychological level and in terms of content.*" (Profesor 3)

In this respect, the model proposed by Tinto (1989; 2012; 2017) for persistence already signaled such aspects as crucial for persistence. This model takes into account the life before entering the institution, such as the family context and its different backgrounds, and the individual skills that were supposedly developed during basic education. Many studies have been done in recent years trying to explain the importance of university stay and student graduation, but few address the identification of strategies that favor the transition between the two levels of education. School disaffiliation is presented as a problem that mainly affects high school, and within this level, at two crucial moments, such as entering high school and moving from elementary school to high school (Solís, Rodríguez and Brunet 2013). As educators and educational institutions, we have an obligation to serve all our students, including those who arrive unprepared. As members of an institution and as an individual professor, we must use a set of actions that will provide unprepared students with deficits in their previous education real opportunities for success. If we notice, we are simply leading these students to failure and at the same time pretending that they have somehow been met with the moral obligation to provide opportunities for our diverse academic population in today's society. (Gabriel, 2008)

CONCLUSION

Listening to students and faculty is an important approach to the creation of persistence policies, as these are the main actors in higher education. These are at the forefront and are therefore important sources of information about the institution itself. Curriculum engagement focuses on ways students can help shape higher education courses, while engagement can also be focused on establishing communities, which focuses on ways in which students can involve helping to shape the institutions and societies in which they participate. (Klemenčič; Chirikov, 2015). The information collected from the participants' speech is in line with the thinking of researcher Bain (2014), who points out the need for universities to work on the protagonism of students in relation to their studies, but also in the social and professional spheres. they can act socially as committed citizens, encouraging the search for the reduction of social inequalities. If we look at the research data, we realize that the student and the professor are at the heart of the issue, because, in our

understanding, they are the main actors in the educational dynamic. Admittedly, they are supported by different professionals and by an institution and educational system structure, but it is they who are ultimately acting in the end activity of teaching and learning. We emphasize the importance of professors understanding the importance of their role in adapting the student to the university environment, which occurs simultaneously with physical, psychological and social changes. Therefore, they are fundamental actors for student persistence, but in most cases, they simply assume their role as academically formative agents, isolating the individual and their needs, and this may lead to the evasion of these subjects under construction, of the higher education system. For this reason, it is necessary to invest in the continuing education of professors, especially from the last school years, and university professors to favor the academic success of students. This requires a look from educational institutions for the promotion of this type of training, as the development of student accompaniment skills, which develop and strengthen interaction, but are not present in most of those who decide to exercise teaching, a This development does not originate in vocation, but when it is given the opportunity to develop it.

Moreover, the articulation of knowledge with the realities of the context they inhabit, the real articulation between knowledge, being and doing. This should lead to disarticulation in the education system, revision of curricula that are executed within the programs and follow-up to the development of the program, being aware that society gives institutions its young people waiting for the academy to provide the tools to contribute to social development. It is at this time that we should be aware of our role as mentors, as our influence can be positive or negative, depending on our attitude, willingness and success in helping students stay in university. We need to address the issues of staying together with the institution, because, after all, it is made up of all its agents, namely students, professors, staff and managers. Thus, the changes necessary to increase the persistence rates in the university necessarily involve listening to the other and the notion that the quality of education, and in this case, higher education, should be advocated and worked in all areas, from personal to professional. Institutional and governmental.

REFERENCES

Altbach, P. (2009) The complex roles of universities in the globalization period. IN: GUNI (ed.), Higher Education in the World 3. Higher Education: New Challenges and Emerging Roles for Human and Social Development, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2009.

Astin, A. W. (1991). Assessment for Excellence: The Philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. American Council on Education/Macmillan Series on Higher Education.

Astin, A. W. (2012). Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bain, K. (2014). Lo que hacen los mejores estudiantes de universidad. Universitat de València.

Barbour, R. (2009) Grupos focais. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2009.

Bawden, R. (2013). O objetivo educador da educação superior para o desenvolvimento humano e social no contexto da globalização. GUNI. Educação superior em um tempo de transformação: novas dinâmicas para a responsabilidade. Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS.

Cabrera, A. F., Nora, A., & Castaneda, M. B. (1992). The role of finances in the persistence process: A structural model. Research in higher education, 33(5), 571-593.

Callender, C., Ramsden, P., & Griggs, J. (2014). Review of the'National Student Survey': report to the UK higher education funding bodies by NatCen Social Research, the Institute of Education, University of London and the Institute for Employment Studies0.

Castaño, E. V., Gómez, S. G., Portilla, K. G., & Velásquez, J. V. (2006). Análisis de los factores asociados a la deserción y

graduación estudiantil universitaria. Lecturas de economía, (65), 9-36.

Coates, H. (2007). A model of online and general campus based student engagement. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 32(2), 121-141.

Eisner, E. W. (2017). The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice. Teachers College Press.

Gabriel, K. F. (2008). Teaching unprepared students: Strategies for promoting success and retention in higher education. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Gale, T., Mills, C., & Cross, R. (2017). Socially inclusive teaching: Belief, design, action as pedagogic work. Journal of Teacher Education, 68(3), 345-356.

Gómez, Á. I. P. (2015). Educação na era digital: a escola educativa. Penso Editora.

Gutiérrez, S. L. S.; Quevedo, J. C. M. (2015). Guías para la internacionalización de la educación superior: cooperación internacional. Bogotá: Ministério da Educação.

Klemenčič, M., & Chirikov, I. (2015). How do we know how students experience higher education? On the use of student surveys. In The European Higher Education Area (pp. 361-379). Springer, Cham.

Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. Academy of management learning & education, 4(2), 193-212.

Malhotra, N. K. (2006). Pesquisa de Marketing-: Uma Orientação Aplicada. Bookman Editora.

Marconi, M. D. A., & Lakatos, E. M. (1992). Metodologia do trabalho científico. São Paulo: Atlas, 6.

Martins, L. M., & Ribeiro, J. L. D. (2017). Engajamento do estudante no ensino superior como indicador de avaliação. Avaliação: Revista da Avaliação da Educação Superior, 22(1), 223-247.

Moraes, R., & Galiazzi, M. C. (2007) Análise textual discursiva. Ijuí: Ed. Unijuí.

Morosini, M. C. (2009). Qualidade na educação superior: tendências do século. Estudos em avaliação educacional, 20(43), 165-186.

Nora, A., & Cabrera, A. F. (1993). The construct validity of institutional commitment: A confirmatory factor analysis. Research in Higher Education, 34(2), 243-262.

Nóvoa, Antonio. (coord). (1997) The teachers and their formation. Lisboa-Portugal, Dom Quixote.

Ortega, J. (1930). Misión de la Universidad. Revista de occidente.

Parra, C. M. P., Gónzalez, G. R., Manco, O. C. U., Gómez, E. C., Mejía, P. E., Zuleta, E. M. U., ... & Herrera, R. R. M. (2015). Relación del Autoconcepto y del acompañamiento psicopedagógico con el rendimiento académico en estudiantes de primer semestre de ingeniería. Ingeniería y Sociedad, 1(09), 40-66.

Parsons, J., & Taylor, L. (2011). Improving student engagement. Current issues in education, 14(1).

Perna, L. W., & Thomas, S. L. (2008). Theoretical Perspectives on Student Success: Understanding the Contributions of the Disciplines. ASHE higher education report, 34(1), 1-87.

Santos, P. K. D. (2015). Permanência na graduação a distância na perspectiva dos estudantes: um estudo a partir da experiência do projeto Alfa Guia.

Santos, P. K., & Giraffa, L. M. M. (2017). Permanência na Educação Superior a distância. RIED. Revista Iberoamericana de Educação a Distancia, 20(1), 305-321.

Santos, P; K. (2020) Permanência na Educação Superior: desafios e perspectivas. Brasília: Cátedra Unesco de Juventude, Educação e Sociedade.

Solís, P., Rodríguez Rocha, E., & Brunet, N. (2013). Orígenes sociales, instituciones, y decisiones educativas en la transición a la educación media superior: el caso del Distrito Federal. Revista mexicana de investigación educativa, 18(59), 1103-1136.

Terenzini, P. T., & Pascarella, E. T. (1991). Twenty years of research on college students: Lessons for future research. Research in Higher Education, 32(1), 83-92.

Thomas, D., & Brown, J. S. (2011). A new culture of learning: Cultivating the imagination for a world of constant change (Vol. 219). Lexington, KY: CreateSpace.

Tinto, V. (1987). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. University of Chicago Press, 5801 S. Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.

Tinto, V. (2012). Completing college: Rethinking institutional action. University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2017). Reflections on student persistence. Student Success, 8(2), 1-9.

Tinto, V. (2017b). Through the eyes of students. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 19(3), 254-269.

Trowler, V. (2010). Student engagement literature review. The higher education academy, 11(1), 1-15.

****