328 Factors Related To The Permanence Of Students In Evening Degree Courses At The University Of Brasília - Brazil, 2015 -2019

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Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

This paper examines the factors related to permanence in evening degree courses at UnB, as perceived by former students, both graduates and non-graduates, between 2015 and 2019. The study is relevant for institutional policies aiming to reduce the high dropout rates in these courses, which reach 50% of enrollments, and that are responsible for training teachers for primary and secondary education. The research draws on quantitative methodology and descriptive analysis, integrating institutional data and responses to surveys applied to graduates and non-graduates. First, it will present the theoretical-methodological framework of the research. Second, it will analyze determining factors to permanence of students who attend university at night. In conclusion, reducing dropout rates in evening courses requires institutional efforts to develop policies for the success of students, particularly workers. This challenge needs to consider inequalities in the student´s profile and improvements in infrastructure, technological aspects, pedagogical conditions, and curriculum innovations.

Full paper

Introduction

The first evening degree courses at University of Brasília (UnB) were stablished in 1993 when the university opened its doors to working students. Today, comprising fifteen courses that prepare teachers for primary and secondary education, the University faces complex challenges regarding student permanence.

The aim of this study was to understand factors that contribute or not to the permanence in evening degree courses at UnB, in the perception of former students, both graduates and non-graduates, between 2015 and 2019. The study is relevant for institutional policies to reduce the high dropout rates in these courses, which reach 50% of enrollments.

This paper consists of two parts. The first part will present the theoretical-methodological framework of the research, while the second will analyze factors related to the permanence of students who attend university at night.

Theoretical - methodological framework

The theoretical framework included factors for permanence, institutional policies to support students, and predictive characteristics of dropout, defining the factors covered in the research: student's profile, pre-university school trajectory, choice of course, self-regulation, self-efficacy, engagement, academic environment, assistance actions; qualifying actions, and satisfaction with the course.

The study draws on a quantitative approach. It combined institutional data, taken from the academic management system to identify the research universe, composed of individuals who left the course between 2015 and 2019, categorized by way of leaving: 1,573 graduates and 2,394 non-graduates. Online surveys were applied to each group from March 18 to April 30, 2022, with a response rate of around 15%. The scope of the analysis included 255 graduates and 296 non-graduates as valid cases.

Factors related to permanence in evening degree courses at UnB

The first factor is the student´s profile. More women (56%) completed the courses than men (43%). Predominate, among graduates and non-graduates, whites (51%); of those who declared themselves black, 45% completed the course. Most of the two groups have father and mother education lower than higher education (60%); among graduates, 40% had father with higher education. The origin of public schools is also predominant in both groups.

The main form of admission was the university entrance exam for graduates (56%) and non-graduates (44%). 23% of non-graduates entered through the federal Unified Selection System (SiSU) program. The universal admission system prevails for graduates (88%) and non-graduates (75%), while others entered through the quota system. The majority in both groups did not choose a teacher training course as their first choice.

Regarding student's experience, there was low engagement in academic activities beyond teaching. Graduates participated more in student assistance action such as the permanence grant, socioeconomic aid, emergency aid, book voucher and food aid than non-graduates, who had a greater participation in housing aid and scholarship for language study.

Graduates also showed greater engagement in qualifying actions as monitors, scientific initiation, initiation into teaching and tutorial education. Regarding self-regulation and self-efficacy, this group has an even greater capacity for resilience and organization of studies.

Being at UnB was a positive factor for former students. 69% of graduates said they felt welcomed in a university environment free of discrimination, while for non-graduates, this percentage was 59%. Non-graduates also faced more difficulties in social relationships: talking to their teachers as well as interacting with study colleagues. Despite this, most (67%) said that this was not a determining factor for dropping out.

At the time of leaving, 73% of both groups were working, with 37% of non-graduates working more than 40 hours a week.

For graduates, family support (70%), good professional perspective (67%) and support from professors (50%) were positive factors for completing the course, while solidarity from colleagues (44%) and being in an academic program (30%) were not relevant.

For non-graduates, the difficulty in reconciling work and study (70%), the difficulty in organizing the time for studies (66%), emotional difficulties (59%), lack of motivation to continue studying (58%), and the difficulty in reconciling study and family responsibilities (57%) were determinants of dropout. On the other hand, access to study materials (71%), difficulties with the content (63%), financial conditions (69%), or going to university (54%), and carry out the proposed evaluations (59%) were not relevant.

Conclusion

 The study highlighted individual, social, and institutional factors related to permanence and the specificities of students who attend university at night. Reducing dropout rates in evening courses requires institutional efforts to develop policies for the success of students, particularly workers. These policies need to align with the profile of students and improve infrastructure, physical and technological aspects, pedagogical conditions, and curriculum innovations.

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