



Original Research Article

Human development of university students participating in academic mobility program in Tabasco, Mexico

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This study is about the importance that internet and its electronic devices have in the decision of the universities to participate in the program of international student mobility. Knowing that these devices are an important part of their lives, the possibility of knowing their measure would be palliative of their concerns when they are in another country or including another continent. To clear this question, two questionnaires were applied in different moments, to 139 students, of a total of 218, all belonging to the degree in economics the results demonstrate their interests in participating and developing their survival capabilities supported by the benefit that holds the management of the technology in their different options, so it is recommended for those who wish to participate to ensure an effective connectivity both for them and for those with whom will be kept in contact.

Key words: Education model, student mobility, human development and technology

INTRODUCTION

Technology performs an important role in society, and not only because of the variety of services it offers, but also because its tools and programs have contributed to its development, especially in the education field, introducing itself wonderfully and specifically in programs like International Academic Mobility.

In Tabasco, a large number of universities have already implemented the academic mobility program to provide a better experience to their students. García, (2013) States that these programs are one of the main referents of the processes and strategies of educational cooperation and, apart from being a direct expression of collaboration, also... it is constituted as an important element of the educational politics in the matter of higher education internationalization.

To be able to take the international mobility in university students to a good position, it is required to rely on professors, who, as Villagrana, 2013 says, they are the ones who make attainable the possibilities to facilitate and increase the opportunities of learning for everything, especially in the face of the global agreement of

improving the education quality, with technology as a tool.

This tool is of great importance for the growth and development of knowledge of students at all ages, especially among university students, since, as stated by Glasserman and Manzano, (2016), technology's effectiveness in the improvement of scholar achievement is related to the digital skills that students and teacher have.

De Wit, 2011, States that as a consequence of globalization, society, economy and of course education, become internationalized, frontiers open or disappear (depending on the case), making easier the entry and permanence in the visited countries.

For the students from Tabasco, this frontier opening represents an opportunity to face the challenges that life presents, and since they are digital natives, the usage of technologies will play a decisive role at the time of choosing whether to participate in the mobility program offered by the academic institution where they belong.

In spite of student academic mobility not being a new phenomenon as Solanas (2014) Claims, day by day it gains importance and validity not only in the lives of participant

students and the lives of the professors who collaborate in their preparation and sending to other universities, but also among the university students who share the classroom with peers who have already participated or are participating in that moment.

Sebastian, (2013) points out that universities cooperate with each other and with other institutions to improve their organizational models, management standards, student mobility programs and linking activities, which means that mobility is a priority in almost every higher education institution of the world.

International mobility in higher education is one of the most important aspects in matters of internationalization, students strengthen their knowledge making them more competitive, preparing them for the labor market. The benefits are numerous, such as, gaining access to new technologies, developing their capacity of overcoming adverse situations, meeting different educational models and manners of learning.

According to Luchilo, (2006) University student mobility is the principal aspect of the higher education internationalization. The process of internationalization includes and feeds of a wide range of activities, that affect directly or indirectly the international circulation of students. One of those activities is the offering of services of higher education abroad.

Higher education institutions look to train professionals to answer to all the demands of the globalized world, making them change agents, international academic mobility strengthens bond between countries, generating cooperation standards.

Rodríguez and Bautista, (2004) claim that Is accepted that student mobility and academic exchange allow the student to course subjects from other institutions and accredit in their curriculum from the institution they belong. Within their educational model and as a strengthening strategy, it has as an essential part fostering educational programs with dynamic and flexible curricular structures that allow student's and professor's mobility, as well as academic exchange, which comes up out of a strategy to a regional, national, and international levels.

Alcon, (2011) considers that foreign language proficiency has turned human development into an opportunity of academic exchange, because social habits have changed: people travel more frequently, and the English language is perceived as a necessary instrument for employability. Although currently English is the most spoken language in the world, some participants of this study have opted for other languages such as French, Portuguese or Italian.

Based on this, (Perez and Navarro, 2011) consider that is important to remind that human development must be understood from the perspective of a continuous, global and flexible process.

In this globalized world, in which university students belong to what is known as the Net Generation, because of their ability and necessity to handle information and communication technologies, the program of international academic mobility is born, which principal objective is that

participants achieve an exchange of knowledge with their peers in the country they chose, promoting the credit recognition and equivalence of studies.

Agulhon, (2009) claims that nowadays this program is a big issue and a priority for those who have to take a decision when it comes to educational politics, since it seeks to maintain Mexican presence in different countries with which each higher education institution has an agreement.

University students, are immersed in a formation process, not only academically, but also in maturity to face life. Their ages, depending on the degree they study, goes from 18 to 24 years old, they stand up for a participative nature in teaching, where they take on every time more leading role in the conduction of their learning consequently transforming every day (Gonzalez, 2002).

For Zamudio et al. (2012), human development consists in the possibility that every human being has to expand their opportunities of improving in every field of knowledge, including the academic field.

Padilla et al. (2015) point out that human development is considered a base in the process of real liberties that people can have helping with getting more attention to human freedoms and standing out the role the social plans play.

And, as Garcia, (2013) says, human development is marked in the developed capacity of self-determination parting of a need or a wish, in the case of the participants of this study, this need or wish takes form in the fact of being aspirants in the program of international academic mobility.

Benavides, (2015) points out that for university students, the educative institution where they belong not only gives them an identity, but also enables them to achieve their emancipation, and this is proved in the in-depth interviews carried out for this work.

Garcia, (2013) considers that the formation of communication channels and the contact with varied cultural expressions, human development, lifestyles and academic work is due to the increment of student flow, that coincides with the coming of a greater information and knowledge mobility, that is sustained by the utilization of the information and communication technologies.

The participants of this study, are young adults that demand educational answers that take into account and face the reality they are living, respect their individuality and preferences, answers that deal with the social phenomenon set up here.

Gairín et al. (2013) consider that the diverse forms of relation –On a personal, collective and/or institutional level- produce different forms of work. Interpersonal networks between peers, internal or external networks, among others.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The present research was carried out in a public University, located in the southeastern region of the Mexican Republic.

Participants

The participants in this study were 139 students out of a total of 218 of the Economics Degree, distributed as follows: 35 subjects of the first cycle; 18 of the second cycle; eight of the third cycle; nine of the fourth cycle; five of the fifth cycle; 13 of the sixth cycle; eight of the seventh cycle; 12 of the ninth cycle; and nine of the tenth cycle; without distinction of sex, marital status, age or occupation.

Procedure

The empirical study was based on This degree was chosen because it is the one with the minor number of registered alumnus out of the four degrees offered in the economic administrative area, therefore students that have the less participants in the mobility program.

The surveys were filled by the students, whom were explained the objective of the research, asking them for their cooperation, they accepted gladly, and the open questions were product of an in-depth interview with the most significant cases, which were used to give meaning to the closed questions and build the facts in an analytic manner.

It is therefore a study of a quantitative type aided by qualitative tools, so it could be classified as mixed. It presents results of interest, obstacles and wishes students of the degree of economics have, to participate in this program.

Formula used to obtain the sample:

$$n = \frac{N(Z)^2(50\%)^2}{(N-1)(e)^2 + (z)^2(50\%)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{218(1.96)^2(.50)^2}{(218-1)(0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2(.50)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{218(3.8416)(0.25)}{217(0.0025) + 3.8416(0.25)}$$

$$n = \frac{218(0.9604)}{0.5425 + 0.9604}$$

$$n = \frac{209.3672}{1.5029}$$

$$n = 139 \text{ Survey}$$

n= Sample size

N= Population size

Z= Confidence level

e= Margin of Error

50%= probability of success

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results to the question if they know about the international academic mobility program, it can be clearly perceived that out of the 139 participants, 38 of them equal to 27% of the sample, are unaware of the

existence of this program, 13% of them coursing the first cycle. This result seems to draw attention, because in the induction course imparted at the moment of entering the institution, students are informed about the University's academic programs.

This is probably because in the official page the characteristics and requirements are not always shown, unless the call to participate in it is opened.

Parting from this moment, our sample is reduced to 101 participants who have heard about the program, that is 73%. Of this total, 15% wouldn't like to participate in the program. Results are shown in Table 2.

In regard to this, Villagrana, (2013) points out that one of the main formulas to increase the opportunities to make the most of the benefits of the cooperation programs consists in creating a national strategy that take the needed of these and take it into practice together.

In the In-depth interviews (names have been changed to protect their identities) they state that they are not interested in participating due to different reasons.

...Because I work to maintain my family, my mother is a widow and I have other siblings that depend on me economically (Aldo, 7th Cycle).

I'm married, it is impossible for me to participate in that program... (Catalina, 8th Cycle).

So, there are very few subjects of the degree in Economics offered in the higher education institutions of the countries I'd like to visit, I prefer to complete the Italian language course, I'm almost done (Irene, 9th Cycle).

I prefer studying in this university, since here I know almost every professor and they know me, I think I'm fine here, besides I don't like traveling (Carlos, 2nd Cycle).

The 85% left point out that they are interested in participating, out of this, 46% expresses that what they desire the most is to get to know other countries and cultures. Gacel, (2000: 127) states that currently there are many International academic mobility programs that are the result of a long tradition of agreements between institutions that offer the participant the opportunity to know other places that otherwise would be hard for them to visit.

In the In-depth interviews, they also point out among other motives that being far away from home would allow them to grow emotionally, raise their self-esteem and get to progress in their education.

... that's why it is convenient for me, imagine having coursed subjects abroad! even though that won't be included in the professional title, I would be sure to spread it out...(Francisco, 7th Cycle).

I have always dreamed about traveling to Germany, I'm now in the fourth semester of the German course, I think that by the summer of 2018 I will be able to go, I need to have the required advance in my credits (Azucena, 5th Cycle).

I'm the youngest of four sisters, my mother is a widow and she wouldn't let me go out to have fun with my friends, I think

Table 1. Students who know about the program

Cycle	Total of students	Yes	No
1st cycle	35	17	18
2nd cycle	18	15	3
3rd cycle	8	6	2
4th cycle	9	8	1
5th cycle	5	4	1
6th cycle	13	11	2
7th cycle	8	7	1
8th cycle	22	17	5
9th cycle	12	7	5
10th cycle	9	9	0
Total	139	101	38

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2. Students who would like to participate in the program

Cycle	Yes	No	Total per cycle
1st cycle	16	1	17
2nd cycle	13	2	15
3rd cycle	1	5	6
4th cycle	8	0	8
5th cycle	4	0	4
6th cycle	11	0	11
7th cycle	6	1	7
8th cycle	13	4	17
9th cycle	6	1	7
10th cycle	8	1	9
Total	86	15	101

Source: Own Elaboration

that mobility, besides allowing me to know other cultures, will let me become a little more independent of her (Monica, 5th Cycle).

I'm Interested in mobility because I want to have a good job, here or anywhere else, I think the opportunity this program offers is a good option (Luis, 6th Cycle).

According to Benavides, (2015: 169) young adults have as a disadvantage the lack of opportunities of a formal job, what makes harder the creation of new labor spaces.

When asked if they consider their stay abroad hard, if they go alone (without a friend, couple, or relative), 49 of them, which means 49%, points out that this is the case, arguing that they are not used to living alone, that the costs of their stay would be high due to the parity of our currency compared with the currency of the country they travel to, even though the socioeconomic status of the students is not the purpose of this work, it has an effect in the obtained results, since most of them come from homes with few or none economic stability.

Belvis et al. (2007: 5) consider that the familiar context, that is considered based of the level of studies and labor activities of the parents, has an impact in mobility since the more raised their socioeconomic and cultural status is, the greater the possibility to participate in these programs.

On the other hand, the 51% remaining considers that there is no difficulty in the case of traveling alone. The truth is that, as Gil and Roca, (2015) state, the encouragement to mobility has become a priority needed nowadays. This 51% points out that traveling and living alone in an estrange country would increase their self-esteem, promote the necessity to bond with their peers and professors in an almost mandatory manner and would help them to measure their capacities to be away from home and having to solve the problems presented. Also, is important to point out that, as Agulhon, (2009: 176) says, other characteristics distinguish them, either their scholarship, the form of access to studies abroad or their capacity to adapt.

Besides they recognize that the employment of technology is a great ally, since as they say, technology was, is and will be helpful for them to keep in touch with their surroundings, friends, partners and couple. According to Castillejos et al. (2016) the internet, cellphones and videogames are key elements in their everyday activities. Besides doing homework, downloading movies and being informed.

Aquino et al. (2016: 3) consider that the digital competence makes easier the academic development and the possibility to participate in diverse forms of education

Table 3. When asked if their stay would be hard if they happen to be alone

Cycle	Yes		No		
1st cycle	Is not used to living alone	5	Has lived alone before	7	12
	Costs	3	Can be independent	1	4
2nd cycle	Costs	5	Will be in the company of friends	1	1
	Is not used to living alone	2	Has lived alone before	3	8
3rd cycle	Doesn't know anybody	3	Get more experience	5	7
4th cycle	Costs	1	Can be independent	3	6
	Doesn't know anybody	3	Has lived alone before	4	5
5th cycle	Costs	4		0	4
6th cycle	Costs	3	Has lived alone before	6	9
	Doesn't know anybody	2			2
7th cycle	Doesn't know anybody	4	Has lived alone before	2	6
			Can be independent	1	1
8th cycle	Costs	3	Can be independent	7	10
	Doesn't know anybody	4	Has lived alone before	2	6
9th cycle			Get more experience	1	1
	Costs	1	Can be independent	4	5
10th cycle	Is not used to living alone	2			2
	Costs	1	Get more experience	3	4
	Doesn't know anybody	3	Can be independent	2	5
Total		49		52	101

Source: Own elaboration

and learning for university students. Results are shown in Table 3.

If this Table is analyzed by scholar cycles, it can be observed that nine students of the first cycle would not have any problem staying alone during international academic mobility, compared with eight that claim that it would be hard for them.

In the second cycle, eight students point out that there would not be any problem in participating without a companion. The six students from the sixth cycle who claim that they would not have any problem express that they have lived alone and being alone again would not be a problem for them.

When asked if they had any obstacle to participate, 47% of them answered yes, compared with 54% who consider not having any impediment to access this academic program. If this answer is analyzed, according to Garcia de Fanelli, (2009: 120), it can be concluded that the rise of the mobility in university students and the diversification of destinations are characteristics of the new stage of higher education.

It is pertinent to mention that, according to the records of the Autonomous Juarez University, (2015: 23), less than 1% of Mexican students carry out studies abroad. This takes us to the need of giving a greater impulse to mobility, the exchange for academic collaboration and cooperation, as we as for investigation.

Another of the factors they point out as impediments, is the labor aspect (related with the former), some of them (as expressed in the in-depth interviews) work to support their household, or to support themselves, probably with a

constant and permanent scholarship, they can participate since as Marmolejo, (2009: 113) mentions, the policy of giving scholarships for Mexicans to carry out studies abroad must be linked in a better way, with priorities and development programs of Mexican institutions, the support they receive from this institution is an onetime only amount.

DISCUSSION

It is of all known that the use of the technology by the university adds for them know what occurs in the cyber space, this knowledge will verse about what they or their pares are interested to know.

Therefore, the minority of the participants in this study, disagree in what is the student mobility, this program that can be found when the official page of the institution to which it belongs is explored. (Palmeros et al., 2013) and frequently ignore, possibly for lack of dissemination in sites that are obliged to visit them, like cafeteria, informal talks or mouth-in-mouth information.

Of these students, 27% are not aware of the Mobility Program, this piece of information draws the attention because taking into account the globalization and with it the internet and its electronic devices, they take an important place in the life of university students who navigate all day in the cyberspace, they have the option to explore the page of the institution where they belong and get informed about the academic programs this institution offers, as Palmeros et al.(2013) say.

Regarding this, Villagrana (2013) points out that one of the main formulas to increase opportunities to take advantage of the benefits of the cooperation programs consists in creating a national strategy that takes the necessary and implements it altogether.

When they were asked if they considered difficult their time abroad, if they went alone (without a friend, couple or parent), 49 of them, the same as 49% percent, points out that it was indeed difficult, claiming that they are not used to living alone, that the costs of maintenance were too high due to the parity of out currency with the one of the country they visited, even though the socioeconomic status of students, is not the aim of this work, it does affect the results obtained, since in most of the cases they come from homes with no economic stability.

Belvis et al. (2007) point out that the Family context, considered from the studies level and labour activities of the parents, come into play when talking about mobility, since the higher the socioeconomic and cultural status, the better the possibilities of participating in the programs.

On the other hand, the 51% left, considers that there is no difficulty at all in the case of living alone. Truth is that, as Gil and Roca (2015, 2) say, the encouragement of mobility has come to be a priority need these days. This 51% points out that traveling and living in an unknown country alone would rise their self-esteem, encourage the need of bonding with their peers and professors almost mandatory and would help them to measure their capacity to being far from home and having to solve the problems they face. It is also important to point out that, as Agulhon (2009, 176) considers, other characteristics distinguish them, either education, the way of access to studies abroad or their capacity to adapt.

When they were asked if they had any impediment to participate, 47% of them answered yes, while the 53% that consider not to have any impediment to access this academic program. If this answered is analyzed, Garcia de Fanelli (2009) points out that it can be concluded that the rise of mobility in university students and the diversification of the destinations, are characteristics of the new stage of higher education.

Regarding the ones who manifest to have an impossibility to participate, mention among other obstacles the economic factor, even though this institution supports the participants economically, this help is not enough. The economic factor is the one that prevents some students to participate in this program, it is also the factor that encourages the research professors to emigrate abroad to improve their situation. Despite the fact that, as Marmolejo (2009) claims, there is limited information about the reasons why the Mexican academics go out of the country, it is often deduced, however, the two main reasons are economic and professional development factors.

It is important to mention that less than 1% of Mexican students carry out studies abroad. This takes us to the need of giving a greater impulse to mobility, the exchange for collaboration and academic cooperation, as well as for research, as stated by Juarez Autonomous University of

Tabasco (2015).

These academic programs seek to avoid the existing academic gap between the graduated students of the public university and the graduates of the private universities, given by fact that who executes a private superior institution has more possibilities of access to educational internationalization. That's why day with stimulates who are interested in applying and that meet the requirements of participation, to register and bring this company.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the results obtained, it ensures that the participants in this study, who decide to find in internet employment and their devices a support in human development, consider as an opportunity to temper their character and strengthen their affective next, participate in this program.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests

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