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Critical Analysis of the Causes of School Abandonment

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Abstract: The key to succeed in a professional career is continuous education. One of the serious problems faced by the educational system in contemporary society is the early leaving of school. A person who drops out of studies will not have the professional qualification required to integrate into the national or international economic market, eventually becoming the future unemployed worker. While in the EU the general tendency is decreasing, in Romania, school abandonment is increasing both at pre-university and university level. In this paper, the authors propose to analyze the possible causes and to correlate them with the evolution of the school abandonment registered in a composite university. The data are obtained from the national database and statistically processed. According to the results we obtained, the rate of the school abandonment which is registered in such an university shows different trends depending on the faculty profile and the economic environment.

Keywords: University management, School abandonment, Professional career

Introduction

A real education is first gained in the family and then at kindergarten, school, high school and / or college. According to the latest data provided by Eurostat, Romania ranks third in the European Union at 18.9% early school leaving among 18 to 24 year-olds, of which 18.3% are girls. School abandonment is a serious problem faced not only by pre-university but also by university education, where, in some universities, more than a quarter of admitted students to degree and master study programs do not complete their studies.

Among the reasons for university dropout can be listed:

- the absence of access to high-level specialist counseling for adolescents to find out what they are good at, what they would like to make alive, or what career they would suit; (Pricopie, 2011)
- the absence of financial resources needed to cover the costs of education, a situation faced by students and their families. Abandonment risk is higher when family incomes are lower, there is a negative correlation between them; (Pricopie, 2011)
- the absence of a strong economic environment attracting trained and qualified young people;
- the quality of the educational process carried out by the academic staff.

A problem can only be solved when looking for the causes (roots) that generated it.

Methods

The paper analyzes the school abandonment rate registered for 2012-2018 at a composite university. Analysis were considered enrollment figures recorded at the beginning of each academic year (Raport anual Rector).

The statistical processing of the data allowed the study of the evolution of the number of students enrolled on license cycles as well as of the abandonment rate (Mereuta, 2006). The study was performed for two technical faculties and one economic faculty.

Technical faculties have been taken into account because they are more vulnerable to abandonment due to the complexity and difficulty of the technical discipline but also the existence of the regional economic environment.

Although the regional economic environment is good for graduates of the faculty with an economic profile, however, after the statistical processing of the data, it will be noticed that among the students of the analyzed faculty the abandonment rate after the first year is important.

In the tables (Table 1, Table 2, table 3) there are the centralized data for years of study and university years for each faculty analyzed.

Table 1. Number of students enrolled in technical faculty 1

	Year I	Year II	Year III	Year IV	Total Students
2012-2013	268	246	201	273	988
2013-2014	239	184	220	206	849
2014-2015	243	186	171	234	834
2015-2016	259	161	181	162	763
2016-2017	160	201	154	179	694
2017-2018	176	111	183	152	622

Table 2. Number of students enrolled in technical faculty 2

	Year I	Year II	Year III	Year IV	Total Students
2012-2013	105	100	65	132	402
2013-2014	124	101	95	98	418
2014-2015	133	121	95	108	457
2015-2016	145	127	111	122	505
2016-2017	117	132	119	124	492
2017-2018	103	108	118	148	477

Table 3. Number of students enrolled in economic faculty

	Year I	Year II	Year III	Total Students
2012-2013	308	343	383	1034
2013-2014	345	243	376	964
2014-2015	300	271	248	819
2015-2016	367	252	278	897
2016-2017	297	278	260	835
2017-2018	315	240	280	835

Results and Discussion

For the period under analysis, in what the first technical faculty is concerned, it can be seen that in the academic year 2016-2017 the lowest number of students enrolled in year 1 was registered (Figure 1).

For the license cycles, it is observed that from one year to another, the number of promoted students is decreasing (Figure 2), but the highest school abandonment is registered after the first year, reaching an average of 27.28%.

The highest rate of school abandonment is registered in the academic year 2014-2015 (Figure 3).

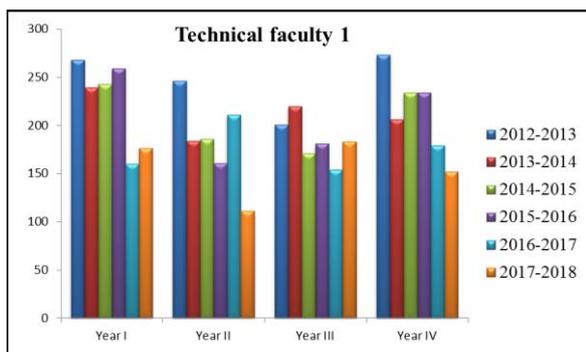


Figure 1. Number students/year of study

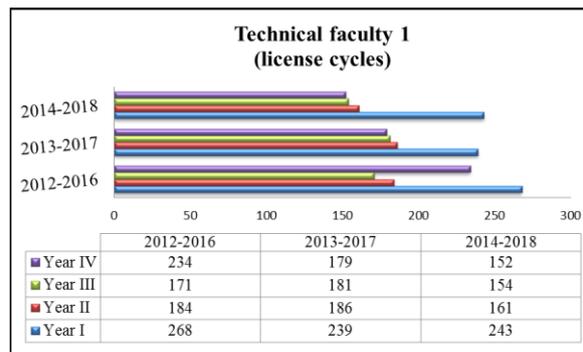


Figure 2. Number students/license cycles

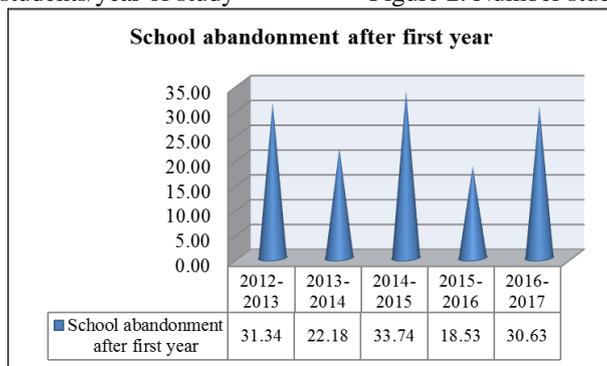


Figure 3. School abandonment after the first year of study

For technical faculty 2 it is observed that from the number of students enrolled in the first year point of view, one ascending trend is followed by one with a slight decrease, the minimum being reached in the academic year 2017-2018 (Figure 4).

For all the analyzed license cycles the situation of the number of students promoted from year to year is similar (Figure 5), the school abandonment rate recording only an average of 5.47%. The highest rate of school abandonment is registered in the academic year 2015-2016 (Figure 6).

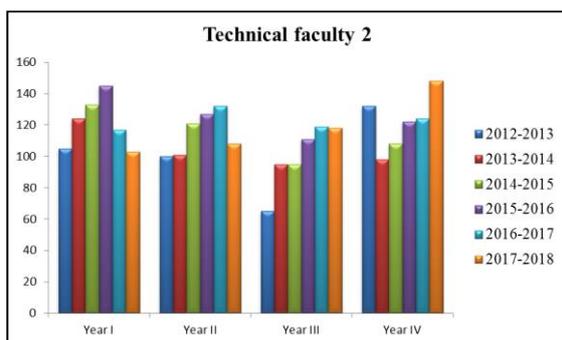


Figure 4. Number students/year of study

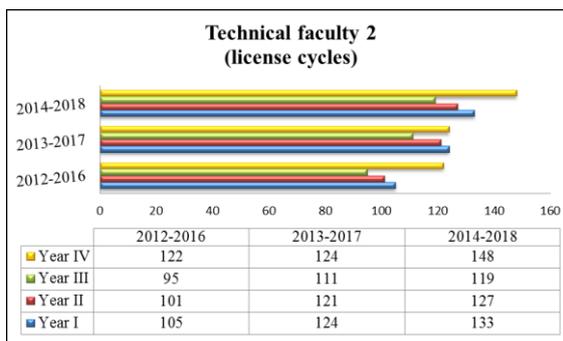


Figure 5. Number students/license cycles

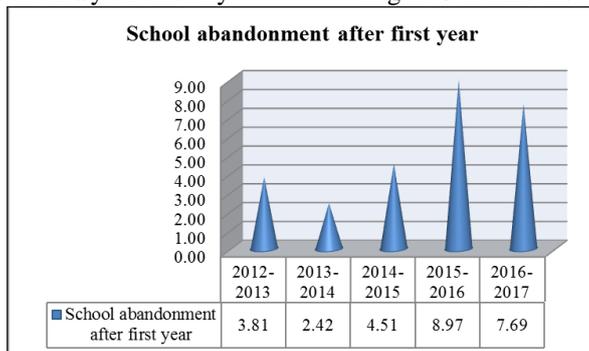


Figure 6. School abandonment after the first year of study

In the case of the economic faculty, the number of students enrolled in the first year reaches the maximum value in the academic year 2015-2016 (Figure 7).

For all the analyzed license cycles, the number of students who promote from the 2nd year into the third year is almost constant (Figure 8), and only after the first year the school abandonment rate was an average of 20.39%. The highest rate of school abandonment is registered in the academic year 2015-2016 (Figure 9).

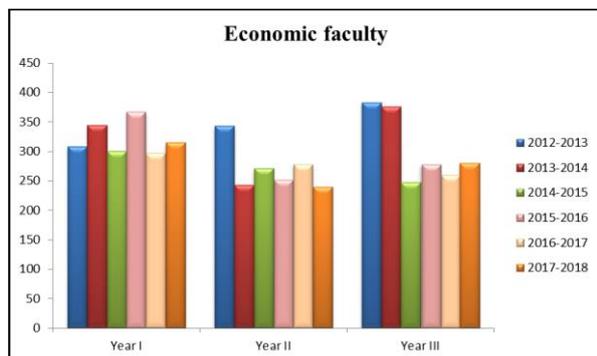


Figure 7. Number students/year of study

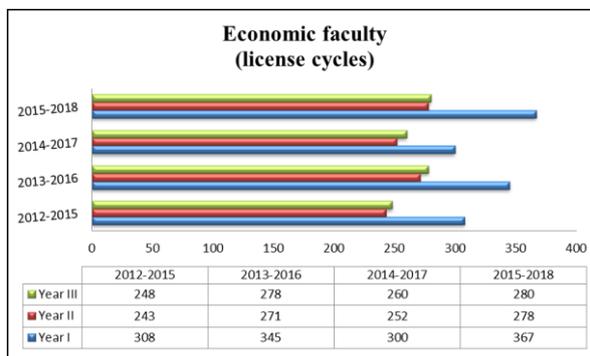


Figure 8. Number students/license cycles

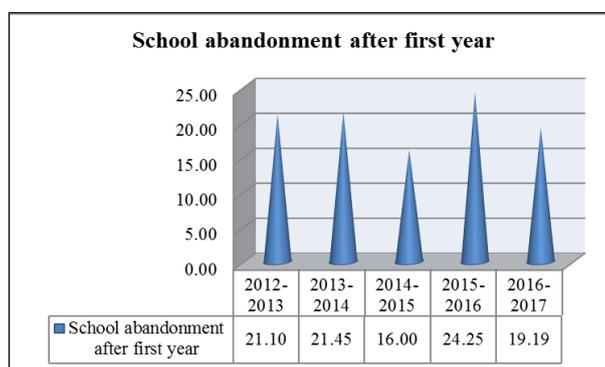


Figure 9. School abandonment after the first year of study

Conclusion

1. The analysis shows that the school abandonment rate is higher in the case of technical faculties than in the case of economic ones. This may be due to the fact that the technical disciplines studied have a higher level of difficulty than the economic ones.
2. Significant school abandonment rates when passing from the first year to the second year may also be the result of the absence of specialized counseling in graduate high schools. Thus, students do not find out in due time what they would like to do, which are the careers that would suit them.
3. If we analyze the percentages of school abandonment registered at the two technical faculties, we observe that the economic environment can also be an important factor. The existence of the construction sites in the faculty profile 2 makes the abandonment rate registered at this level very low (5%) compared to the other (27%).

Recommendations

Taking into account the principle of total quality "to prevent is cheaper than to repair" as well as measures to prevent school abandonment are more cost-effective than reintegration. In order to prevent abandonment university after the first year, it may be advisable to carry out additional consultation programs, interim retirement sessions, and so on.

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