

# Study of Perceptions in University Students: Contributions for the Curricular Restructuring in a Study Plan

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**Abstract:-** In this document, a diagnosis of perceptions of students of the Bachelor of Economics regarding the Plan and Study Program in which they are enrolled is exposed. This degree is taught face-to-face, it is part of the educational offer of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Autonomous University of Chiapas in Mexico, and it is an Accredited program since 2015 and Re-Accredited in 2022 for a period of five more years. This diagnosis is an important tool to know, identify, investigate, and analyze what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that we have in the Plan and Study Program of the Degree in Economics. This diagnosis helps to complement the observations and recommendations received from the National Council for Accreditation of Higher Education, CONACE, A.C., accreditation body (CONACE, 2023). According to the 2018-2022 Academic Project (UNACH, 2020), there is a need to generate an educational and academic model that guarantees the relevance and quality of the face-to-face educational program in Economics. The foregoing, with the aim of generating professionals with comprehensive training, quality, competitiveness and who help to solve the problems of the society to which they are inserted at work (UNACH, 2019).

**Keywords:-** *Perceptions of Students, University Education, Restructuring a Study Plan.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The diagnosis is articulated with several of the substantive functions of an educational institution, such is the case of the institution where the present investigation was carried out, the Autonomous University of Chiapas, UNACH. Within these substantive functions are teaching. That is why the teaching staff that is attached to the Study Plan and Program, Bachelor's Degree in Economics, require to comply with the teaching-learning activities in front of the group and with activities to accompany the student such as counseling, tutorials, and addresses of thesis; without forgetting the

conduct of research and its consequent teaching to students in professional training.

Teaching, according to Morán Oviedo (2004), is a propitious space to know and know how to think, investigate, and teach to think about the reality we live in, in which the subjects who teach and those who learn interact with an object of knowledge, under their supervision. own logic and transformation.

Another substantive function is research. In relation to research, Fabre Batista (2005) considers that the disciplines express the internal logic of science, which is a constant process of knowledge production and a continuous approach to reality; reality is a mutual relationship for the existence of both, teaching-research. Likewise, research requires an ethical and academic commitment to the social; with the purpose of contributing to the integral development of people and having better living conditions for society (Morán Oviedo, 2004).

Finally, university extension is directly articulated with teaching and research, as the activity that enables a continuous exchange of knowledge between the university and society (González, 2011; Ortiz and Morales, 2011). The university extension seeks to activate the experiential, critical and reflective participation of students and teachers, which positions them in the contexts in which they will have to develop professionally, personally, and socially responsible.

The UNACH 2018-2022 Academic Project raises the need to generate an educational and academic model that helps to guarantee the relevance and quality of the face-to-face educational program in Economics, to generate capable graduates in their discipline, highly competitive and who join the different social sectors, to solve problems and generate opportunities for improvement (UNACH, 2019). That is why the Autonomous University of Chiapas is firmly convinced that the Educational and Academic Model is a proposal that requires continuous improvement, considering that the reality in which we live is dynamic, changing, and complex. Due to

the above, the plans and Study Programs that I offer require updating that allow me to improve and quality of the educational service.

The integral formation of the student is the cornerstone of the educational and academic model of the Autonomous University of Chiapas, the fundamental purpose is to train upright, critical, creative, full, conscious, proactive, ethical, and committed human beings, who can practice their profession. competently and responsibly with society and the environment. Comprehensive training is defined as "a process of constructive and interdisciplinary mediation, which requires that the different curricular components be integrated in a convergent sense and provide strategies, methods and techniques that strengthen the development of competencies in students" (Marín-González et al, 2018).

This study shows a general panorama, starting from identifying the place of origin of our students, the ethnic group to which they belong and their perception regarding the structure of the study plan to which they are inserted. On the other hand, it is possible to identify and know which are the Learning Units of the curricular map, where the students have had the greatest learning, or where the level of this has fallen below. The foregoing, to make the necessary adjustments to maintain educational quality and even increase it.

## II. METHODS

Cross-sectional, mixed, exploratory, and analytical study. A stratified sampling was used where the strata were the active semesters during the period August-December 2022 at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Autonomous University of Chiapas. The total size of the studied population is 207 students enrolled in the economics degree of this Faculty.

The information collection instrument was a survey structured according to the needs of the study, to know the perceptions of university students regarding the plan and study program of the Bachelor of Economics and the training areas included within it.

## III. DISSCUTION

When applying the survey to the students of the Bachelor of Economics, it was found that 51% correspond to the female gender and 49% to the male gender. It is necessary to emphasize that, in previous years, the enrollment of this degree was mostly occupied by the male gender and with the passage of time it has changed. The female gender has been imposed for a better condition of women in terms of access to professional education.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the largest number of students who study Economics are between 20 and 21 years old (45%). Likewise, approximately 51% of the student population of this degree was born in Region V, Altos Tsotsil-Tseltal. The Faculty of Social Sciences, Campus III, of the Autonomous University of Chiapas, is in this economic region. 20% of the student population has an indigenous mother tongue and 80% Spanish.

It is important to mention that 49% of the enrollment comes from other parts of the state and even from other states of the Mexican Republic and countries such as Honduras and Peru.

According to the opinion regarding the structure of the Plan and Study Program of the Degree in Economics (UNACH-PPELE, 2010) and its Learning Units (AU), the following results were found by semester studied:

- **First semester:** 88% commented that they would leave the Plan and Study Program of the Degree in Economics (PPELE) as it is, because they like its design and it helps them to achieve a comprehensive education. 12% consider that they would change the UA Oral and Written Communication and Current Society.
- **Third semester:** 92% of the students would not change any of the AUs that make up the Degree, and only 8% would eliminate Mathematics.
- **Fourth semester:** 62% of the students of this semester would not change any AU of their degree; the remaining percentage would change some AUs as they consider them of little importance to them, among which are Epistemology of Social Sciences (14%), Political Economy (10%), Development Problems (7%), Oral and Written Communication (4%) and History (3 %).
- **Fifth semester:** 83% of the students comment that they should not remove any UA from the PPELE; but there are some students who consider it necessary to eliminate the AU of Development Problems (8%) and Political Economy (9%).
- **Sixth semester:** 76% of students do not want to change the Plan and Study Program; but the remaining percentage considers it necessary to change some AUs such as Epistemology of the Social Sciences (5%), and 19% consider that the AUs Economic Policy, National Accounts, Marketing, Techniques Workshop and Regional Analysis, Business Strategic Planning, History should be eliminated. Economics, and Macroeconomics.
- **Seventh semester:** Only 28.6% of these students do not consider it necessary to remove any of the UA from PPELE. The other remaining percentage of students do want Economic History (29%), Business Theory (14%), Geography (7%), and SMEs (7%) to be eliminated, and even all the UAs that make up the common core in the first semester (14%).
- **Eighth semester:** 53% of the students do not consider it necessary to eliminate any AU from the PPELE. In another percentage the opinion changes, they see it necessary to eliminate some AUs such as Epistemology (13%), Current Society (7%), Induction to Social Sciences (13%), Public Finance (7%), and Political Economy (7%).

Regarding the important opinion of the students in relation to the area of the Study Plan and Program where they consider they have learned more, we have the following results considering only the 7th and 8th semester, since they have known most of the study plan and can give their opinion based on in your educational experience.

According to the curricular map of this study program (UNACH-PPELE, 2010), it consists of 230 credits, with a total of 230 hours/week/month and is divided into the following areas of knowledge: Theoretical, Instrumental, Research, Specialization, and Multidisciplinary Support.

- **Seventh semester:** The students who are studying this semester consider that the Instrumental area is where they have learned the most (35.7%), and the research area where their learning has been the least (14.3%).
- **Eighth semester:** For the eighth semester students, after having completed the entire curriculum, the Theoretical area is where they have learned the most (33.4%), followed by the specialization area (26.7%), Research continues to be an area where they do not perceive good learning (13.3%).

It is important to mention that, of the students surveyed, 53% mention the need to have a training area in economics and education, considered necessary due to their interests in job placement in the educational area.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In the Bachelor of Economics, we find that gender is an important variable. In recent years, the female gender has chosen to study this degree, in a higher percentage than the male gender, which in the beginning was the main user of this academic offer.

80% of the student population of this Degree speaks Spanish, and 20% have an indigenous language of Mexico as their mother tongue, mainly the Mayenses of the State of Chiapas. This characteristic invites us to pay attention to student inclusion (Sánchez and Robles, 2013; Niembro et al., 2021) and to carry out studies that allow the identification of barriers in the academic achievement, desertion, and even professional performance of graduates.

Most of the first semester students of the Economics Degree agree with the design of the current Study Plan and Program. In the third, fifth and sixth semesters, it is properly the totality of the students who do not need to change something in the Study Plan and Program.

The reality is perceived completely inverted in seventh semester students, since 28.6% of them do not want them to remove any Learning Unit from the Study Plan; while 71.4% do consider it necessary to change some Learning Units. The reason behind their opinion is that they do not see the utility of subjects that are not from the area of specialization. However, in professional life, all the Learning Units they take will be useful and necessary for their comprehensive training and job placement.

In the last semester of the degree, eighth, the situation is similar in proportions, that is, 53% of the students do not need to change any Learning Unit; while 47% if they want to change some Learning Units that they consider of little interest, most of them belong to the Common Core.

However, about the area where students consider they have learned more than in others, the instrumental and theoretical areas are the ones with the highest score, followed by the area of specialization. It is important to note that the research area is considered little learning for most. This result agrees with the low productivity in research, by the teaching staff of the degree in question, proportionally speaking, and which has been the object of observation by the accrediting body.

Within the training areas of the curricular map, the Learning Units of Electives, Seminars and Workshops are being offered, but some students consider that they do not correspond to each of these specialization areas that they are studying, affecting their training as economists, this situation it is being presented since 2020, 2021 and 2022, there being a close relationship with the virtual care process that was carried out during the confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic and where not all the teaching staff were competent for the development of teaching through virtual media.

Finally, the diagnosis will allow to evaluate the possible changes in the contents of the Learning Units that remain in the curricular map, with updating in the bibliographic references; while other Learning Units may be changed to new areas of specialization, such as the area of Economics and Education, due to the current needs of graduates who are inserted in educational work environments. It is important to mention that the teaching staff is trained in these academic disciplines, which may favor the development of students.

The perceptions of the students at a university program, contribute fundamentally to the identification of the improvement needs of a Study Plan, being, in addition, elements of analysis for the substantial activities of the teaching staff.

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