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Title

Why do students consider dropping out of doctoral degrees? : institutional and personal factors /

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Abstract

Despite the increasing popularity of doctoral education, many students do not complete their studies, and very little information is available about them. Understanding why some students consider that they do not want to, or cannot, continue with their studies is essential to reduce dropout rates and to improve the overall quality of doctoral programmes. This study focuses on the motives students give for considering dropping out of their doctoral degree. Participants were 724 social sciences doctoral students from 56 Spanish universities, who responded to a questionnaire containing doctoral degree conditions questions and an open-ended question on motives for dropping out. Results showed that a third of the sample, mainly the youngest, female and part time students, stated that they had intended to drop out. The most frequent motives for considering dropping out were difficulties in achieving a balance between work, personal life and doctoral studies and problems with socialization. Overall, results offer a complex picture that has implications for the design of doctoral programmes, such as the conditions and demands of part-time doctoral studies or the implementation of educational

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proposals that facilitate students' academic and personal integration into the scientific community in order to prevent the development of a culture of institutional neglect. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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