

Educational Dropout of Students with NEE in the City of Portoviejo: A Qualitative Analysis Based on 11 Case Studies



Erick Caballero

Universitas Tecnica se kanabi

ABSTRACT: Educational abandonment has become for many years a social problem that affects Latin American students. Consequently, several nations, including Ecuador, focus their efforts on mitigating this problem. The research about the educational abandonment of students with special needs aims to identify why 11 students did not continue studying. The sample was part of six public and private schools in Portoviejo. The school was selected due to the high number of students with special needs enrolled in the last school year. For achieving this qualitatively oriented study, semi-structured interviews were applied as a data collection technique, and the case study research method was implemented. Among the results found in the study sample, three factors of educational abandonment stand out. One of them was the socioeconomic situation, which takes precedence over the educational quality that the student could receive regardless of the type of educational institution of which he is a part. The other one was the educational environment stands out, which mainly alludes to the teacher's preparation regarding the methodological adaptations that students with disabilities require to consolidate their learning. Finally, the family factor emphasizes the lack of responsibility of parents towards their children, such as limiting their right to education. This type of research is especially relevant due to the little literature about this vulnerable group, which will allow future explorations to be carried out that seek to enforce their rights.

KEYWORDS: abandon studies, special needs, disability, qualitatively oriented study

INTRODUCTION

The Code of Children and Adolescents of Ecuador (2003) in its article 26 ratifies the right to a dignified life, with free multiple basic services, among which access to quality education for children and young people without exclusion of some type of disability, ethnicity, or social class. However, this type of right is affected when due to different social problems, such as poverty, the continuity of children and young people in the educational system is conditioned, because the priorities of the parents are focused on the economy of the home, leaving education in the background (Estrella, 2015).

One of the main breaches is known as school dropout, a problem that has been rooted for many years in our country. Portoviejo Canton is not exempt from a school dropout, according to data from the Ministry of Education (2020) of Ecuador, in the 2019-2020 school year "three percent of the enrolled student population dropped out." The coordination identified among the most predominant causes of school dropout is the low economic level of dropout families and, secondly, intra-family conflicts.

This problem is increased when addressing the school dropout of students with special educational needs (SEN), due to the scarcity of qualitative studies that identify the causes of dropout of this vulnerable group of students. The present work addresses this social problem from a qualitative perspective in which it is intended to identify the main causes of school dropout of a group of students with SEN associated and not associated with disability and answer the following questions: What are the reasons that the representatives of students with SEN associated with a disability must leave the Educational Institution? Are the reasons for dropping out of school different between students with SEN and students who do not have SEN? Will the preparation of teachers influence issues such as methodological adaptations in the educational abandonment of students with SEN?

In this sense, interviews were conducted with directors of six Educational Units of the Portoviejo canton, whose registration records have students with SEN who recently abandoned their studies. In addition, the reasons for dropping out of school were analyzed through case studies applied to dropout students. Thanks to the application of the techniques and instruments, it is possible to contrast the information presented by the directors of the Educational Units involved and the representatives of the students who justified their reason for dropping out of school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School dropout is also present in students with SEN and when a bibliographic search of a national approach is carried out about this problem, the results obtained are scarce, which reveals the little importance that is usually given to this problem. The vulnerable

Educational Dropout of Students with NEE in the City of Portoviejo: A Qualitative Analysis Based on 11 Case Studies

group is present in the educational community. However, some national and foreign research that addresses this problem appropriately is highlighted below.

In the first place, the investigation of Rojas (2013) stands out, which, through the application of case studies, seeks to know the family factors that influence the school dropout of students with SEN in Peru. The author concludes in his research that the family factors that influence school dropout were intrafamily problems, associated with the psychological strength that parents must have when accepting their child according to their personality, since parents prefer to withdraw to his representative of the Educational Unit to prevent affectations such as bullying, marginalization, among others.

During the same year, the Ecuadorian researcher Fuentes (2013) elaborated on an inquiry called the school desertion of students with disabilities from the special education institutions of the Esmeraldas canton, study period 2011-2012. Which, after finishing its qualitative work, concluded that the most important factors of school dropout of students with SEN are intra-family problems since there are conflicts when discussing the presence or absence in education, considering it unimportant.

Calderón (2015) highlighted in his research the decrease in school dropout in rural areas, due to the opening of educational centers in areas of difficult access. However, it also calls for better teacher preparation. The author considers that the teacher should be a person who lives in a rural area since he knows the deficiencies of his students, especially the limitations that homes with SEN students have.

Years later, the Ecuadorian researcher Yáñez (2018) proposed an investigation entitled "Students with disabilities and school dropout in the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Education Sciences of the Central University of Ecuador". Even though his study sample was university students, his objective is striking, since he intended to verify whether a disability is a reason for academic desertion. Concluding that having a disability is not a reason for academic dropout, however, external factors associated with poorly accessible facilities, and lack of teacher preparation, among others, influence.

Finally, the Ecuadorian author Tubilla (2021) carried out an interesting investigation entitled "Public management of inclusive education and school dropout of students with disabilities in public educational institutions, UGEL 03, 2019". In it, he analyzed the changes in Ecuadorian public management regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in the public education system, to know if these changes affected the school dropout of students with disabilities. Concluding that the budgetary allocation to the institutions for their equipment in learning resources for students with SEN is insufficient, as well as the public management in inclusive education brought therefore school desertion of students with disabilities because their management has not been efficiently addressed.

Addressed the investigations, it is possible to identify factors of school dropout of students with SEN that have in common with the previously mentioned works. In the first place, intra-family problems due to parents' acceptance of the differences their children have with others, possible integration problems, and bullying, these intra-family conflicts affect school dropout. Second, educational institutions sometimes do not have adequate physical conditions and proper teaching staff preparation to achieve significant student learning. And, thirdly, the socioeconomic factor present in Ecuadorian families affects the continuity of education.

These factors are related to an investigation carried out by Romero and Hernández (2019) who classify the causes of educational dropout into three types: a) those that focus on the student's perspective, that is, those that are related to abilities, motivation, among others, b) those that focus on social, economic and cultural factors, c) those that focus on the educational system, that is, those that are related to teaching programs, pedagogy and teacher strategies, among others. others.

METHODOLOGY

Multiple case studies were applied to 11 dropout students with SEN. The case studies to be applied are of descriptive characteristics because it is intended to identify the main causes of school dropout.

The application of case studies finds its justification in that, as Sampieri, Fernández, and Baptista (2003) point out, this approach is particularly appropriate for testing hypotheses and developing theories about social phenomena.

For the development of the research, six Educational Units of the Portoviejo canton participated, represented by the director and/or the general secretary of the institution. Who, after agreeing to participate in the investigation, interacted in a semi-structured interview. The selection of the Educational Units is due to different aspects that are detailed below:

The selected Educational Units have more than five students with SEN, whether associated or not associated with disability, of which at least 2 students dropped out of school. The SEN that students have will be both associated with disability and not associated with disability

Educational Dropout of Students with NEE in the City of Portoviejo: A Qualitative Analysis Based on 11 Case Studies

Table 1. Selected educational units.

Nombre	Tipo de institución	Estudiantes con NEE asociada a la discapacidad	Estudiantes con NEE no asociada a la discapacidad	¿Estudiantes con NEE asociada a la discapacidad abandonaron?	¿Estudiantes con NEE NO asociada a la discapacidad abandonaron?
Unidad Educativa 1	Pública	16	12	SI	NO
Unidad Educativa 2	Pública	11	4	NO	NO
Unidad Educativa 3	Pública	12	5	NO	SI
Unidad Educativa 4	Privada	14	5	SI	SI
Unidad Educativa 5	Privada	8	0	SI	NO
Unidad Educativa 6	Privada	7	0	SI	NO

The present investigation applied the semi-structured interview as a data collection technique due to the freedom that the interviewer must introduce the necessary questions to obtain precise information on the desired topics. The interviewer must keep in mind that the answers expressed are related to the proposed topic. The preparation and selection of the items that made up the interview were subject to the contribution of the research present in the theoretical framework, in general, the various researchers highlight three groups of potential factors in the decision to abandon, and these factors will be explained in the following chapters. Subsequently, the questions were analyzed and validated by the tutor of this research.

The interviews were conducted in person and online through the ZOOM platform, the selection of the medium to conduct the interview was subject to the availability of time by the director or the staff in charge of the institution. The interview was recorded regardless of the physical medium in which it was conducted, and its structure consisted of two parts. The first part of the interview presents generic questions, which sought to know the inclusion of students with SEN in a general way, including the preparation of teachers and access and infrastructure. The second part of the interview aims to know certain characteristics of each student who left the institution. These questions are classified into the personality of the student, the cooperation and participation of the representatives with the institution and finally, they are questioned about the delivery of the document justifying the school dropout.

Table 2. Description of categories and codes

Instrumentos	Categoría	Códigos	Descripción
	Inclusión de estudiantes con NEE	Adaptación estructural	Los accesos físicos que poseen los estudiantes NEE
		Inclusión de estudiantes NEE en sistema educativo	Percepción sobre la inclusión en UE general o especializada
	Especialización de docentes	Docente específico para estudiantes NEE	Docente único especialista en casos NEE
		Docentes capacitados en adaptaciones curriculares	Preparación para adaptar contenidos a estudiantes NEE
Entrevista semi-estructurada	Personalidad estudiante	Personalidad	Participación de estudiante
		Asistencia	Compromiso con la UE
		Integración	Extrovertido/Introverso
Representante involucrado		Participación con la UE	Nivel de compromiso con la UE
		Conflicto con la UE	Desacuerdos con la UE
		Economía	Nivel económico percibido
Documentación		Estado	Entregado/No entregado
		Validez	Justificación acorde a la realidad

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the different realities of the sample in relation to school dropout, three main factors were identified as causes of dropout, these factors do not differ with the type of SEN, whether it is associated with disability or not, that is, the reasons for Identified dropouts are present in our sample both in students with SEN associated with disability and students without SEN not associated with disability. Figure 1 summarizes the main causes of abandonment in our study sample.

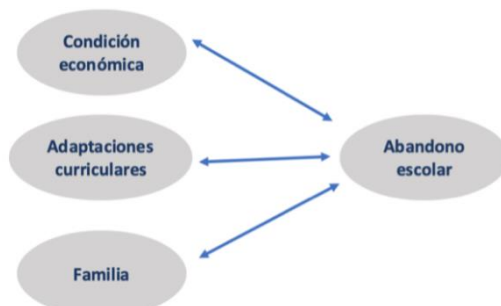


Figure 1. School dropout factors are present in the sample. Source: self-made

Economic condition: This dropout factor is perhaps one of the most prevalent in the academic literature, highlighted by Abril et al, (2008) "The economic factor is the main reason for dropout." Pariguana (2011) "There is a positive relationship between household income and the probability that the adolescent attends school and does not work." Mayancela (2016) "The risk of school dropout increases with the presence of situations such as economic and intra-family problems". Cevallos and Macias (2016) "The socioeconomic factor is more prevalent than the cultural factor as a reason for dropping out of school." Barbecho (2020) "Personal and socioeconomic reasons are the main causes of school dropout."

In our research sample, this factor was also present as a justification for student one, in which the representative made this decision because he was "unemployed due to a pandemic" (student one case study, 2021). What made it difficult to acquire the necessary computer resources for their represented to be part of online learning, in this case of abandonment, the lack of employment directly affected the ability to acquire the necessary computer supplies for virtual education, therefore, despite belonging to a public institution, whose education is free, the socioeconomic condition prevailed over free education.

A similar reality was experienced by the representative of student four, whom he mentioned this dropout factor due to the "closure of his business due to restrictions due to the pandemic" (student four case study, 2021). In this sense, the economic condition influenced the decision to drop out since the student belonged to a private institution, however, even though the representative did not provide documentation formalizing the specific reason for dropout and considering that education in our country is mandatory for 12 years, the approach to school dropout changes from being permanent to temporary.

Another case in which there is evidence of school dropout due to the economic factor has as its protagonist the representative of student five, who delivered the document requesting a change of institution to a public entity. However, the student's data is not part of the students enrolled in public or private institutions in the Portoviejo canton and considering that the student had debts with the institution, the dropout is temporary. Finally, the case of student seven has the economic condition as the cause of abandonment, because the representative had delays in the monthly payment of a private institution, so in this case, it can be seen how the economic situation prevails over the educational quality that the student could receive.

Curricular adaptations: This factor refers to the level of preparation of the teaching staff regarding curricular adaptations for students with SEN. The dropout factor is highlighted by Navarro et al., (2016) "Curricular adaptations are the instrument to achieve the individualization of teaching". Ayala (2017) "the curricular adaptations recommended by the Ministry of Education are suitable". Vera (2017) "The implementation of curricular adaptations improves the academic performance of students with SEN".

This dropout factor was justified by the representatives of student three "lack of teaching commitment" (student three case study, 2021). Student six has "virtual learning difficulty due to his disability" (student six case study, 2021). Student eight "lack of teacher preparation" (student eight case study, 2021). And finally, student 11 "lack of teacher preparation" (case study student eleven, 2021). It should be noted that, in the cases described, the supporting documents were delivered, the four cases indicated a lack of preparation on the part of the teacher regarding teaching strategies or methodologies, regardless of the type of institution in which the students were part.

Within educational institutions, the preparation of the teacher is not the only factor of school dropout, the infrastructure adapted to students with SEN is a dropout factor identified in the academy, as highlighted by Mendoza (2019) "There are high numbers of children (as) with disabilities who cannot access education, mainly due to the lack of adequate infrastructure", however, in our study sample the adequacy of adequate infrastructure that facilitates the mobility of students with SEN was not considered a determining factor in the school dropout of students, due to the fact that public and private educational institutions use different strategies such as the accompaniment of the student through a tutor teacher to guide the student during their stay in the institution.

Educational Dropout of Students with NEE in the City of Portoviejo: A Qualitative Analysis Based on 11 Case Studies

Family: A priori it can be interpreted that the economic condition is a characteristic immersed in the family, however, the results obtained from the study sample suggest perceiving the economic condition as an independent dropout factor. The family factor has various components, among which are intrafamily problems, single-parent families, and lack of responsibility on the part of parents, among others.

The dropout factor was analyzed in previous research, the same ones found in the theoretical framework, mentioning Martínez and Álvarez (2005) "The participation of student representatives with the institution is important to guarantee an optimal educational environment". Espinoza et al., (2012) "Families that are large, single-parent and have a low socioeconomic level are directly related to school dropout." Rojas (2013) "The family factors that influence school dropout were intra-family problems". Sources (2013). "The most important factors of school dropout of students with SEN are family problems." Guanoluisa and Llango (2015) "Parents tend to detach themselves from academic responsibilities."

In our sample, this dropout factor was the justification by the representative of student two, indicating "lack of time" (student two case study, 2021). This type of justification is associated with the lack of academic responsibility that parents can present when it comes to a student with SEN, in this case, the student has a hearing disability. Ignorance about the teaching processes and pedagogical actions applied at home, trigger frustration for parents, the same ones who usually entrust the growth and intellectual development of their client to the Educational Institution. However, this was frustrated due to the new modality of virtual studies in which the representative acquires a leading role in the consolidation of his son's learning.

The cause of educational abandonment of student ten, clearly evidences a disengagement from academic responsibilities, given that the student suddenly interrupted his studies. On the other hand, the student's representatives have not requested a change of institution and, furthermore, they did not have any debts with the entity, so school dropouts due to socioeconomic factors are ruled out. In addition, it can be said that the student was a model student, even though he had autism, his academic performance was remarkable, also ruling out educational abandonment due to the school environment. In this sense, the educational disengagement of a student with SEN totally adapted to the institution can cause a negative impact on the student's personality, because he is being denied his right to a quality education regardless of the duration of this educational abandonment.

External factor: The presence of COVID-19 in Ecuador since February 29, 2020, was a challenge for a country that in educational matters did not have adequate knowledge to function virtually in the field. The confinement and the non-attendance of many activities, including education, exposed the deficiencies of the educational system, in addition to increasing the economic gaps of a predominantly middle-class population. In the opinion of this author, this external factor potentiated the reasons for dropping out of school exposed in the investigation. The economic condition as a factor of abandonment was strengthened with the confinements, due to the layoffs suffered by the representatives that justified this reason. Curricular adaptations as a dropout factor apparently evidenced the lack of training of teaching staff in the educational institutions of our sample regarding the methodology of online education for students with SEN.

During confinement, the group of students with associated SEN and no disability was particularly affected, due to the restriction of the only place that allows them to develop socially, the school. Figure three shows the presence of COVID-19 as an external factor present in the reasons for dropping out of school discussed above.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The reasons for dropping out of school do not differ in relation to the presence or not of associated SEN and not to a disability, because the reasons are part of external factors that affect the decision to drop out.

Three dropout factors present in the selected sample were identified: a) the socioeconomic factor, b) curricular adaptations, c) those related to the family.

The development of this research generates a positive impact on two aspects. From the academic point of view, this study provides recent information on the educational dropout of students with SEN in the city of Portoviejo, providing bases that allow future research focused on this vulnerable group. On the other hand, socially, it constitutes the first independent qualitative research that descriptively identifies the causes of school dropout.

People with SEN associated with or not with a disability acquire several limitations during their growth that prevents them from functioning in the society of which they are a part. The impediment usually starts from the home, by not considering beneficial activities for this vulnerable group. This author is convinced of breaking down the barriers that prevent people with SEN associated or not with disabilities from interacting with society by providing equal opportunities that are a right.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- 1) Abril, E., Román, R., Cubillas, M., y Moreno, I. (2008). ¿Deserción o autoexclusión? Un análisis de las causas de abandono escolar en estudiantes de educación media superior en Sonora, México. *Revista electrónica de investigación educativa*, 10(1), 1-16. http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S160740412008000100007&lng=es&tlng=es.

Educational Dropout of Students with NEE in the City of Portoviejo: A Qualitative Analysis Based on 11 Case Studies

- 2) Ayala, D. (2017). Adaptaciones curriculares para los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales no asociadas a una discapacidad (tesis final de grado, Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi). Repositorio Digital Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi. <http://repositorio.utc.edu.ec/handle/27000/3916>
- 3) Calderón, A. (2015). Situación de la educación rural en Ecuador. Grupos Diálogo Rural/Impactos A Gran Escala. https://www.rimisp.org/wpcontent/files_mf/1439406281ATInformeTecnicoSituaciondeLaEducacionruralenEcuador.pdf
- 4) Congreso Nacional. (2003). Código de la niñez y adolescencia (Ley No. 2002-100). <https://www.registrocivil.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/01/este-es-06C%C3%93DIGO-DE-LA-NI%C3%91EZ-Y-ADOLESCENCIA-Leyes-conexas.pdf>
- 5) Espinoza, Ó., Castillo, D., González, L., y Loyola, J. (2012). Factores familiares asociados a la deserción escolar en Chile. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales (Ve)*, 18(1), 136-150. <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=28022785010>
- 6) Estrella, S. (2015). Causas que determinan la deserción y la repitencia escolar (tesis fin de master, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales). FLACSO. <http://hdl.handle.net/10469/8857>
- 7) Fuentes, L. (2013). La deserción escolar de los estudiantes con discapacidad de las instituciones de educación especial del cantón Esmeraldas período de estudio 2011-2012 (tesis final de maestría, Universidad Politécnica Salesiana). Repositorio Institucional de la Universidad Politécnica Salesiana. <http://dspace.ups.edu.ec/handle/123456789/6397>
- 8) Gómez, M. (2021). Políticas educativas inclusivas para estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales asociadas a la ceguera total (tesis final de grado, Universidad Central del Ecuador). Repositorio digital de Universidad Central del Ecuador. <http://www.dspace.uce.edu.ec/handle/25000/22675>
- 9) Guanoluisa, M., y Llango, F. (2015). Importancia de la adaptación curricular para estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales no asociadas a la discapacidad en la escuela Dr. José María Velasco Ibarra, de la ciudad de Latacunga (tesis final de grado, Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi). Repositorio Digital Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi. <http://repositorio.utc.edu.ec/handle/27000/2345>
- 10) Martínez, R., y Álvarez, L. (2005). Fracaso y abandono escolar en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria: implicación de la familia y los centros escolares. *Aula Abierta*, (85), 127-146. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2044877>
- 11) Mendoza, M. (2019). La discapacidad en el Perú y adaptaciones de accesibilidad de espacios e infraestructura en centros educativos inclusivos. *Educación*, 24(1), 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.33539/educacion.2018.v24n1.1313>
- 12) Ministerio de Educación. (2020). Currículo priorizado. <https://educacion.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2020/09/Curriculo-Priorizado-Sierra-Amazonia-20202021.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0RsnFRzndH-dK-MjIVwbev8bB0zJ6MTYVczV2d0K9Zm2Hg8dQy2VL2Dw>
- 13) Navarro, B., Arriagada, I., Osse, S., y Burgos, C. (2016). Adaptaciones curriculares: Convergencias y divergencias de su implementación en el profesorado chileno. *Revista Electrónica Educare*, 20(1), 1-18. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=194143011015>
- 14) Rojas, D. (2013). Factores familiares que influyen en la deserción escolar de los alumnos con necesidades educativas especiales en el cebe-pacasmayo, distrito de pacasmayo en abril 2013 (tesis final de pregrado, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo). Universidad Nacional de Trujillo. <https://dspace.unitru.edu.pe/bitstream/handle/UNITRU/4274/ROJAS%20SUYON%20DIANA%20KARINA%28FILEminimizer%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- 15) Sampieri, R., Fernández, C., y Baptista, P. (2003). *Metodología de investigación*. Mc. Graw Hill.
- 16) Tubilla, M. (2021). Gestión pública de la educación inclusiva y deserción escolar de estudiantes con discapacidad en instituciones educativas públicas, UGEL 03, 2019 (tesis final de maestría, Universidad César Vallejo). Repositorio de la Universidad César Vallejo. <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12692/58627>
- 17) Vera, D. (2017). Adaptaciones curriculares para estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales asociadas y no asociadas a una discapacidad (tesis final de pregrado, Universidad Técnica de Machala). Repositorio Digital de la UTMACH <http://repositorio.utmachala.edu.ec/handle/48000/11505>
- 18) Yáñez, J. (2018). Estudiantes con discapacidades y la deserción escolar en la Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad Central del Ecuador (tesis final de maestría, Universidad Central del Ecuador). Repositorio digital de Universidad Central del Ecuador. <http://www.dspace.uce.edu.ec/handle/25000/14371>



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.