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# The Influence of The Tourism Industry on University Abandonment

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# 1. Abstract

The big tourist industry of the Balearic Islands generates hundreds of jobs, being the main economic driving force of this community. The few skills and academic requirements necessary to acquire these jobs, suppose a big opportunity for young people to find work, even while they are studying in the university.

Nevertheless, the ease of finding job could influence the fact that the Balearic Islands is one of the communities with the highest abandonment average in Spain, especially in the case of tourism students.

Throughout this project, we will try to find the main reasons that motivate students to abandon university, especially in tourism degree, and discover if tourism industry, which is growing year after year, influence or not that incident.

## 2. Introduction

The Balearic Islands is one of the most touristic areas in Europe, receiving thousands of visitors every year. These visitors generate many job opportunities and economic profits.

On the other hand, Spain has one of the highest university abandonment levels in Europe. In particular, in the Balearic Islands approximately one in four students give up university, leading the state drop-out ranking (Mayte Amorós, 2018)

Could these two phenomena be related? Indeed, some news and articles affirm that tourism industry is one of the main reasons of university abandonment, due to the incentive for young people to receive income, and the low academic training required for many of these jobs (Xavier Serrano, 2017). For example, According to Calero "the labour market in Balearic Islands allows the early incorporation of young people to jobs essentially from service sector, which increases the opportunity cost of studies and discourages continuity in them"(Amer, 2011). Furthermore, it is more easy to introduce people to the labour market for the first time in tourism industry than in other sectors, creating greater opportunities for young and low-skilled people (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2017).

It is essential to be conscious of the importance of this matter for our community, considering that, a low academic level supposes poor wages, bad work places and more difficulties to promote in a job in the future.

These factors could generate, in the long term, important problems for the society such as an excess of population with poor intellectual level, placing the

Balearic Islands at the end of Europe and, possibly, requiring that foreigners are hired to fill the more qualified job positions in this region.

Also, the tourism faculty of UIB (University of the Balearic Islands) has been awarded as the better tourism faculty in Spain and one of the best in Europe during the last years (“Ranking universidades donde estudiar turismo,” 2017), a fact that contradicts the academic results. To what extent is tourism and the wide range of job opportunities provided by services industry—the main reason for students to drop out university in Balearic Islands? Why do they do it? These will be the issues we will try to understand in this project.

### **3. Methodology**

The methodology used consists of three different and complementary aspects. The most important element and the main source of information to carry out this project have been personal interviews with students who left their studies in Mallorca, as well as people who are currently studying tourism in order to compare each issue in both cases. These interviews were carried out through phone calls, face-to-face conversations and online tests. Personal information of the interviewees will not be revealed, in order to respect their identity and privacy. Furthermore, these interviews have been realized essentially to tourism degree students from UIB, and some economics students, including both studies because these two university degrees are very similar regarding subjects taught and professional opportunities after finishing these degrees.

It is necessary to note the difficulties encountered in order to find students who have abandoned their degrees, considering that we are talking about a very closed target population, and that means we cannot find them randomly on the street. That is why was necessary to ask university students if they knew of former students who had abandoned their studies, causing in this way that the sample of interviewees to be small. Also, not everybody agreed to provide information about his or her acquaintances who dropped out, or even in some cases, although the name or contact information were provided, these people did not respond or accept the call or message sent.

Nevertheless, although students who are currently in university are easier to find and access, the size of the sample of current students is similar to the sample of students who abandoned, to make the analysis balanced. The short time window supposes another limitation, due to some external elements of the society change depending on the time frame in which students decide to drop out. For example, if a student has in mind abandon university during the economic crisis, he will have more difficulties to find a job than another one who decide to drop out during last years, when tourism labour market is growing in Balearic Islands, being possible to condition their decision.

Furthermore, regarding some data concerning academic results, opinions or other information about university students and statistics, it was not possible to do this analysis for each UIB degree, due to the difficulty to obtain all this information from each department. That is why the information used has been regarding tourism students and general datum from UIB, grouping all the university careers together.

## **Data collection**

### **3.1. Interviews and surveys**

As mentioned earlier, two methods of data collection have been used, interviews and online surveys. Although the question format was different for each case, because interviews allow more dynamism and personalization, both methods follow the same structure, with similar questions and the same topics to inquire into. That means that both methods provide us the same information even though conducted in slightly different ways.

In the case of face-to-face and telephone interviews, it did not have a closed question format. It consisted in questions and dynamic conversations following a structure previously prepared, in order to tackle all the necessary matters to investigate. In those cases that were not possible to do a personal interview or a telephone call, surveys were used which, despite being answered online, allow respondents to express their opinions and suggestions with open questions.

In any case, both methods permit to obtain information about the main reasons or motivations to abandon the university, apart from any other contribution or opinion about the tourism degree, touristic labour market or any other aspect related with the matter of this project.

Furthermore, although most of the questions and matters to tackle were the same for current students and those who abandoned, both have some different questions or, at least, some ones focused on the characteristics of each group to make possible to compare responses from both.

The structure and content of these interviews and surveys were divided in the following parts:

The first part refers to sociodemographic matters regarding age, gender, city of residence, etc. This information was necessary to create a general profile of the people interviewed. Afterwards, more specific questions were asked. For example, people were asked about the economic situation of their family to determine if the family context could influence or determine the drop out decision. Furthermore, the level of education of their parents and if they possess any university title were also important, due to the academic level of the ancestors, could have an important role in the motivation to be graduated.

In the second part, the interview was focused on university topics, which main goal was basically to understand why students decided to leave the university and which reasons motivate them. Because of that, was necessary to know their opinions, experiences and level of satisfaction with the career they signed up. One of these questions was for example, in which academic course they left the studies, to know the average of time that people who abandon stay in university.

Moreover, ex-students were requested for the main reasons or situations that motivated them to drop out the university. In that way, the idea is to try to recognize a pattern or common motive among the interviewees. As this question cannot be done to current students, they were asked if they have ever thought leaving university and for what reasons, and in that way, compare the results with those who dropped out.

Another important issue was interviewees' view about which is for them the main function of the university in our society, showing them two alternatives: to find a job or to educate citizens. Their point of view about that could explain if they are studying simply to find job or not.

Regarding some different questions asked to current students, they were asked about if they are actually working and if they have ever combined work and university, to understand if the fact of combining both activities could influence abandonment.

In third part, the next topic to be discussed in the interviews was jobs. As in the previous sections, the students expressed their opinions about the touristic labour market in the Balearic Islands. They were also asked for the kind of jobs they applied and the main reasons that motivate them to start working (economic problems, pay their studies, save money, etc.). To know the requirements for these jobs, for example the level of studies or language skills, can be an essential factor because the lower the conditions required for these jobs, the easier will be for young people to abandon their studies.

Also, it was important to ask if students abandon their studies immediately after they find a job or if they combined work and studies during some period of time. That could determine if people are finding a job because they want to abandon the university immediately or, in the case that they combine studies and work for a period of time, the idea of abandoning could possibly appear later.

Finally, to conclude the interview, people explained their points of view about the future of their jobs and academic career and their conclusions about that issue. Some interesting questions during this completion were for example, to know if they think that university studies will be necessary to promote in their jobs and if they plan to go back to university to finish their studies.

### **3.2. Statistics provided by SEQUA**

The second source of data used for this project are statistics provided by the statistics and university quality service (SEQUA), regarding abandonment in tourism degree and UIB from 2013 to 2017. These reports provided information about percentage of people who abandoned, their academic results, average of people under 25 who dropped out, etc.

It is necessary to point out how UIB defines a person who has given up university: It consists of people who has initiated his studies, and without having concluded them, have not signed during the last two years (Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2017). For example, if a student was signed up in tourism degree in 2015, but he does not do it in 2016 and 2017 courses, it is considered that he has abandoned. We accessed two reports, a report regarding students who have not been signed up in his studies during the courses 2013/14 and 2014/15 and secondly, another one with those who have not signed up between the courses 2015/16 and 2016/17.

In addition, regarding students who interrupt their studies, UIB classifies them in four groups:

1. Students who have changed their studies.
2. Students who have changed the centre of studies (university).
3. File transfer.
4. Students who have abandoned their studies (Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2017).

In particular, we are interested in the fourth group, in order to discover if job opportunities are an important fact to leave the studies.

## 4. Results

In this section will be explained the different results and effects obtained through the study of the different sources of information required to develop this project.

### 4.1. Important data about abandonment.

#### 4.1.1. Abandonment percentage in Tourism and UIB.

Firstly, it is necessary to provide context to this issue analyzing some statistic information provided by SEQUA concerning tourism students from 2013 to 2017, divided into two times frames (2013-15) and (2015-17). When analyzing this data, we can observe that the number of people who have left university increases from the first period (2013-15) to the second one (2015-17), concretely from 72 to 81 drop out.

Nevertheless, it does not suppose a negative fact because the number of students registered increased, supposing a slow decrease in give up percentage from 14% in the first period to 13% in the second one. That is why we can say that the percent of abandonment practically remain constant.

<u>Abandonment percentage</u>		
	Tourism	UIB
2013-15	14%	7%
2015-17	13%	7%

(Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2016)

However, the general UIB statistics show that during the first period of time, 1.466 of 19.505 registered students gave up (Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2013) and specifically, 1.493 of 18.930 students in the second one (Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2015) representing in both cases 7% of drop out. Stands out that tourism career has the double of abandonment percentage than the general UIB statistics, indicating that tourism-related work can be behind the decision to give up university.

#### 4.1.2. Credits passed

We need to take into account that academic results usually have a big weight in the decision to abandon studies. For that reason, we will compare the academic results of those students who abandoned with the results of current students, in order to know if that fact condition abandonment.

Also, to compare the results of tourism students with the rest of university, can help us to explain the difference of abandonment percentage between them,

due to if tourism students fail more subjects, they will be more predisposed to drop out.

Firstly, we are going to examine the academic results of those students who have definitely abandoned (that means, people who gave up university and they are not studying in another university or another career). It is necessary to take into account that university subjects are expressed by number of credits, due to the following table is expressed with the average of credits passed by credits matriculated:

<b><i>Average of credits passed / credits matriculated in definitive drop out</i></b>		
	Tourism	UIB
2013-15	39,4%	38,55%
2015-17	52%	47%

(Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2016)

Analyzing this table, we can observe how during the first period, tourism students who abandoned passed on average 39% of the credits, different from 52% of credits passed during the second one. On the other hand, 38,55% of UIB students abandoned during the first period and 47% during the second one. That means that all these students are failing less and less subjects, what in advance seems a positive point. Nonetheless, percentages around 50% of credits passed in both cases, supposes an absolutely low level of results.

Moreover, when current students were asked about that matter, the result was that most of them passed at least 85% of credits matriculated, a really different result from those students who abandoned. That means that the academic failure is a weight reason for students to abandon.

However, in comparison with UIB statistics, tourism students are more successful since 2013 until today. That means that although tourism students abandon more than the rest of UIB, they pass more subjects, which indicates that academic results, despite being an important fact to abandon, are not a determinant element to explain the difference of drop out average between tourism degree and the rest of university. For this reason, we can start investigating which other reasons may influence the abandonment.

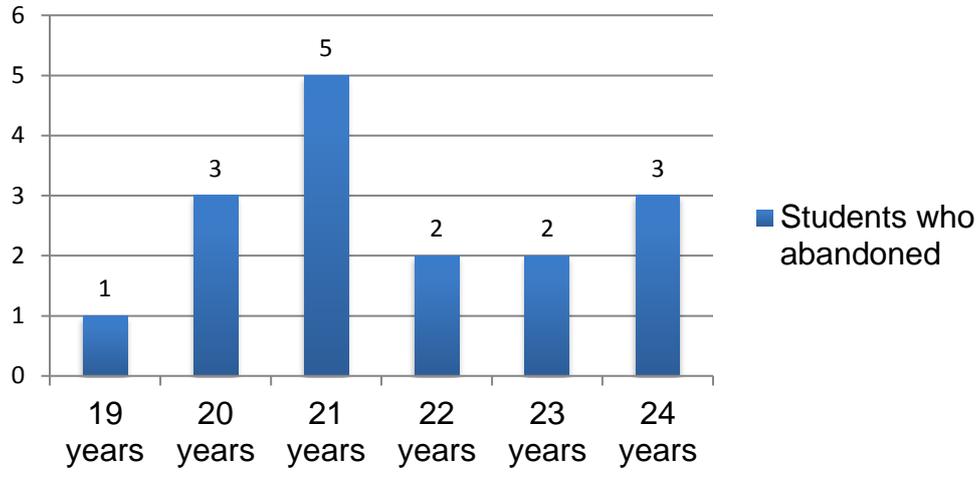
## **Interviews**

### **4.2. Sociodemographic information of the interviewees.**

#### **4.2.1. Age.**

Before starting with the results of the interviews, some general information about our target people will be analysed. First, both those who abandoned and those who continue studying, are people between 19 and 24 years old. Regarding those who dropped out, the specifically average age is 21,6.

**Age of students who abandoned**



This data makes sense taking into account that usually university students are young people. Otherwise, the fact that the age range is young, supposes a positive factor because it shows that these people have recently abandoned university, which means that they have fresh in their memory their opinions and reasons to drop out.

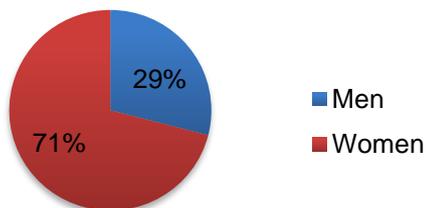
**4.2.2. Gender.**

The other element to take into account regarding sociodemographic aspects is the gender of the interviewees. Gender difference in students who abandoned has risen from 2013 to 2017, with 64,2% for women and 35,8% for men. Furthermore, the fact that the number of women employed in tourism industry is increasing since 2015 (“Las mujeres suponen cerca del 54% del empleo hostelero,” 2018) can also have an important relevance because if women can easily access to more job opportunities, it could explain the difference in drop out statistics with male.

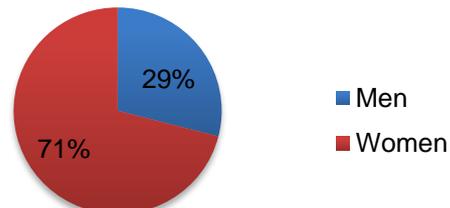
Regarding people interviewed, the gender proportion is the following:

**Gender**

**Students who abandoned**



**Current students**



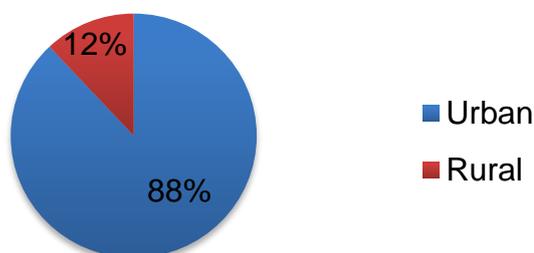
The result is that the percentage of women is the same for students who abandoned and for current students. Also, it is true that more women are registered in tourism studies, supposing that probably more women work in that industry precisely because they are more interested in this sector. That explains why tourism industry has almost twice as many women employers as other sectors (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2017).

#### 4.2.3. Environment and area of residence.

The next step was to ask interviewees about their city or town of residence and if they have grown in an urban or rural area. That question was designed in order to discover if the place where the students have growth, could influence their decision to abandon, due to those people who have lived in urban areas, could have more motivation to study than those who lived in rural places, where less businesses are located.

The result was that 88% of the students who abandoned have grown in urban areas, especially in Palma. That means that the region where students have grown does not influence abandonment.

#### Environment where students grew up



#### 4.3. Survey results

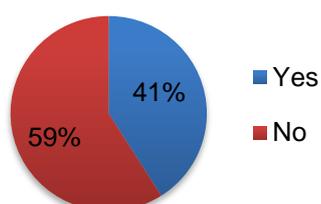
Through the results of the answers from 17 UIB tourism students who abandoned and 21 current tourism students interviewed, we will try to know their main reasons that motivate those who abandoned to do it, and know a little bit more the standard profile of these students.

#### 4.3.1. Economic situation.

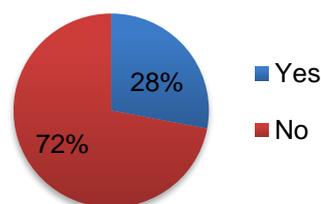
The question used to inquire about the economic situation of the interviewees was whether their family (or themselves) had suffered any kind of economic problem.

#### Have you suffered economic problems?

##### Students who abandoned



##### Current students



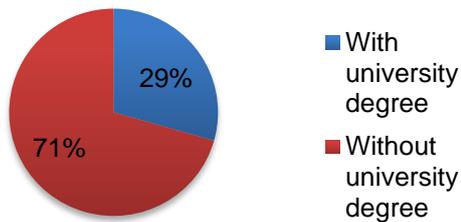
We observe that in advance, it does not seem to be a high percentage for students who abandoned, due to people who suffered economic difficulties represent less than half of the sample (41%). However, if we compare that average with current students, a 13% less had economic problems. This suggests that economic problems of the student or in his or her family could contribute to abandoning, possibly to find a job to earn money and revert this situation. Moreover, it is curious that all of these 7 people who suffered economic difficulties have parents without any university degree, precisely the next point to analyze.

Furthermore, in relation to the familiar situation, students were asked about if they have ascendants or descendants in charge, in order to know if it could influence abandonment due to, to have a son or your fathers in charge, can take away time to study. This matter was discarded as an influence to abandon because only one person has this familiar situation.

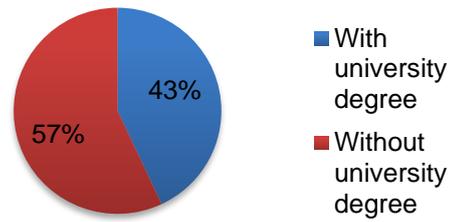
#### 4.3.2. Parents academic level.

Moving on to the next point, regarding the academic level of their parents, it was a question designed to know if the example and influence of the education level of their ancestors could determine their decision to abandon.

### Students who abandoned



### Current students

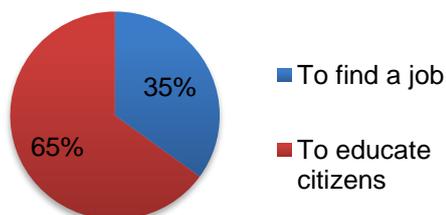


The results show that the percentage of parents without university degree is 14% higher in the case of people who left university. Presumably, these students could have less pressure and motivation from his family to get a university title than other youth with graduated parents. That supposes that the example of the position of the parents in the academic contest influence people. Nevertheless, in spite of the difference of percentage, which indicates that parent's level of education could contribute to abandonment, the difference does not seem large to consider this fact, as well as economic problems, as the main reasons to drop out.

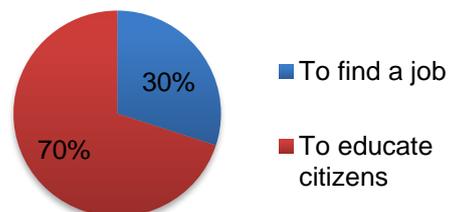
#### 4.3.3. Perception of the university main function.

The next point to examine is the perception of the interviewees regarding the main function of the university in our society, expounding them two alternatives: to find a job or to train and educate citizens. The initial perception inspires to believe that these students who gave up university to work, will choose the answer, "to find a job" because if somebody believes that, this person will be probably more predisposed to abandon his studies if he can find work.

### Students who abandoned



### Current students



Once obtained the results, we can observe that 70% of current students think that the main function of university is to educate citizens, a fact that makes sense because if they do not believe that university function is to find a job, they will be probably more resistant to abandon for job reasons. However, curiously the result was practically the same for students who abandoned. 65% thinks that the main function of the university is to educate population, discarding that fact as a determinant element to abandon.

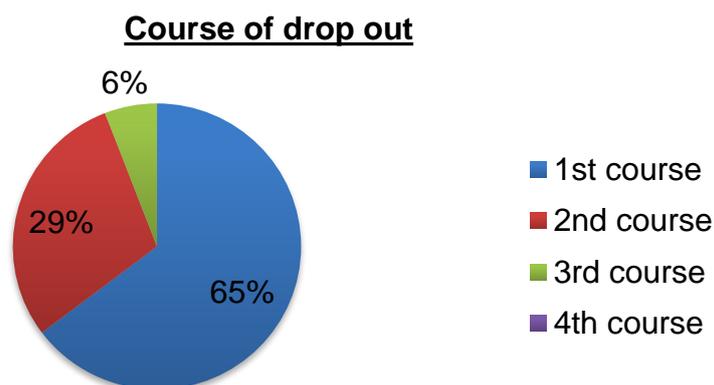
#### 4.3.4. Cultural institutions.

When the questions for this interview were designed, it was thought that maybe the fact that a person belongs or not to a cultural institution (for example dance, music, literature, etc.) could be related to abandonment.

In advance, we can tend to think that people who belong to a cultural institution will be less predisposed to abandon university, but nevertheless, the result was just the opposite. 25% of the students who abandoned and none of current students belong to some cultural institutions. In both cases the percentages are very low, but stands out that more people who abandoned are part of cultural groups, discarding this fact as a reason to drop out.

#### 4.3.5. Course of drop out.

Afterwards, students who gave up university were asked about in which academic year they decided to abandon, with the purpose to try to know how long have they stayed in the university.



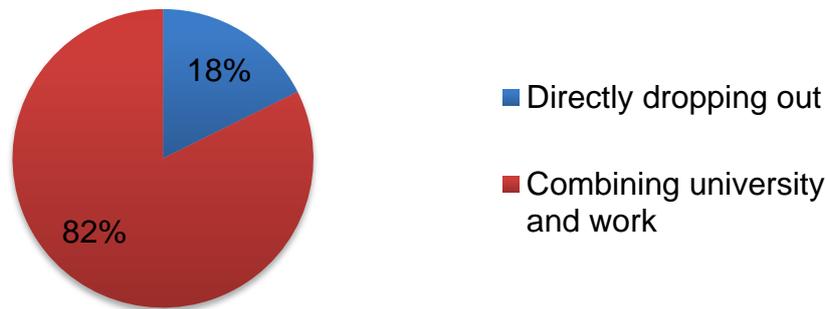
The result was that most of them dropped out especially in the first academic course and, followed at some distance, in the second one. That means that these students do not arrive to the half of the degree duration (tourism career lasts four years). It makes sense because if somebody has in mind to abandon university, he will not be there too long.

#### 4.3.6. How students leave university.

The next step was to ask to survey respondents about the way they left the university, exposing them two alternatives:

- Students that directly abandon university when they start working. That is, when they find a job, they immediately stop their studies.
- Students that combine university and work for a period of time before dropping out.

### How students leave university



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Looking at the chart stands out that only four of seventeen ex-students directly abandoned. That is a remarkable point, which demonstrates that most of the students are not looking for a job in order to immediately leave university, but rather, it seems that people start working and afterwards, comes to their mind the idea of stopping their studies. That could mean that in some way, this job could later affect or influence them. That stands out taking into account that the majority of students who abandoned, combined university and work, a task not easy to perform.

In fact, 47% of current students have never combined work and university. Also, some of them explained that they only worked during summer, a fact that makes sense because 67% of current students are not actually working. It could suggest that those students who work during the academic course could have more probabilities to abandon.

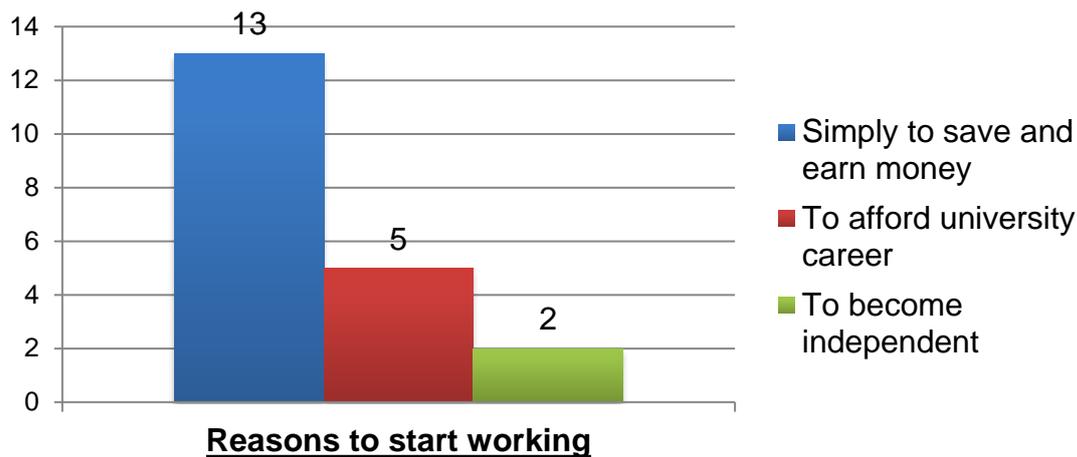
In conclusion, these results suggest that in some way jobs could affect or influence those students who combine work and university to have less motivation to continue studying.

#### 4.3.7. Reasons to start working

To continue studying more thoroughly the previous matter about combining work and university and the influence of jobs, all interviewees were asked about their main reasons to start working.

Generally, most of the students who abandoned, explained that they did not have any necessity or a matter of urgency to work and earn money. They explained that the main reason was basically to save a little bit of money for their expenses, such as petrol, go out with friends, travel, etc. The second most named reason, although far from the first one, was to afford their university career, coinciding in the majority of cases, with these people whose family suffered economic problems.

In the following graph will be shown the distribution of reasons of those students who abandoned to start working. It should be mentioned that the sum of all the results is not equal to 17 (total number of students who abandoned interviewed) due to in some cases, people chose more than one option.



In fact, the results and averages obtained from current students regarding this question were practically identical, demonstrating the same conditions to work and discarding more the economic problems as a strong reason to abandon.

#### 4.3.8. Job requirements.

In order to analyze more deeply these jobs, the next step was to know which were the necessary requirements that these jobs presented. It is possible to find several similarities through the different responses of all our interviewees. The most common requisite is, without doubt, languages, specially English, being always essential. In some cases, is recommendable or at least favourable, the knowledge of other languages.

The following important requirement is the academic level. The most common, and the highest studies required was the secondary school title, and to a lesser extent, professional training (known as FP in Spain). Work experience and the fact to be studying a university degree, especially tourism, where it is assumed that languages are studied, were as well other appreciated facts.

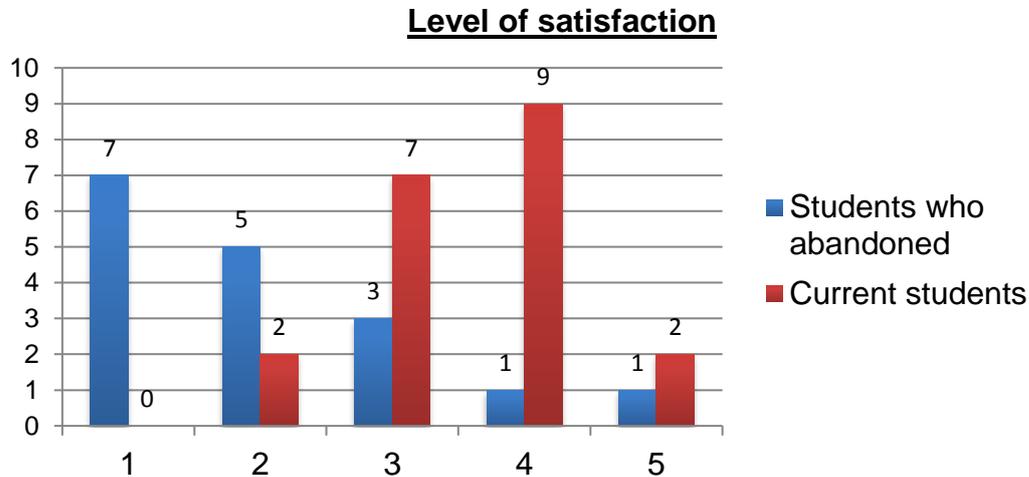
All these requisites demonstrate that with a secondary school title, and a standard English level, you have a lot of options to find a job in the Balearic Islands.

#### 4.3.9. Level of satisfaction with tourism degree.

After all the information seen so far, it is essential to know the valuation by the interviewees about the tourism degree in UIB. To know the satisfaction level of both groups interviewed can help us a lot to understand the main reasons of abandonment. The tool was a numerical ranking from 1 to 5, in which survey respondents had to rate their satisfaction with the studies.

The valuation is the following:

1. Absolutely dissatisfied.
2. Dissatisfied.
3. Neutral.
4. Satisfied.
5. Absolutely satisfied.



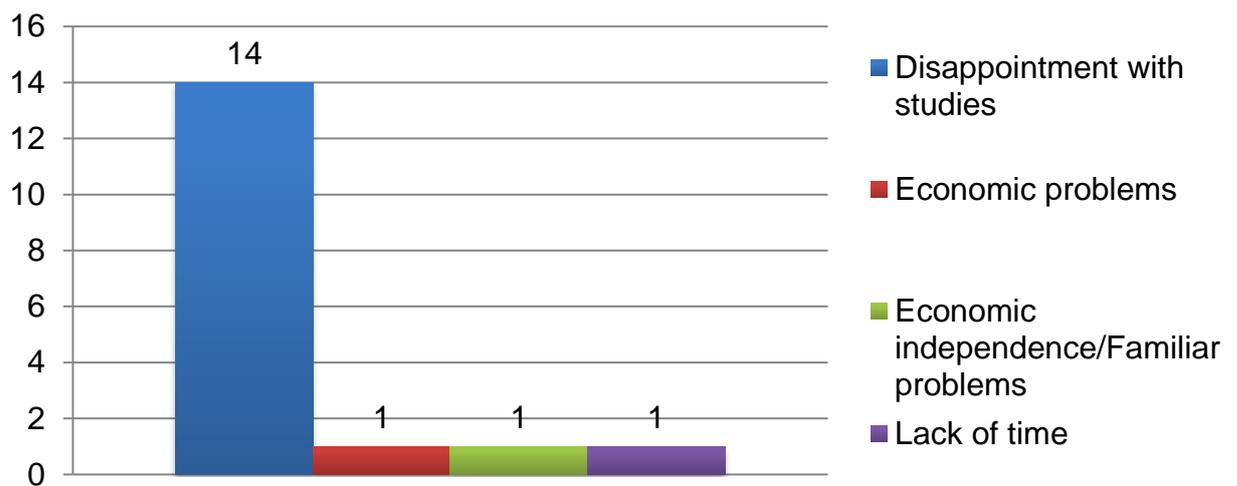
As the graph shows, the majority of the students who dropped out are really disappointed with tourism career, being the two lowest levels the most voted. On the contrary, 80% of current students are happy with their studies, due to the majority chose levels 3 (neutral satisfaction) and 4 (satisfied). That shows a clear differentiation in terms of satisfaction between current students and those who leave university, showing that this fact has an important weight in the decision to abandon.

About some statements from those people disappointed with tourism degree, the great majority exposes that this career is too focused on economics, hotels and business subjects, issues that were not useful for them when they started working (that could explain why people give up after combining university and work). Nevertheless, others claimed that subjects are too wide, without allowing students to focus on a particular matter. Also, some people said that the organization of the language subjects over the courses is not the best one. To sum up, we could say that all of these students did not find in tourism degree what they expected.

However, we must take these answers with caution. Respondents may use their answers to justify their decision to abandon their studies, rather than to express their true level of satisfaction with their studies.

#### 4.3.10. Reasons to abandon

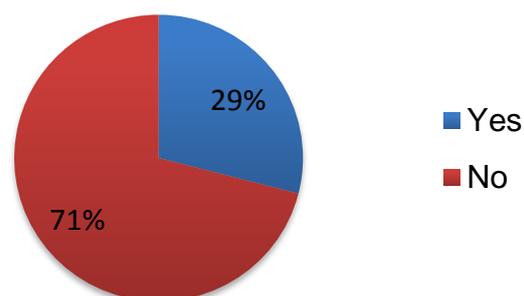
The next point supposes one of the most important parts of this project. It consists in directly ask interviewees about the main motives that inspired them to leave the university. We see that the principal reason is disappointment with the degree they were studying. Specifically, 14 of 17 ex-students, expound that they were disappointed.



These results make sense if we take into account that people who abandon pass approximately 52% of their subjects (Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2017), what supposes that they will not be happy with their studies, as opposed from those who are currently studying, whose level of satisfaction and academic results are better.

Regarding this matter, it was thought that could be interesting to know if current students have ever considered leaving university. The result was that 71% has never considered it, explaining that they are satisfied with tourism degree. Of the remaining 29%, people explained that low satisfaction and lack of time were the reasons why the considered dropping out.

#### Have you ever considered dropping out?



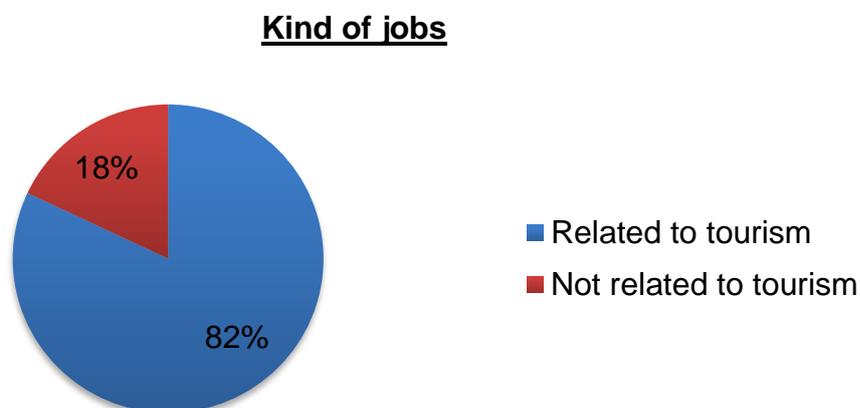
#### 4.3.11. Kind of jobs.

Although at this point we can suppose that disappointment and low academic results are the main reasons to drop out, which can be applicable to all university degrees, we still need to understand what is the fact that supposes the difference in abandonment numbers between tourism degree and the rest of UIB. This question can determine if tourism industry is one of the essential

facts. To do that, the data from both groups (people who abandoned and current students) will be expressed together because in both cases these jobs were obtained while they were studying and the results are very similar. In the case of current students, only 17 people answered this question because the four remaining have not worked. In this way, the sample will be 34 people (17 answers from each group). Regarding the responses, we can divide it in jobs that are related to tourism and the others that are not related to.

- Jobs related with tourism: These jobs will be divided in three groups:
  1. Airport: 5 of 34 interviewees worked in the airport, particularly in check-in and boarding jobs.
  2. Hotel industry and restaurant business: This category encompasses both sectors because they are very close, due to several people interviewed, worked for example as waiter or maitre in a hotel. That supposes the largest group, with people working on it as receptionist (10 people) and as waiter (6 people).
  3. Shop assistant: This sector can be a bit ambiguous, due to some people consider it as a touristic work and others not. Probably it depends on the area where the shop is located, the kind of customers and the products sold. In that case, six people obtained this job, in shops located in the center of Palma, in well-known commercial areas, that means, areas frequented by tourists.
  4. Sales promoter: One person worked as sales promoter in a touristic company.
- Jobs not related to tourism: The last group comprises jobs that, in advance, do not have any relationship with tourism. In particular, the six people who are included in that segment find job as checker, administrative, financial consulting and teacher.

The following graph illustrates which percentage of jobs performed by all the interviewees belongs to the tourism industry.



The difference is evident. The majority worked in jobs related to tourism, which indicates that this sector offers many opportunities for young people to be employed, what could explain why these students with poor academic results and low satisfaction with tourism degree, abandon more than the rest of UIB, due to these students can have more facilities to start working if they have in mind abandon university than other students from other careers.

In relation to that issue, students were also asked about the wage obtained in those jobs, which are on average, 1.000 € per month, an amount that is not bad for young people without having completed their university degree.

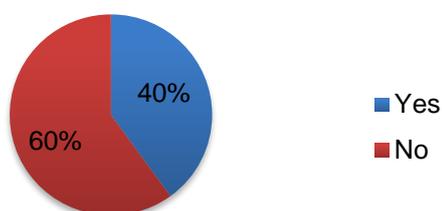
#### 4.3.12. Future views.

Last, but not least, the interview tackled the matter of the future views of the interviewees and to know which are their conclusions and suggestions about the different topics dealt with.

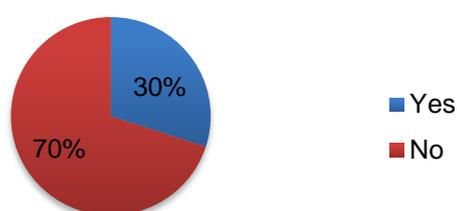
On the first hand, interviewees were asked about their perception of the need of a university title to promote in the future in their jobs.

#### **Need of a university title to promote in your job**

##### **Students who abandoned**



##### **Current students**



As a result, most of them think that they will not need university studies to promote in their jobs. It is logical that they decide to give up university when they find a job, if they believe that these studies will not be necessary in the future. Nevertheless, stands out that 10% more of current students believe that will not need studies to promote. The reason is that they answered in reference to those jobs they have done until now, jobs that are not related with what they want to do in the future when they obtain the academic title. However, it will depend on the personal ambition of each one because if somebody aspires to be an important manager or to have an important position in a company, university titles are normally required.

Moreover, although initially we could suppose that those who said that a university title is necessary to promote in a job will believe that the main function of the university is to find a job, the majority think just the opposite, that the main function is to educate citizens.

Subsequently, students who abandoned were requested about the possibility to come back to the university. It could be as much to finish their tourism career as

to initiate another degree. The results obtained in relation to this topic were quite assorted. Some people, specifically 5 of 17, affirm that their intention is to come back to UIB to finish their careers. It should be mentioned that two of them related that they will come back, if a university title was required to promote in their jobs. Otherwise, 7 of 17 interviewees explained that is not in their plans to come back to university. Also, makes sense that all of these 7 people, except one, stated previously that a university title will not be necessary to promote in their jobs. Two of them, expressed that their refusal was about tourism studies, but they do not discard to sign up in another degree in the future. Besides, one person explained that he maybe study tourism again, but in another university.

In smaller numbers, some people said that they have already returned to the university. In particular, two of them explained that they are currently studying other careers in UIB, and only one person is studying tourism again.

#### **4.4. General patterns of university drop out in Balearic Islands.**

##### **4.4.1. Statistics of Balearic Islands related to tourism.**

The next section consists of investigating some demographic statistics from the Balearic Islands as population growth, active population, employment, etc. In that way, we will try to connect the society situation with the tourism sector, in order to determine if the changes in this industry can influence abandonment in our society, for example generating more jobs, tempting students to abandon.

<b><i>Employed people in tourism sector</i></b>				
	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Annual average</b>	<b>123.700</b>	<b>122.100</b>	<b>139.100</b>	<b>147.600</b>

(Agència de Turisme de les Illes Balears, 2016)

If we observe this table regarding people employed in tourism sector, it is possible to observe a considerable increase, especially since 2015. That table includes people employed in accommodation services, food & beverage services, passenger transportation services and other tourism activities in general (Agència de Turisme de les Illes Balears, 2016). It can lead to think that tourism industry is offering more job opportunities, but nevertheless, this data by themselves do not explain anything if we do not take into account other demographic facts from the society.

In the following table these different sociodemographic statistics from the Balearic Islands will be shown:

### ***Population statistics from The Balearic Islands***

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Population</b>	<b>1.114.288,5</b>	<b>1.122.721</b>	<b>1.132.635</b>	<b>1.147.126,5</b>
<b>Active population</b>	<b>588.500</b>	<b>589.900</b>	<b>604.300</b>	<b>593.500</b>
<b>Employed</b>	<b>454.800</b>	<b>478.500</b>	<b>501.500</b>	<b>511.600</b>
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>133.700</b>	<b>111.400</b>	<b>102.800</b>	<b>81.900</b>

(Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal (SEPE), 2017)

On the first hand, we can see how population has grown during these years. That means that not necessarily tourism industry could be demanding more people to work because if there are more population, more people should be working.

On the other hand, the number of active and employed population has been also growing, a normal fact because as more citizens, more people can be employed. However, the unemployment numbers follow the opposite way, decreasing year after year while population increases, supposing a positive fact because that means that, although there are more people in the Balearic Islands, more people are being employed and less unemployed.

Once known these data, the next step is to compare it with tourism statistics. The results of calculating the average of tourism employed people over the active population in the Balearic Islands is as follows:

### ***Average of tourism employment over Active population***

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Annual average</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>24%</b>

The result is that tourism employment average is growing year after year, supposing a considerable percentage of the active population. That means that while population and employment are yearly growing and unemployment decreases, tourism sector is having every year a higher presence in the labour market. That supposes a positive fact, because unemployment rate is decreasing while tourism industry (the most powerful in this region) is growing. However, with regard to the topic of that project, it may not be so positive for tourism students, due to those students who are disappointed and have in mind to drop out, will have every time more facilities to find a job, tempting them more to abandon.

#### ***4.4.2. Under 25 years old drop out***

A significant information to be aware of, is to know which percentage of young people are part of the total drop out statistics. It is necessary to note that according to the report from UIB, young students suppose people under 25 years old. (Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2017). To be exact, the under 25 average drop out rates for tourism students and for the general UIB studies is the following:

#### **Average of under 25 years old students abandonment**

	Tourism	UIB
2013-15	58,3%	51,3%
2015-17	63%	49%

(Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària, 2016, 2017)

Analyzing this data, we can conclude that tourism degree apart from always having a higher drop out rate than UIB, has a percentage that increases about 5%. That shows that something different happens with tourism young students as opposed to the rest of UIB. The explanation could be similar as was explained before, due to tourism students have more job opportunities than other careers, jobs that in general, require less training than other studies more specific. It is true that, most of the university students are under 25 years old, but it is still alarming that the percentage in tourism studies keep on growing and remains always higher than other careers.

Interestingly, this resulted very obvious for me during the yearly "occupation UIB forum", where several companies expound their job offers and collect curriculums from the students. During these forums, most of the companies were related with touristic or services industries, which were specially looking for tourism or business students, a fact that demonstrate the ease of labour insertion of this sector for young people.

#### **4.4.3. Definitive abandonment statistics.**

Another important element to take into account, are the effects of interruption of studies. Taking into account that UIB classify drop out students in four groups:

1. Students who have changed their studies.
2. Students who have changed the centre of studies.
3. File transfer.
4. Students who have definitely dropped out their studies

(Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2017)

#### **Average of definitive drop out / total drop out**

	Tourism	UIB
2013-15	65%	59,5%
2015-17	73%	63%

(Servei d'estadística i qualitat universitària (SEQUA), 2016)

Focusing our attention in the fourth one, it represents the highest group both in tourism degree (73%) and in the whole university (63%), supposing again, a larger percentage in tourism, concretely 10%. In any case, the average grows up in both cases from 2013 to 2017. That means that when tourism students give up, there are more people who do not continue with other studies or change the university in comparison with the rest of UIB, which suggests that these students are working.

## **5. Conclusions**

At the beginning of this project was explained that the main goal was to discover if the big tourism industry of the Balearic Islands is the cause, or the influence, of the high academic drop out in that autonomous community, especially in tourism career.

This study suggests that the main reason of this high abandonment numbers is disappointment with the tourism degree, especially if we compare the satisfaction level with those students who have not dropped out. This fact, added to the low academic results obtained by them, causes that these students, lacking motivation, finally decide to abandon.

Furthermore, comparing again the results with current students, some elements characterize these students who abandon. For example, apart from obtaining lower academic results, which can explain why people are dissatisfied, these students have more economic problems than current students. It could lead that more of them decide to abandon to start working and reverse that situation. Also, more students who give up have parents without university title, which can influence them to have less motivation and pressure from their parents to be graduated.

Nevertheless, the big difference between tourism and the rest of university abandonment numbers, and that tourism students who drop out pass more subjects than the general university average, suggests that not only disappointment and poor marks influence tourism students to abandon, due to these facts are probably applicable to the other university careers. That is why, the high job offer in service sector, together with the low requirements to apply for these jobs, permit those unsatisfied students have an easy escape route. Also, the majority of the interviewees explained that the jobs they obtained when they abandoned were related to tourism and the low requirements to apply for it.

This fact, added to the growing touristic job offer year after year, has an important weight in abandonment numbers.

To sum up, tourism students who are disappointed with their career and obtaining poor academic results, have more facilities than other students to abandon university and to enter to the labour market, due to touristic labour market has a wide job offer and low academic requirements, having a quick alternative to drop out the university and earn money. It will suppose in the future and excess of poor qualified local workforce, causing that the best job positions be occupied by foreigners.

That is an important issue to confront for our society because although tourism industry generates positively many work opportunities for youth, and reduce unemployment rate, it is necessary to solve the abandonment numbers and motivate youth to finish their studies, due to it can generate in the future, a large number of low qualified employees, with poor labour ambition.

## **6. Limitations**

Once arrived at the end of that project, it is important to include a section about the limitations of that paper, in order to facilitate to people who can be interested in this matter, investigate it more deeply in the future.

As was explained previously, it would be ideal to have a larger sample of respondents, because to find people who abandoned university is a difficult task to carry out, due to, we are talking about a very closed target population. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to interview, apart from tourism students, people from other university careers, in order to compare the results from all the university, a task really difficult to carry out because it would have required a lot of time. Just like the interviews, it is difficult to find all the information from each UIB career regarding subjects passed, percentage of students who abandoned, number of people registered, etc.

Also, could be interesting to have a larger time frame regarding students who abandoned, due to most of them dropped out during these last years. In this way, we could compare their motivations and situations with people who abandoned some years before.

Moreover, could be curious to investigate a little bit more about that matter in a few years, to know how society, tourism industry and students will have changed after these years of economic and tourism growth.

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## **8. Appendix**

### **1. Questions posed to all interviewees in the interview and surveys:**

1. Age.
2. Gender.
3. City of Residence.
4. Did you grow up in an rural or urban environment?
5. Approximate level of monthly income.
6. Have your parents a university title?
7. Which was your family economic situation? Have you suffered economic problems?
8. Do you belong to a cultural institution?
9. Do you have ascendants / descendants in charge?
10. Perception of the main function of the university in our society.
11. Why did you start working?
12. If you have worked, which kind of job have you obtained?
13. Which studies or requirements had this job?
14. Do you think that you will need a university title to promote in your job in the future?
15. Level of satisfaction with your degree.
16. Perceptions, oppinions or suggestions about university and works derived from tourism.

### **2. Extra questions posed to interviewees who abandoned:**

1. In which course did you abandon university?
2. What was the reason/s for dropping out university?
3. Did you combine work and university for a period or time or did you directly abandon to work?
4. Do you plan to come back to university to finish your studies?

### **2. Extra questions posed to interviewees who are currently in university:**

1. Have you ever considered leaving university? For what reasons?
2. Approximate percentaje of approved subjects on subjects signed in.
3. Have you combined university and work?
4. Are you actually working?