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# Socioeconomic Factors and University Student Dropout

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**Abstract**---The investigation adopted a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative) in order to analyze the different factors of dropout. Based on the analysis of the socioeconomic factors that constitute an element that affects student dropout at the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí ext. Chone. The methods used were: Bibliographic, analytical/synthetic, inductive/deductive, documentary, and descriptive. The documentary method contributed to collecting information from the Academic Commission and Secretariat of this institution that contributed to supporting the research. The results showed that the main causes for student dropout are lack of time, work impediments, health problems, and economic situation. In the period from 2020 to 2023, 509 students were registered, of which 446 students graduated in different careers. According to the information collected through the teacher survey, it was determined that the main reasons for student dropout are linked to the lack of economic resources, work aspects, and family problems. At the level of conclusions and based on the data obtained, it was possible to demonstrate that socioeconomic factors constitute an element that affects student dropout. Factors such as academic, economic, family, intention to drop out, motivational, health, and social factors can influence university student dropout.

**Keywords**---academic, motivational, socioeconomic factors, university student dropout.

## Introduction

University student dropout is a problem that currently generates many doubts and expectations in the educational system and in society in general, given that for many students the problem is related to aspects such as: Academic, economic, family, intention to drop out, motivational, health and social make it difficult for them to continue in the institution. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that education at the university level is not an activity that is carried out without the support of the student's environment. The family is the support through which the student decides whether to continue in his or her professional training.

Latin America is currently a region where changes at the political level cause educational systems to change | heading constantly. At the level of educational processes, it is evident to observe an increase in the dropout rate of young people from universities because they prioritize meeting their own and their families' fundamental needs in the face of an economic system that is becoming more complex and difficult every day for the region. General. For [de Gauto \(2021\)](#), university dropouts are the gateway to the degradation of society; the medium and long-term consequences aim to limit Latin American development and increase dependence on other nations with a high social cost (p. 1).

At the level of university education in Ecuador, there are a series of obstacles that young people must face in order to complete a certain degree. Problems such as academic problems where the great inequalities in teaching in the educational system are evident, which demotivates and increases the tendency to drop out. Aspects such as economics represent a fundamental factor in whether or not to continue with a university degree where the lack of financial resources forces the student to prioritize their own and their families' fundamental needs.

According to [Cortázar & Lozano \(2022\)](#), Ecuadorian university dropouts are associated with factors such as the young person's lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In general, this lack of motivation is fundamentally due to socioeconomic problems, factors that generate emotional instability that in many cases force the student to drop out at some point during their studies (p. 2093).

At the local level, the causes of university dropout at the Eloy Alfaro Secular University of Manabí (ULEAM) ext. Chone are related to academic, economic, family, dropout intention, motivational, health and social aspects. At the same time, another factor is integrated, which is the distance from university education centers. It is well known that an important segment of university students comes from the rural sector, where the distance from their home to the university affects their attendance at classes. Therefore, although the student received the information provided by the teachers, difficulties arose in his learning process.

The educational model of the ULEAM is based on the Socio-Humanist conception in which epistemological postulates of constructivism and systemic complexity are articulated, which direct the training process by establishing learning and interculturality as the articulating axis of the academic, investigative and connection with diverse human groups, in social, cultural and work contexts. The vision of comprehensive training of the human being (student/teacher), in their subject-object, subject/subject interaction, is based on respect for individuality, belief, customs, development, general cultural and professional experience, within a climate of secularism, democracy and trust that generates benefits for the population, concern for social and gender injustices, respect for the environment, inter and multiculturalism, and other ways of understanding the realities of society and human beings with alternative and pluralistic thoughts (Laica Eloy Alfaro University of Manabí, 2016).

From a broader perspective, the identification of factors that positively affect student retention is related to the quality and profile of the programs, as well as the support that the institution provides to its students to keep them linked to the academic programs ([Murillo-Zabala & Santos, 2021](#)). In this sense, this research identifies various factors that could eventually be the cause of dropout at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (ULEAM) ext. Chone. These factors are linked, among other things, to poor academic performance, financial resources are not sufficient to continue studying, the student spends a lot of time on other activities instead of studying, family problems harm his studies, he receives little support from his parents. Relatives or being a father/mother makes it difficult to study

University permanence and academic performance were and will be topics of great importance for institutions that provide vocational training services since it allow us to understand the causes of why students choose to abandon a career ([Aquino, 2023](#)). In this sense, the current reality requires the incorporation of new university educational policies where learning and pedagogical innovation processes evolve towards the construction of new paradigms that allow it to be more effective and effective. Hence the importance of coordinating educational policies with the aim of reducing university dropouts. It should be noted that the student's abandonment of university training activity is subject to various aspects related to social and economic matters.

In this context, the research had as a general objective: Analyze the socioeconomic factors that constitute an element that affects student dropout at the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí ext. Chone. The specific objectives set were aimed at identifying, through bibliographic information, socioeconomic factors and student dropout, as well as investigating the factors that affect student dropout in ULEAM ext students. Chone and finally had the purpose of demonstrating that socioeconomic factors constitute an element that affects student dropout ([Vartanian & Gleason, 1999](#); [Cantos et al., 2021](#); [Moreira-Morales & García-Loor, 2024](#)).

The research was based on the socio-economic factors that influence student dropout, where these factors generally influence the life of a student. So much so that a career cannot be carried out without the support of the family and even the community. It should be noted that an important segment of the student population of the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí Chone extension comes from the rural sector, where socioeconomic aspects have a different connotation than those of the urban sector. In this regard, the following question was raised: How to ensure that ULEAM ext. Chone not drop out of their university career?

The research adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach. The methods used were inductive, through which an analysis was based from the particular to the general. In this case, the socioeconomic factors that affect university student dropout were analyzed. The deductive method, on the other hand, allowed an analysis from the general to the particular. On the other hand, the analytical methodology allowed the problem posed to be broken down into its different causes. The synthetic method made it possible to develop conclusions related to the research.

The documentary method allowed the search for data in the archives of the Academic Commission of the ULEAM ext. Chone during the period from 2021 to 2023, with the purpose of determining what were the socioeconomic factors that motivated the dropout of students in the different careers. At the same time, the descriptive methodology made it possible to describe the reasons that motivated students to dropout. The data

collection instruments were the teacher survey and the information provided by this institutional unit. Finally, the scientific article was developed based on the following sections: Introduction, literary review, results, discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations (Olaya et al., 2020; Xenos et al., 2002; Wild & Heuling, 2020; Krüger et al., 2023).

## Materials and Methods

The research adopted a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative) in order to analyze different dropout factors. Based on the analysis of the socioeconomic factors that constitute an element that affects student dropout at the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí ext. Chone. The methods used were: Bibliographic, analytical/synthetic, inductive/deductive, documentary and descriptive. The bibliographic method contributed to collecting concepts, theories, statements, and conclusions, among others that contributed to supporting the research.

On the other hand, the inductive method allowed the research to be based on a particular analysis until reaching its general aspects. In this case, it corresponds to the analysis of the factors that influence student dropout at ULEAM Ext. Chone. On the other hand, the deductive method allowed us to know the situation of the factors that influence university dropout. At the same time, the analytical method allowed the behavior of the different people involved to be investigated separately.

The synthetic method is the opposite, it helped determine relationships and general characteristics between the elements of the research. Through the documentary method, a systematic search for information was developed in the archives of the Academic Commission of this educational institution regarding the reports issued on the subject of student dropout in different careers, taking into account the period from 2021 to 2023. The population was made up of the teachers who teach in different careers and the sample was made up of 15 teachers from the institution. The information provided corresponds to students who dropped out between the periods 2021 – 2023. By contrasting the quantitative results with the qualitative analysis based on the information obtained from the Academic Commission of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone (2021 - 2023). Where at the level of quantitative analysis the number of dropout students was evident, as well as the causes and levels. At the qualitative analysis level, aspects that helped the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations were analyzed.

## Results and Discussion

School dropout is a phenomenon that affects many students around the world, and refers to abandoning studies before completing an educational cycle. This problem has multiple causes and consequences, both at the individual and social level, such as socioeconomic factors; poverty is one of the main reasons why students drop out of school.

### *The economic factors*

The dropout of university students is a topic of great interest due to the personal, institutional, social and economic implications that the phenomenon presents. Students are emotionally affected by the feeling of failure by not completing their projects and aspirations; For institutions, it represents a decrease in academic performance. Socially, it generates inequity due to the difference between those who manage to complete their studies and economically due to the cost it implies for the educational system (Lopez et al., 2020).

In this regard, Castillo et al. (2020), identify that the problem related to university dropout is related to aspects that range from particular, isolated to multidisciplinary cases. The institutional indicators point to variables of different types, for example Academic, economic, family, intention to drop out, motivational, health and social. Therefore, it is a priority to clearly determine the work the institution must undertake to reduce the dropout rate (p. 590).

From the point of view of Mendoza et al. (2022), it is indicated that student dropout is recognized as a problem of important representation within the educational system, which directly affects the training of professionals in society. The financial issue is decisive in the possibility of joining and staying in the educational system. Therefore, if the institutions and the system, in general, do not have clear financing policies and the necessary synergies of interaction between the different agencies, it will be very difficult to achieve access and retention of students (p. 297). According to the research by Cajahuanca et al. (2022), it was evident that one of the most recurrent risk factors among students who abandoned their studies is the economic aspect with 43.4%, during their stay at the university. Therefore, the model obtained can help predict in the first cycles of study, which students are more likely to abandon

their studies, at the same time, alert the welfare office, the need to improve social assistance programs, especially for low-income students, as well as improving scholarship coverage (p. 373).

Regarding the implementation of institutional policies for the retention, permanence and graduation or qualification of university students, it is not possible to significantly reduce desertion and abandonment, although, due to the volume of research, it can be stated that universities are fulfilling their social commitment; however, it is a reality that efforts to reduce the gaps between entry and exit enrollment are ineffective, which raises concerns regarding the budgets for educational plans and projects for the purposes of supporting students who need help. economic (Palacio Sprockel et al., 2020).

### *The social factors*

At the level of family support, it must be considered that this is a fundamental factor since this research is based on the fact that a university career cannot be developed without the direct or indirect support of the family. However, there are often factors that influence whether or not to continue a university degree. Factors such as, for example: that in the family almost everyone has the same profession that the student is studying, that the student misses living with her family, there are problems in the family that harm her studies, the student receives abuse from her family or Being a father/mother makes it difficult for you to study. It is essential to understand the variables in both the microsystems, mesosystems and macrosystems that affect the student in their decision to drop out (According to Castro-Martínez & Machuca-Téllez, 2023).

According to Velasco et al. (2020), there are two variables that explain the family factor, family conflicts and head of family status. Family conflicts refer to relationships in the student's family context. The situation of head of family status refers to the fact that many times, students are the father or mother of the family as head of family. This situation is also external to the university, but it has an impact on regular attendance at university classrooms (p. 167). On the other hand, Erazo Guerra & Rosero Morales (2021), point out that at the societal level, students do not feel free to choose a career based on their preferences, the system is playing against the desires and opportunities to choose their future, the Grades, scores, in short, simple numbers have become the reflection and the only option for them to choose a university career, frustrating in many cases the dreams and aspirations of childhood or adolescence in relation to their occupation and future. Professional (p. 603).

Dropout in higher education is a social phenomenon with several aspects, addressed from socio-formation, seeking to eradicate it by strengthening spaces for dialogue, entrepreneurship, and quality of life, with a sense of belonging through management, empowerment and work collaboration that lead to academic quality and the progressive reduction of academic lag, increasing the rate of terminal efficiency with policies that involve tutoring processes, in attention to each individual with their particularities, generalities (Naranjo, 2020).

### *Student desertion*

Important contributions such as Dávila Morán et al. (2022), point out that the dropout of students at the university level corresponds to a social distortion since at this age is where they have all their abilities to learn, however, social problems prevent (p. 442). The statistics presented suggest that a segment of university students is not prepared to live outside their families and in many cases, family problems harm their studies since they are financially dependent on their parents. In this regard, Torres-Rentería & Escobar-Jiménez (2021), point out that, in general, Ecuadorian university students register high socioeconomic characteristics that indicate their high economic dependence on their families (p. 5). For their part, Castro-Martínez & Machuca-Téllez (2023), identify that it is essential to clearly understand the aspects at the level of microsystems, mesosystems and macrosystems that influence students to drop out (p. 89).

Another factor that influences student dropout is related to the quality of the educational proposal where the quality indicators at the level of higher educational institutions are indices that generate information regarding different areas of which educational management is made up, In this sense, aspects such as, for example, adequate management at the level of authorities are essential to ensure that the institution obtains adequate quality indicators. At the same time, the practice of values allows us to share principles that facilitate or allow a better relationship between the entire educational community. On the other hand, aspects such as the learning environment are one of the facilities that authorities must provide to their students within what institutional management means, that is, an environment where educational quality can be observed and felt (Montes de Oca Sánchez, 2021).

Although it is true that there are various aspects that cause dropout among university students, one of the most important is the family factor. Economic disagreements, internal conflicts within each family or being the head of the

family are the variables that directly impact the student's permanence at the university. On the other hand, there are aspects external to the family; for some students, logistics even represents a mobility problem (Velasco et al., 2020).

### Results

Figure 1 details the causes of students withdrawing in 2021, 2022, and 2023 for different reasons, at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone.

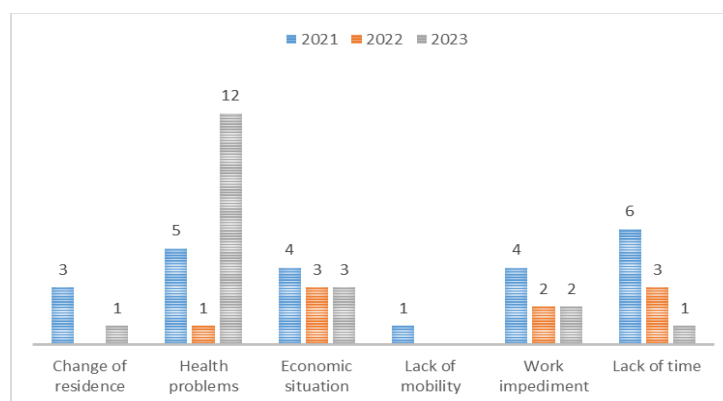


Figure 1. Student dropouts in the years 2021, 2022, 2023

Source: Information from the Academic Committee of the Eloy Alfaro Secular University Ext. Chone (2021 - 2023)

As can be seen, the main causes were lack of time, health problems and economic situation. Table 1 presents information provided by the Secretariat of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone, which shows the number of enrolled students and graduated students in the different careers and periods (2020 – 2023).

Table 1  
Enrolled and graduated students

Career	Enrolled students	Graduate students
Systems 2020 - 1	45	44
Systems 2020 - 2	52	52
Systems 2021 - 1	19	18
Systems 2021 - 2	49	25
Systems 2022 - 2	49	28
Agricultural Engineering 2020- 1	14	13
Agricultural Engineering 2021- 1	30	29
Agricultural Engineering 2021- 2	17	16
Agricultural engineering 2023	17	17
OF 2022 - 1	21	21
OF 2023 - 1	27	27
PIME 2022 - 1	18	18
PIME 2022 - 2	17	16
PIME 2023 - 1	18	16
ADM 2022 - 1	14	13
ADM 2023	18	18
FIMA 2021 - 1	9	9
FIMA 2021 - 2	8	8
FIMA 2022 - 1	15	15
FIMA 2022 - 2	13	10
PCE 2023	39	33
Total	509	446

Source: Secretariat of the Eloy Alfaro Lay University Ext. Chone

The information corresponds to the results of the survey of 15 participating teachers from Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone, Figure 2 shows the main academic causes.

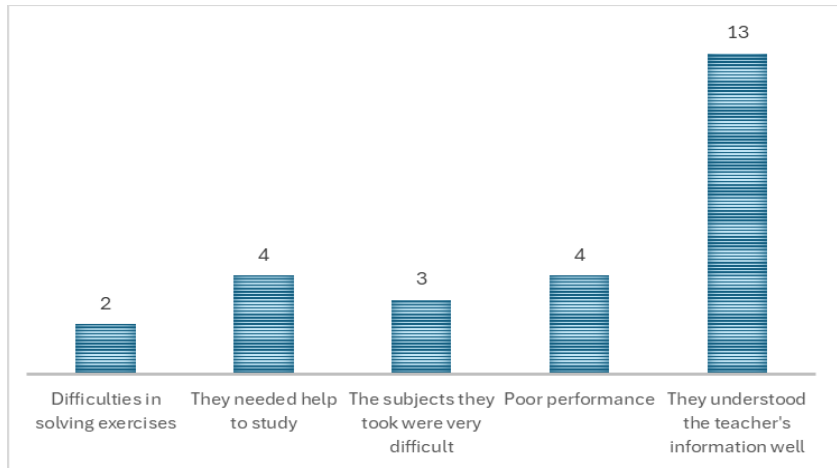


Figure 2. Academic factor

Source: Survey of teachers at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone

Figure 3 shows the economic factor.

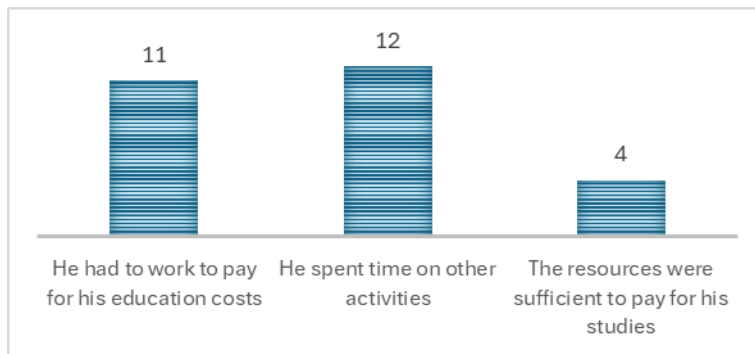


Figure 3. Economic factor

Source: Survey of teachers at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone

As you can see, the highest incidence coincided with their time spent on other activities. The family actor also influenced the dropout process, the results being shown in Figure 4.

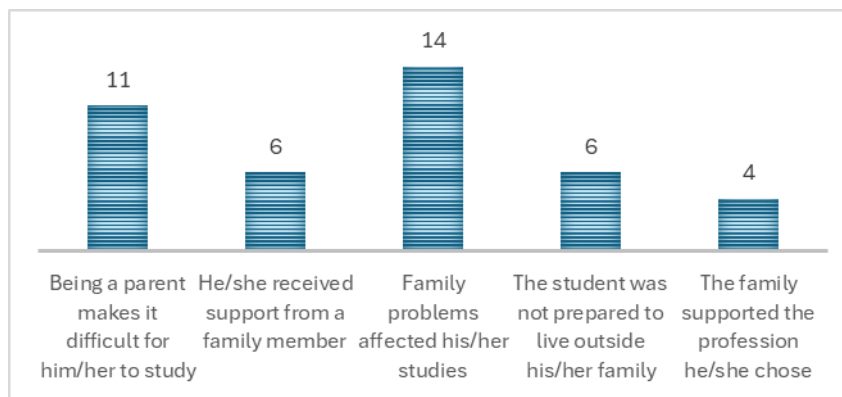


Figure 4. Family factor

Source: Survey of teachers at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone

Health also influenced the dropout process; Figure 5 shows the results.

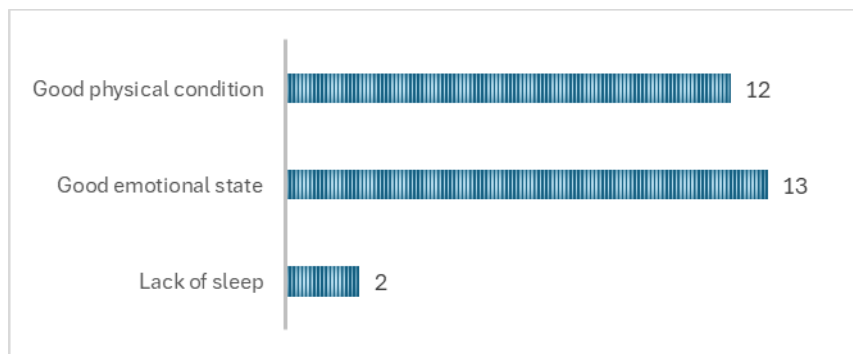


Figure 5. Health factor

Source: Survey of teachers at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone

There were other factors that influenced the process of intention to drop out, such as social and motivational factors; Figure 6 specifies these.

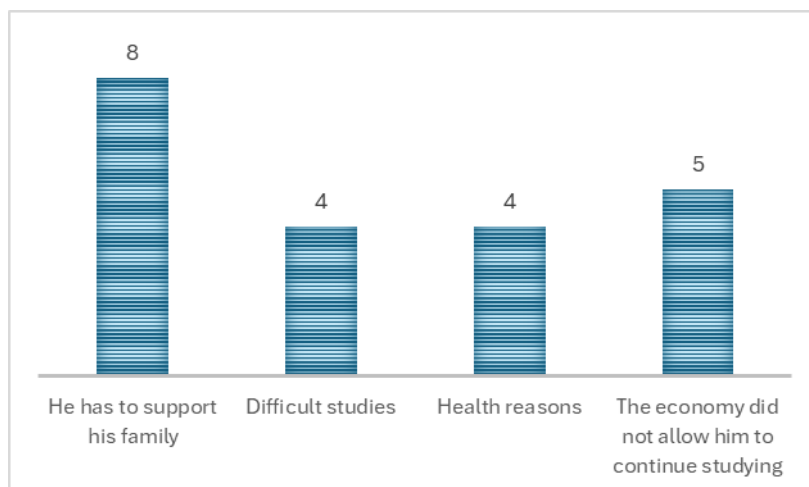


Figure 6. Dropout intention

Source: Survey of teachers at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone

### Discussion

One of the most frequent problems that higher education presents is student dropout. It is a very complex and very current phenomenon, where factors such as: Lack of time, work impediment, health problems, economic situation. And work impediment. Although it is true that a university degree cannot be undertaken without the help of a social environment that accompanies the student from the beginning to the end. It is also true that there are many difficulties at the educational level, especially at the beginning of the career. In relation to the problem raised, at the level of the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí Ext. Chone. In this regard, [Hernández-Jiménez et al. \(2020\)](#), points out that the analysis of the phenomenon of student dropout in university contexts is complex due to the importance of the various problems, not only for the student but also for their environment (p 5).

When analyzing the circumstances that lead university students to abandon their studies, it is complex due to the existence of various reasons, all of them completely justified, and which are often related to the family, work, and personal sphere, among others. According to [Dávila Morán et al. \(2022\)](#), university student dropout is one of the problems that has been plaguing society, since it is the stage where the individual has the decision-making capacity and has the reins of their education in their hands.

The research focused on investigating the factors that affect student dropout, at the same time, demonstrating based on the results delivered by the Secretariat and the Academic Commission of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro



Ext. Chone, where it was evidenced that the factors Socioeconomic factors constitute an important element that affects student dropout from ULEAM ext. Chone. In this sense, the information collected made it possible to show different causes, among which are lack of time, work impediments, health problems and the economic situation.

From a more general perspective, for some years now society has been suffering a general decline and, in particular, its economy has been deteriorating. Consequently, unemployment levels have grown, this reality has caused an increase in unemployment rates. In this sense, it is understandable that a segment of students reorient their efforts towards satisfying their needs and those of their families and, logically, choose to work instead of studying. According to Maslow's theory of needs (1908 – 1970), it is indicated that human beings only worry about issues related to self-realization only if they are sure that they have a stable job, guaranteed food, and friends who accept them (Casanova et al., 2021; Montmarquette et al., 2001; Fall & Roberts, 2012).

It should be considered, on the other hand, that the main challenge that the educational institution has is based on developing instances where the main and most urgent problems of students are collectively identified and addressed. Although it is true that many of the aspects that cause dropout occur in the student's environment, these are not necessarily unrelated to educational activity. The analysis indicates that many of the dropout students disengage from the institution due to problems related to the socioeconomic environment that prevent them from meeting their needs and those of their families.

According to the bibliographic information obtained, socioeconomic factors are the main cause of student dropout. Fundamentally, family problems harm studies because it is an additional element that affects the continuity of studies, not necessarily related to the student's lack of work, but because family members often go through difficulties that cause stress, which creates instability.

When investigating the factors that affect student dropout in ULEAM ext. Chone, the information provided by the Academic Commission of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone in the period 2021 - 2023, it was identified that among the problems that mostly affect student dropout are immersed in those previously detailed.

#### *Limitations and recommendations*

One of the main limitations of the research was the poor accessibility to the information corresponding to the student dropout records of students at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro Ext. Chone. The data obtained was provided by the Academic Commission and the Secretariat of this institution, hence it is considered that the information does not allow the factors of student dropout to be accurately categorized. Based on what has been stated, the recommendation is directed to administrative bodies to grant greater accessibility to this type of documentation, as well as to expedite the procedures for obtaining it (Hernández-Mastrapa et., 2020; Aina et al., 2022; Araque et al., 2009).

#### **Conclusions**

Socio-economic factors constitute an element that affects student dropout at the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí ext. Chone, in this sense, it was evident that lack of time, health problems, economic situation and work impediments are aspects that are mostly related to student abandonment. Based on the information collected, it was possible to demonstrate that socioeconomic factors constitute an element that affects student dropout. Factors such as academic, economic, family, intention to drop out, motivational, health and social factors can influence university student dropout. Where, for example, problems with students' partners can affect their studies. At the same time, many students cannot continue studying, because they must support their families, which prevents them from satisfying their own needs such as self-fulfillment.

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