

# **International Mobility at the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco: Students from the Administration and Public Accounting Degrees**

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**Abstract** – Presented in this work are the results of a research that took place in one of the twelve academic divisions part of the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco in order to know the perception that students from the Administration and Public Accounting degrees have about the Institutional student mobility program. For that a sample of 50 students was taken, in which students belonging to fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth cycles of these degrees were applied two surveys in different moments. The subject is approached from the educative innovation line, developed by the members of the investigation group "Education innovation in the processes of teaching and learning". The results give a general view of the difficulties the students consider they would face if they decide to take this opportunity.

**Keywords** – Administrative Sciences, University Students, University Formation, Education Innovation, Student Mobility.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays higher education institutions have the responsibility to improve the understanding of global problems that hinder the growth and development of all the countries in the world, in addition, they must contribute to reduce the gap in matters of development, through the increase of knowledge across frontiers and finding common solutions to encourage the circulation of abilities, because of this, universities demand promoting initiatives and international mobility is a clear example of that, as stated by Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco (2012:35).

The definition of academic mobility, as Ariño, Soler and Llopis (2014, 145) point out, is the realization of stays abroad for studying purposes, with a minimal duration of a semester. No matter whether if it is funded by oneself or by a public or private higher education institution.

In view of this, the Autonomous University Juarez of Tabasco has developed academic programs for supporting this need, one of them is the institutional program of International Student Mobility (Universidad Juarez Autónoma de Tabasco, 2014). As Martinez (2004, 239) says, mobility represents an alternative to increase the academic quality and international competitiveness of institutions that participate, since they promote and strengthen the intercultural understanding that allows the solidarity between the nations of the world needed in these days, as well as an environment of mutual rapprochement.

In this way the university community from Tabasco, has access to new and different strategies of knowledge application in regards to academic, scientific, technologic, humanistic and environmental development, and in the

same manner, it approaches other cultures that enrich their vision of the world, because the transcendence of this university is not only the national scope but also the international scope is a goal for those who are involved in its future as stated by the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco (2014, 44).

## **II. AUTONOMOUS JUAREZ UNIVERSITY OF TABASCO**

Located in the southeast of the Mexican Republic and at 674 kilometers away from the capital of the country, this institution is in constant improvement, committed with the society that it serves and sustained in its institutional autonomy and academic freedom, carrying out notable efforts to expand the access to young people and guarantee the quality of the services and products of its academic doing.

As a public higher education institution, the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco has the mission of contributing in a significant way to the transformation of the society and development of the country, with particular interest in the state of Tabasco, through the solid and well-rounded formation of professionals capable of acquiring, generating, spreading and applying the scientific, technologic and humanistic knowledge, with ethic and responsibility for being better individuals and citizens.

Public universities have to be prepared for making the necessary changes that are the result of the technologic progress and the scientific advancement, favoring the acquisition of new knowledge, promoting positive attitudes in students, offering proper programs and improving education quality.

## **III. INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAM OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY**

Luchilo (2006, 105) considers that the International student mobility for university students is one of the main aspects of the qualified personnel mobility, and at the same time, the most notorious facet of the processes of internationalization of higher education.

Larrea and Astur consider that increasing student mobility is a target for university systems (2011, 4), since this mobility constitutes a vehicle for interinstitutional cooperation.

Currently, university students have the opportunity to participate in the Student Mobility Program, given by the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco. Being able to

participate in this program, forms one of the bases for the exchange of experiences and ideas between students from different parts of the world, that gather in a place chosen by them. In regards to this, Garcia considers that the increase of student flow coincides with the coming of a greater mobility of information and knowledge that is supported by the use of technology. (2013, 61).

In the period of 2010 – 2011 there is an account of 7689 international students, that represent 0.73% of the total of all the registered students from the higher education institutions that participate in the International Mobility Program as stated by the Secretariat of Public Education (2014), this talks about the participation that students from the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco have in this program.

In this context, according to the strategic development plan 2006-2016 (2006) of this Institution, with the tendencies of globalization, promoting a mentality of exchange is determining to have access to more advanced and remote knowledge, that is why in this institution promoting the student's mobility is an important element whereby the update of the labor field will be favored.

This work was carried out during the months of December 2014 to October 2016 with the purpose of getting to know the opinion that university students registered in the degrees in Administration and Public Accounting of the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eight cycles have about the Institutional mobility program.

This program consists in the exchange of students with other International Higher Education Institutions, with the purpose of taking a school cycle, with accreditation at the end of the period; with the requirement of studying the last school cycle of their degree in this university, which also supports the chosen participants economically. Belvis, Pineda and Moreno (2007, 3) consider that the goal of mobility is to offer students the option to study part of their credits in another city.

In the same way, the program allows the reception of students from other higher education institutions who are interested in studying a school cycle out of the university they belong. Flores (2010, 48) points out that it is estimated that currently there are roughly three million university students studying in countries other than their country of origin, of which 83% are registered in universities from countries that take part of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development).

For University from Tabasco (a pioneer in higher education in the state of the same name), it is satisfying to know that 68% of the applicants in this program are abroad for the period August – December 2015, studying in countries like South Korea, Italy, Canada, Brazil, Spain, Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica, as well as 18 of the most prestigious Mexican universities.

However, this number of applicants is low taking into account the total number of registered students in this institution since, as Flores (2010, 47) says, is not until in the middle of the decade of 1970 when there is a constant increment in the number of international students for the realization of university studies abroad.

Gacel (2007, 83) considers that although it is assumed that higher education is essentially international, student mobility has been until now, marginal, since there are obstacles that impede making the most of this opportunity.

Some of the obstacles expressed by the participants are presented in this work. Unfortunately, not all of them have the economic resources to enjoy this great opportunity.

#### **IV. ACADEMIC DIVISION OF ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES**

Located in Zona de la Cultura, this Division has the mission to be a higher education dependence that sustains its strength with the creation and application of knowledge for the well-rounded education of high-quality professionals in the economic administrative area, capable of analyzing problems and providing solutions that society demands.

In it four degrees are imparted: Degree in Administration, Public accounting, Economics and Marketing; and five postgraduate degrees of which four of them are masters: Administration, Public administration, Sciences in Regional development management and Accounting; and a doctorate: Educational Administration.

It is precisely with students of the two first degrees previously mentioned, Public Accounting, and Administration, with whom this research was carried out. The degree in Public accounting was created in the year of 1961, it has as a mission to form professionals committed with the development of society in front of the globalized environment in the accounting, fiscal, financial and administrative fields, under quality, innovative and sustainability educational approaches; generators and applicators of knowledge, creative, competitive, enterprising, innovators, and leaders.

The degree in Administration was created in the year of 1976, and it has as a mission to form professionals capable of developing innovations and interpret economic, social, politic, cultural, environmental and technological tendencies that have a direct impact in the quality of public, private and social organisms; which will allow to form a professional with the ability to solve problems and take decisions guided by ethic and humanistic values.

#### **V. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The empirical study, was based on an intentional or convenience sample of 50 students belonging to the 4°, 5°, 6°, 7°, and 8° cycles of the degrees in Administration and Public accounting, who were properly registered in the Scholar Services Office.

The criteria to determinate the sample was based in the random choice of the participants, making use of a random number table, without taking into account their age, gender or marital status. The surveys were filled by the students themselves and the open questions were product of an in-depth interview with the most significant cases, which were used to make sense of the closed-ended questions and constructing the facts in an analytic manner.

The instruments used for measuring were two semi-

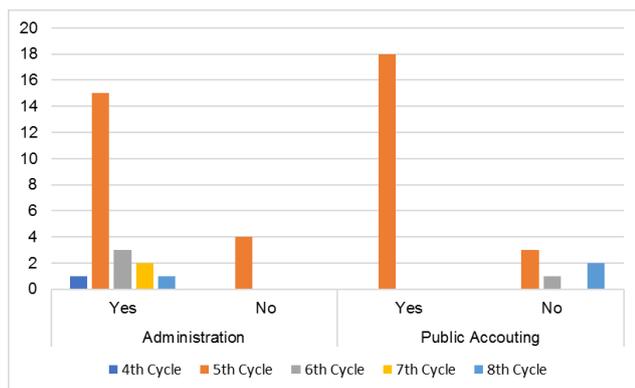
structured surveys, applied in different moments between the period of December 2014 – October 2016. It consisted of ten questions of multiple choice and it was used to detect the population with the required features: Students registered in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eight cycle of the degrees in Administration and Public Accounting, focused in the subjects of Business English 4 and Operations Research and that are fit to participate in the program. In a second moment a survey with eight semi-structured questions was applied to students who answered affirmatively to 70% of the questions of the entry survey. The data produced were used as a base for writing this article, pointing out to which cycle and degree these answers belong.

The opinion of the participants in this study, about the program of exchange in varied countries, revolves around the impediments they have to travel and conduct their studies abroad.

## VI. RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

When asked if they knew the institutional student mobility program, 80% answered yes, while 20% answered no. This stands out because this is an official program in this university from Tabasco, besides, since the past century American universities and some European ones count with foreign university students as expressed by Luchilo (2006, 106). If this result is analyzed on each degree, the result is that 75% of future accountants, different from 85% of the future administrators, express to know the program. Fig. 1.

In the Table I it is clearly shown how four students of the fifth cycle of the degree in Administration express not knowing the program, conjointly with the results shown in Table II, with three students of the fifth cycle, one of the sixth cycle and two of the eight cycle of the degree in Public Accounting. This provides a general view of how interested they are in knowing what the university's web page has to offer, this despite the positive role the technologies of information have played in the stimulus and exchange of ideas as well as the storage and distribution of knowledge, generating a greater interaction between the key actors, as Gonzalez (2011, 74) expresses in his work.



Source: Own elaboration

Fig. 1. Students who are informed about the Institutional Student Mobility Program

Table I. Degree in Administration

Cycle	Yes	No
4 <sup>th</sup>	1	
5 <sup>th</sup>	15	4
6 <sup>th</sup>	3	
7 <sup>th</sup>	2	
8 <sup>th</sup>	1	
TOTAL	22	4

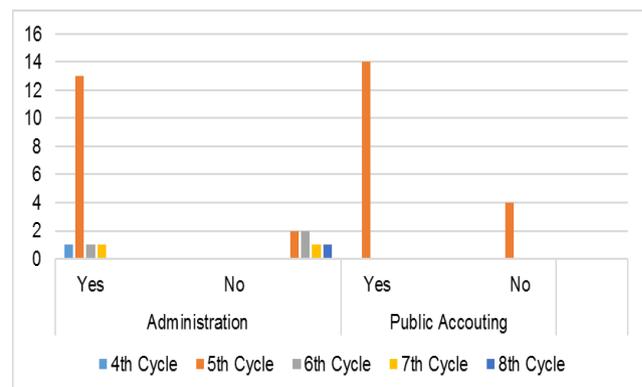
Source: Own elaboration

Table II. Degree in Public Accounting

Cycle	Yes	No
5 <sup>th</sup>	18	3
6 <sup>th</sup>		1
8 <sup>th</sup>		2
TOTAL	18	6

Source: Own elaboration

Of the forty participants who indicate that they know the program, 55% (22 students), belong to the degree in Administration and the 45% remaining (18 students), belong to the degree in Public Accounting, as shown in the figures 4 and 5. Of that 55%, 40% (16 students) consider they would participate in the program, versus the 15% (6 students), whose answer was negative. While those who are accountants, 35% (14 students), point out that they would like to participate, versus the 10% remaining (4 students), who answered negatively. See Fig. 2.



Source: Own elaboration

Fig. 2. Students who would participate in the program

Table III and Table IV respectively show that thirteen students of the degree in administration, and fourteen of the degree in accounting, all of them belonging to the fifth cycle, are interested in participating in the program. It is notable that the majority answered affirmatively to this question.

Table III. Degree in administration

Cycle	Yes	No
4 <sup>th</sup>	1	
5 <sup>th</sup>	13	2
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	2
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	1
8 <sup>th</sup>	0	1
TOTAL	16	6

Source: Own elaboration

Table IV. Degree in Public Accounting

Cycle	Yes	No
5th	14	4
TOTAL	14	4

Source: Own elaboration

Table V shows that 59% of students of the degree in Administration (13 students), belonging to the fifth cycle, consider this opportunity an excellent option for preparation, they are the ones who participated the most pointing out that among the benefits there is the chance to obtain new knowledge and develop other competences, as Calvo, Jimenez, Mendoza, Moron, Ponce and Enriquez (2012, 18) consider, participating in academic mobility will develop the communicative, textual, cultural, intercultural and thematic competences in each of the students.

It is necessary to point out that none of them has been in academic mobility, while one student from the fourth cycle, one from the sixth cycle and one from the seventh cycle join this affirmation having a total of 16 affirmative answers to this question.

Table V. Degree in Administration

	Cycle	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Total
	Yes	Learning		3			
Knowledge		1	2				3 = 14%
Experience			2				2 = 9%
Culture			3				3 = 14%
Education Level			2				2 = 9%
Has participated					1		1 = 5%
Methods of study			1	1			2 = 9%
							16 = 73%

Source: Own Elaboration

Six students from this degree consider that due to the lack of time, interest and because of finding themselves working they would not participate in the program. These six students represent 27% of the total of future graduates in administration who were participants in this study. See Table VI.

Table VI. Degree in Administration

	Cycle	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Total
	No	Time		1	1	1	
Lack of interest			1	1			2 = 9%
Job						1	1 = 5%
							6 = 27%

Source: Own Elaboration

Other of the reasons as to why they would not participate is about the insecurity that prevails in the whole world. Some examples that illustrate the previous statement are expressed by the students in the in-depth interviews:

“... I could have been one of the persons who lost their lives in the Paris attack, I’m not interested”. (Carmen, fifth cycle, degree in Administration).

“... I better stay working at my home place and not risking in other places or I may not come back alive”. (Luis, sixth cycle, degree in administration).

“... I’m not interested in experiencing other cities more violent than here, I know this place already and I know where to walk, what to do and where to go, besides I don’t have time”. (Otto, seventh cycle, degree in administration).

“... I had difficulties to settle at my current job, I won’t risk losing it by going to far lands and come back dead; if I come back that is.” (Maria, eight cycle, degree in Administration).

The results given by this questionnaire point out that 78% of the students of the degree in Accounting, consider that participating in this program would bring them positive results, for example, the opportunity to travel abroad or getting to know another culture or improve their academic level. See Table VII. As Solanas (2014, 5) points out, student mobility has contributed to the cognitive circulation and the generation of different institutional changes.

These 14 students belong to the fifth cycle. Garcia (2013) considers that mobility makes reference to the movement of students between international education institutions with the objective of participating in formative programs and particular research projects. Regarding this Muñoz (2015) expresses that, during 2015, there had been a rise of 15.4% in the number of Mexicans who studied in the United States, reaching a number higher than 17 thousand in academic exchange. Also, as Haug (2010, 26) points out, the number of courses offered in countries different from the institution where they belong, has grown a lot.

Table VII. Degree in Public Accounting

	Cycle	5th	Total
	Yes	Opportunity	1
Knowledge		4	4 = 22%
Experience		2	2 = 11%
Culture		4	4 = 22%
Education Level		1	1 = 6%
Visiting		2	2 = 11%
			14 = 78%

Source: Own Elaboration

The lack of interest and work are the motives pointed out by four students of the degree in Public Accounting, reasons why they would not participate in this program. These represent 22%, all of them belong to the fifth cycle as shown in the Table VIII. It is clear that they work to generate an income and that way they can afford their studies or support their household, and the thing is that, as

(Beelen, 2011, 96) claims, the insufficiency of economic resources are the main intern obstacle in the global environment.

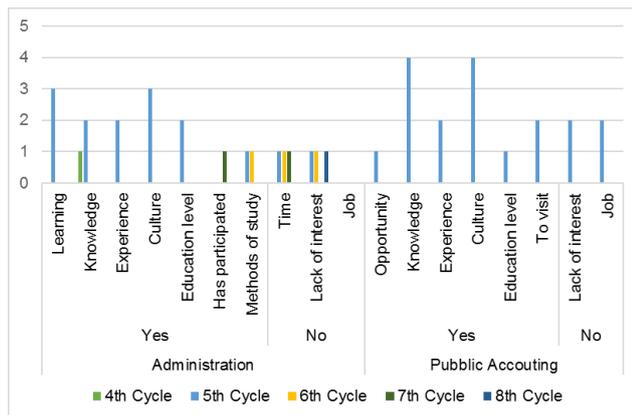
In contrast with the result obtained from the participants of the fifth cycle of the degree in administration, there is no difference. In both of the cases, there are two students who claim similar situations.

Table VIII. Degree in Public Accounting

No	Cycle	5th	Total
	Lack of interest	2	2 = 11%
	Job	2	2 = 11%
			4 = 22%

Source: Own Elaboration

In Fig. 3. The motives of the choices previously signaled that the participants have given for this work are clearly expressed. The increase of knowledge and getting to know other cultures are two of them. Others vary from rising their academic level and acquiring experience. Aguado, Malik and Monje (2010) express that student mobility has become a key element for internalization. Other pointed reasons for the decision they have made, are the lack of time and interest. In regards to this, Flores (2010, 83) points out that in the choice of not studying in another country, there are not only reasons linked to politic or economic conditions of the issuer and recipient countries, but there are also other like social or cultural reasons.



Source: Own Elaboration

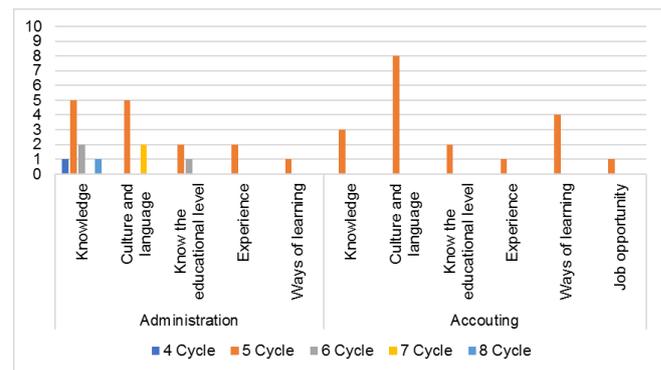
Fig. 3. Motives of this decision

The increase of consciousness about the importance that globalization and mobility have, is presented as a benefit applied to those who have or will participate in it, as Beelen (2011, 95) expresses. When the participants were asked about the benefits they would get by going to study to another country, they pointed out, as shown in Fig. 4, that they would increase their knowledge, since mobility, due to its multilateral, general and wide nature, has academic recognition and a duration enough to go in depth in the culture and language of the country visited. Jaen and Madarro (2004, 141) consider that the knowledge between teaching institutions and the reliability in the quality in the teaching imparted, form the parting point for student mobility.

According to data published by the Public Education Secretariat (Secretaría de Educación pública 2012), mobility produces positive effects not only for students benefited from it, but it also has an important impact in collective, institutional, regional and national terms.

For Gonzalez (2011, 74) as the importance of science and technology activities increases, the international flows of university students become necessary and vital for the development of the institutions where they belong.

It is a fact that currently all the higher education institutions must send their students to take subjects in other countries with the purpose of achieving the integration of knowledge and assembling the processes of learning. All of these actions and measures should be taken in order to make the mobility of individuals possible, as Fernandez (2010, 14) expresses.



Source: Own elaboration

Fig. 4. Benefits of studying in another country

Participating in this program has advantages not only for the higher education institution in which the student participates, but also for the participant students themselves. As Medina (2016, 25) claims, they have the possibility and opportunity to enrich in a personal and intellectual way, contributing to their future and labor possibilities.

## VII. CONCLUSION

It is undeniable that despite living in the globalization era and being digital natives, not all of the students know this institutional program of academic support. It is also evident that plenty of them are not interested, since the call for participation is published and updated frequently in the institutional page.

This research proves that, in spite of the evident economic and academic support by the Autonomous Juarez University of Tabasco, students do not seize this opportunity for reasons that they may not even know, although some of them point out the lack of interest, apathy, or finding themselves working in companies or accounting firms, besides the lack of time.

Due to the incident that happened almost two years ago in Paris, in which a female student subject to academic mobility in that city lost her life, the respondents consider traveling to another country a risk.

Some of them express that, they don't have the

economic resources necessary for staying abroad one semester, and it is understandable, since according to data published in the August issue of *The Economist*, nearly 70% of Mexicans are unable to obtain a university degree due to the lack of economic stability.

Due to Mexico being a country excelling in the fields of research and development, one of the objectives of students to go abroad is to know other forms and methods of education, methods and learning, which are strengthened and continued in the interior of the institution. Therefore, it is important that both professors and students get involved in a direct way in this program. In addition to obtaining the advantages pointed out by the participants of this work, the professional profile of the professors gets strengthened, and the quality of the academic formation of the students improves, besides the national and international competitiveness.

Other students mention that they are willing to participate and that they would enjoy this experience. They express (among other reasons), that this is an opportunity to update their knowledge, learn about other cultures and the learning and practice of other languages, which would develop other competences.

For the professors of this university this is a big challenge, since it is necessary to make new students aware about the importance of this program in their academic lives and future curricular development.

There is still material for future research, which can take into account the point of view of students who are currently carrying out their studies in another country, seizing the opportunities of this program.

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