

Analysis of Beginner'S Perception and Expectatives about University Studies, Making Use of Lexicometrix Methods.

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The problems of the academic fulfillment in University and the abandonment of the superior studies, are a cause of analysis and a matter of worrying in Argentina. This interest leads in the National University from Rosario., to design a prospective study that started in 1997 with the assessment of the aspects that could have any relation with its later success or failure, throughout an opinion's survey carried out during the first and second months of the academic year of first year students. Although there is not any entrance examination, there are some optional introductory courses, which main objective is to level out the knowledge of the entrants, whom have different upbringing. The number of people enrolled every year is approximately 3500. As an example, about 30% of the enrolled students abandon without having approved any subject. Many reasons motivated to relieve the survey at the beginning of the academic year, and not in the inscriptions' moment, with the idea of including those who have more perspective to continue their studies.

In the present work it is analyzed the answers to the open questions of the poll, about the expectations on studies and their perception in their careers' first part. The open questions included in the questionnaire are: **1-**Why did (or did not) you do the preparatory course offered by the faculty? **2-**Why do you consider the course helped (or did not help) you? **3-**Which is the importance that a university degree has for you? **4-**Why did you choose this career? **5-**What do you think about the classes you are attending? And **6-**Do you think that the performance will depend only on you, or do you consider that the faculty can do things in order to increase your possibilities for success? Which ones?

Analyzing these answers as textual data, each question can be faced either or by questions or considering the whole of them as a more complex speech. The lexicometrix method also allows the study of associations of the answers with different variables such as the career, socio economic environment, study habits, etc. conserving its original richness. To simplify the exposition, only the results obtained analyzing the fifth question are presented.

In the analysis of textual facts, the words or graphic ways represent the nominal variables, and when they are in a matrix of information, the totality of the words contained in the answers appear as columns and each file belongs to a person. In the body of the table appear the frequencies with which each person said each word in his/her free answer. From the analysis of correspondences of this lexical table, can be appreciated associations between words and will appear the big ideas present in the text. Other nominal variables that had been measured about the same persons as supplementary variables, can be studied its proximities in factorial planes to graphic forms. Other analysis form is to divide the whole of the respondents in subgroups pre-established or suggested for a correspondence analysis, for example career that students study, level of instruction of theirs parents, etc. Each of these subgroups are called texts, and the lexical table added which is formed by the words in its files and the texts in its columns is analyzed. The comparison of the lexical profiles of each modality allows to find characteristic answers for each of them.

By the question "**What do you think about the classes you are assisting to?**" we tried to evaluate the perception of the student about any important activity of the institution, trying to discover if that perception was related to other aspects such as training, socio-cultural context, career, or other. The focus of the survey was to detect students' problems, and not to evaluate the institution. First, we started deparating the corpus, keeping for the analysis those that appeared in more than five opportunities. As a result, 141 graphic ways were kept. The correspondence analysis of the answer's

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matrix by graphic ways, identifies three main factors, the first separates the words understand-help-realize-best-important-doubts-study, etc., that indicate why it is good to assist to classes, of the regular-complete-fast-boring-heavy-bad, etc., the ones with adversary opinions. Those students who used critical words said that classes “were good, but”, or “ some were good, others not”. That’s why the word “some” appears in that position. The second factor situates the words referring to the students opinions about lessons in an extreme position; and the different subjects and some opinions about them are in the other extreme. This means that there is a group of answers that has referred to each subject in particular. In the third factor appears a new topic meaning “the discomfort” some students perceive, the ones who answer with words such as: quantity-space-a lot of students- lack of place-bad, lets say those who relate space problems with what they perceive as an unsuccessfully class. In the other extreme of this factor appears favorable opinions about the classes and their utilities.

To enrich the previous interpretation, we consider some of the survey’s variables to observe its association with the answers obtained. These are projected as supplementary variables over the spaces generated by the correspondence analysis of the lexical table. The variables taken into account were: career, number of working hours, the length expected of the career, academic conditions in accountancy and mathematics according to the entrants’ exams, and academic characteristics. This last variable corresponds to an automatic classification made from the correspondence analysis of the close questions of the poll. The answers between the different categories are very differentiated in length of the answers and richness in them. Larger answers correspond to those students who are in better academic conditions, and express no problems to study, but those answers richer in variety of words, are of those students who are in worse academic conditions. About the analysis of characteristic answers of each group, between the students who are not in academic conditions, although express that do not have problems to study, they mention the need of more space and infrastructure problems. The group that recognizes problems, although has passed the entrant exams, express that some classes are good, and others are not, and its characteristic answer has to do with problems of understanding, and also with the need of space. Those who have had studying problems before, expressed also the problems of infrastructure, but studying problems were not observed in their comments, which were noticed in the close answers. In the best expectative, favorable answers are observed to the classes and a clear manifestation of satisfaction, similar to the absence of studying problems that were expressed in close questions.

While making a difference between the answers in each career, the students of Statistics present the largest and mayor percentage of different words. The shortest percentage of different words that is observed in the students that study Accountancy is coherent to theirs homogeneity, which is noticed in the characteristic answers. To complete the analysis of these speeches, it was studied the relationship of the information of the poll with the academic fulfillment showed by these students during three complete academic years.

The techniques of statistic analysis of textual data in polls, result appropriated when it is pretended to conserve the spontaneity of the respondent’s expression. The facilities given by the specific software gives to the investigators the possibility to apply these techniques. The presented results, though partials, allows to view the utility of these methods in the specific analysis of the secluded information for this investigation.

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