



# Factors Related to Academic Dropout in Vocational Training

Factores relacionados con o abandono escolar na  
Formação Profissional

Factores relacionados con el abandono académico en  
la Formación Profesional

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## Abstract

Vocational Training is a key element in developing a quality production model. At the current juncture, and following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy, all countries face the challenge of reactivating the productive sectors. Vocational Training can be one of the driving forces behind social and economic growth after this serious crisis. Improving the vocational qualifications of young people is an investment in the possibility of finding employment. However, a high level of academic dropout has been detected among Vocational Training students, which breaks the possibility of achieving this important social and employment objective. This reality is what justified the present research. Following an ex post-facto methodology, a study was carried out in which a questionnaire was administered to a sample of 756 vocational students to collect information on three factors associated with the intention to drop out of studies (academic satisfaction, engagement, and adaptability skills). The results showed significant inverse correlations between the three factors analyzed and the intention to drop out. Students with a lower intention to drop out had higher satisfaction with their studies, high involvement in their studies, and good adaptability skills. The data obtained will serve to improve the guidance and training processes for these young people, as it will provide more precise knowledge about how they perceive this type of studies and the difficulties they encounter.

## Keywords

vocational training; dropping out; student adjustment; academic qualification

## Palavras-chave

formação profissional; deserção escolar; adaptação estudantil; qualificação académica

## Resumo

A formação profissional é um elemento-chave no desenvolvimento de um modelo de produção de qualidade. No contexto atual e após o impacto da pandemia de Covid-19 na economia, todos os países enfrentam o desafio de reativar os sectores produtivos. A formação profissional pode ser uma das forças motrizes por detrás do crescimento social e económico após esta grave crise. A melhoria das qualificações profissionais dos jovens é um investimento em oportunidades de colocação profissional. No entanto, foi detectado um elevado nível de abandono escolar entre os estudantes de formação profissional, o que quebra a possibilidade de alcançar este importante objetivo social e de emprego. Esta realidade é o que justifica a presente investigação. Seguindo uma metodologia ex post-facto, foi realizado um estudo no qual foi aplicado um questionário a uma amostra de 756 estudantes de formação profissional para coletar informações sobre três fatores associados à intenção de abandonar os estudos (satisfação académica, engajamento e capacidade de adaptação). Os resultados mostraram correlações inversas significativas entre os três fatores analisados e a intenção de desistir. Os estudantes com menor intenção de desistir tiveram maior satisfação com os seus estudos, elevado envolvimento com a sua educação e boa capacidade de adaptação. Os dados obtidos servirão para melhorar os processos de orientação e formação destes jovens, uma vez que fornecerão conhecimentos mais precisos sobre a forma como percebem este tipo de estudos e as dificuldades que encontram.

## Resumen

La formación profesional constituye un elemento clave para desarrollar un modelo productivo de calidad. En la coyuntura actual y tras el impacto de la pandemia de covid-19 en la economía, todos los países enfrentan el reto de reactivar los sectores productivos. La formación profesional puede ser uno de los motores que ayude al crecimiento social y económico después de esta grave crisis. Mejorar la cualificación profesional de los jóvenes es invertir en posibilidades para la inserción laboral. Sin embargo, se ha detectado un alto nivel de abandono académico entre el alumnado de formación profesional, lo que rompe la posibilidad de conseguir este importante objetivo social y laboral. Esta realidad es la que justificó la presente investigación. Siguiendo una metodología ex post-facto, se llevó a cabo un estudio en el que se aplicó un cuestionario a una muestra de 756 estudiantes de formación profesional para recoger información sobre tres factores asociados a la intención de abandonar los estudios (satisfacción académica, compromiso y competencias de adaptabilidad). Los resultados mostraron correlaciones significativas e inversas entre los tres factores analizados y la intención de abandono. Los estudiantes con menor intención de abandono presentaban mayor satisfacción con los estudios que cursaban, alta implicación con la formación y buenas competencias de adaptabilidad. Los datos obtenidos servirán para mejorar los procesos de orientación y formación de estos jóvenes, ya que proporcionarán un conocimiento más preciso sobre cómo perciben este tipo de estudios y las dificultades con las que se encuentran.

## Palabras clave

formación profesional; desercción escolar; adaptación del estudiante; cualificación académica

## Introduction

The socioeconomic crisis that many countries worldwide have been suffering in recent decades has had a significant impact on the most vulnerable groups of the population. These groups include students who leave the education system without finishing an academic degree that would facilitate their entry into the labour market. At the same time, this crisis has highlighted the need to take the necessary steps to ensure that young people acquire the necessary training to enable them to become employable. However, an analysis of the situation has revealed that a high percentage of young people under 25 years of age have a significant lack of training, which makes it hard for them to find a job.

Within this broad framework, vocational training is a compelling educational option for many young people hoping to transition to the labour market, given its practical nature and its close relationship with businesses. Vocational Training is structured through different levels and modalities: a) Basic Vocational Training (FPB), aimed at students who have not completed Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) or who wish to obtain basic training in a specific field; b) Intermediate Vocational Training, targeted at students who have completed ESO or have an equivalent qualification; c) Advanced Vocational Training, designed for students who have completed ESO or hold an equivalent qualification, as well as those who have already obtained an Intermediate level qualification; d) Dual Vocational Training, intended for students who want to combine their studies with work; and e) Vocational Training for Employment, aimed at adults and active workers who wish to improve their skills or change their career path.

Although Vocational Training offers a wide range of specialized studies and prepares students for employment, personal development, and promotes lifelong learning, an additional issue has arisen: the high number of students who fail and drop out of their studies before completing them (Escarbajal et al., 2021). Through educational research, attempts have been made to describe which processes (personal, academic, professional, etc.) lead students to give up on their training and pinpoint the factors that influence this dropout rate (Carrasco et al., 2015; González et al., 2015; Mena et al., 2010; Rizo & Hernández, 2019; Romero & Hernández, 2018; Sogal et al., 2015). Studies in Social Sciences are mainly focused on students in Secondary Education, High School, and University and, to a lesser extent, on those who opt for vocational training. In this sense, Echeverría and Martínez (2021), after pointing out that research on professional training in Spain is rather scarce, proposed the need for more in-depth analysis of specific topics such as Dual Vocational Training, teaching-learning processes in Vocational Training, methodological designs with representative samples, predictive studies, etc.

Mena et al. (2010) described school dropout as disaffection, rejection, and academic disengagement related to factors such as absenteeism, perceived family-social-institutional support, expectations, commitment, self-esteem, self-efficacy perception, satisfaction with studies, personal and professional skills, adaptability competencies, and similar issues. (Fernández et al., 2012; Mena et al., 2010).

Among the cited elements, engagement refers to student participation and involvement in academic life (Christenson et al., 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; LaNasa et al., 2009; McCormick et al., 2013). It is a construct that helps explain academic outcomes and prevents dropping out from courses of study (Bresó et al., 2011; Coates & McCormick, 2014; Reeve, 2012). Its relevance in the educational field has increased over the last few decades (Brigman et al., 2015; Carter et al., 2012; Casuso-Holgado et al., 2013; Jimerson et al., 2003; Lam et al., 2014). Both in working contexts and education centres, students show different degrees of engagement with their academic tasks, which in turn affects their learning achievements (King et al., 2015).

This growing line of research delves into the relationship between engagement and academic performance (Jang et al., 2010; Parra, 2010; López-Aguilar et al., 2021), social variables (Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007), the educational environment (Hinrichs et al., 2016), academic performance (Lee, 2014), academic satisfaction (Elmore & Huebner, 2010; Korobova & Starobin, 2015), academic stress (Extremera et al., 2007), self-efficacy beliefs (Vera et al., 2014) or the motivation for studies (Martín, 2008; Martín et al., 2015; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Thus, students who are committed to their education show a high level of involvement in their studies and a good academic performance. (Salanova et al., 2005). In this sense, Schaufeli et al. (2002) stated that the term *engagement* is used to describe behaviours of involvement in productive learning tasks. People committed to their studies show greater effort, enthusiasm, energy, intensity of dedication, etc., despite the difficulties encountered (Bresó & Gracia, 2007; Durán et al., 2004).

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) and Martínez and Salanova (2003), engagement is conceptualised as a state of psychological well-being that embraces three fundamental factors. The first of these is vigour, which describes the energy and mental stamina during the time in which a task is performed. Second, dedication refers to the active involvement and keen participation in the task. Third, absorption refers to being concentrated and deeply engrossed in academic work.

Regarding the second factor of analysis, academic satisfaction, studies show that it is a key element in explaining social adjustment or integration and success or persistence in school (Fernández-Rico et al, 2007; Schleich et al., 2006). Specifically in education, Lent and Brown (2013) considered

that academic satisfaction reflects the well-being or feeling of success derived from the experiences or performance of a given task related to the student role. Likewise, academic satisfaction is positively related to social integration or to general life satisfaction (Suldo et al., 2008; Lounsbury et al., 2004). According to Lent et al. (2007), students with high levels of academic satisfaction achieve their educational goals, have favourable beliefs about their abilities that enhance their performance, have positive outcome expectations, and perceive social support in learning contexts.

The third factor of analysis, adaptability competencies, is related to academic performance and dropout (Álvarez-Pérez et al., 2016; Esteban et al., 2015; Fraga, 2014; Hirschi, 2009). According to Avram et al. (2019), adaptability skills show high predictive validity for academic achievement. Thus, a student with high levels of adaptability will have a greater predisposition to achieve better academic results and, by extension, will have a greater guarantee of remaining in school and successfully completing their studies.

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) defend the need for individuals to have a high degree of mastery of these skills, as this will allow them to integrate and develop more successfully in the different stages of their life path. These authors argue that adaptability consists of four dimensions: concern for the future, personal control, curiosity to explore new scenarios, and confidence to challenge oneself and overcome obstacles. These dimensions are related to knowing how to apply the necessary skills to adapt and integrate in different scenarios and life plans (Savickas, 2005).

With respect to students in vocational education, the stage they are at coincides with exploration and initiation into the professional world (Lent & Brown, 2013). Adaptability skills have a strong relationship with other explanatory factors of school dropout, such as engagement, which is presented as a powerful predictor of school dropout and academic performance (Truta et al., 2018). In this sense, there is a positive interdependence between adaptability and engagement (Paradnikė & Bandzevičienė, 2016).

In short, this study arose in response to an important gap in relation to the academic dropout of vocational training students. Therefore, the aim is to determine to what extent the academic dropout intention in students enrolled in vocational training studies is linked with academic satisfaction, engagement, and adaptability skills.

## Method

The study was carried out using a quantitative research methodology based on an empirical-analytical approach. This methodological strategy made it possible to describe, compare, and objectively correlate the factors and dimensions described above (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018).

## Participants

The study focused on the student population of the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands who were studying vocational training in any of its modalities and specialities. Based on an accidental sampling procedure and following the criterion of accessibility of the population under study, a total of 844 students took part in the study. The sample size complied with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2014) of having a minimum number of observations at least five times the number of variables under study. After purging the database and the identifying multivariate outliers, the final sample consisted of 756 students who met the characteristics described in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Sample features*

<b>Age</b>	=24.73; sd=9.066; Minimum =15; Maximum =56
<b>Gender</b>	Male =38.4% (n=290) Female =61.6% (n=466)
<b>Entry qualification to studies carried out</b>	Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO)=28.6% (n=216) Baccalaureate =33.2% (n=251) Intermediate Level Training Cycle =19.2% (n=145) Higher Level Training Cycle =8.2% (n=62) Other =10.8% (n=82)
<b>Training modality</b>	Ordinary attendance =75.4% (n=570) Dual =2.9% (n=22) Semi-attendance =21.7% (n=164)

## Instrument

An *ad hoc* questionnaire was drawn up, organised around three dimensions: academic satisfaction, engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), and adaptability skills (Savickas, 2005). For each of these dimensions, a 7-level Likert-type scale was constructed (where 1 was the lowest rating and 7 the highest). Table 2 shows the dimensions and items included in the questionnaire.

**Table 2.***Likert scales included in the survey*

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Coding</b>
Satisfaction	Having chosen this training cycle	S1
	The relationship I have with my classmates	S2
	The relationship I have with my teachers	S3
	The academic results I am achieving	S4
	Usefulness of the contents worked upon in this cycle	S5
	Professional guidance I receive in the school	S6
Engagement	I feel enthusiastic and motivated when doing class tasks	C1
	What I am studying in this cycle makes sense to me	C2
	I like going to class everyday	C3
	I feel involved in the cycle I am studying	C4
	I can study continuously for long periods of time without getting bored	C5
	Taking this cycle is an important challenge for me	C6
	I am so involved when doing class assignments that I lose track of time	C7
	I consider myself to be a consistent person when it comes to completing class assignments	C8
	I try to relate what I learn in the different cycle subjects	C9
	I pay attention in class at all times	C10
	I have no problem doing the class work	C11
	In my free time I complete the topics covered in class by seeking more information	C12
	I feel comfortable and integrated in the centre where I am taking my course	C13
	I take part in classes to express my opinions and points of view	C14
	I review my notes regularly, even if there are no exams marked	C15
	When I have any doubts about the subject, I ask the teachers	C16

Dimensions	Items	Coding
Adaptability	I think about what my future as a worker will be like	A1
	I know the decisions I take today may affect and condition my future	A2
	I am preparing myself well for my future career	A3
	I know what decisions I need to make to achieve my career goals	A4
	I plan how to achieve my aims in the short, medium and long term	A5
	I see myself as a person competent to perform any task	A6
	I am optimistic about life and my chances of getting a job	A7
	When I make decisions, I weigh up my own interests and aspirations	A8
	I look for information on the employment market situation	A9
	Before taking a decision, I analyse the different options and alternatives I have	A10
	I am keen to discover new opportunities in life	A11
	I consider that the tasks I perform are done efficiently	A12
	I am concerned about doing any type of activity correctly	A13
	I overcome the problems I face on a daily basis without difficulty	A14
	I have acquired the appropriate skills and knowledge to solve problems that may arise in the professional world	A15
	I know how to adapt to the demands of the working world	A16
	I have acquired the appropriate skills to interact with other people in the working world	A17

In addition to these scales, the instrument included other questions referring to socio-demographic and academic issues that were of interest in terms of the study objectives (e.g., age, sex, training cycle, degree of access to vocational training studies). As a step prior to the final application of the data collection instrument, the following tests suggested by Escobar-Pérez and Cuervo-Martínez were carried out (2008):

- » Content test conducted by specialists in the field of study (n=2).
- » Form test carried out by experts in Social and Legal Sciences research (n=2).
- » Pilot test conducted by students with similar features to those of the final sample (n=15).

The evaluation criteria considered during the development of these tests were relevance, clarity, appropriateness and response times, etc. For both the content and form tests, experts were sent a grading scale (with 7 levels, where 1 was the lowest score and 7 the highest) on which they assessed, item by item, the appropriateness, clarity, and relevance of each item. In addition, a space was provided for comments so that suggestions for modifications could be incorporated as deemed appropriate. This procedure allowed us to incorporate improvements mainly related to the wording style of the items.

## Preliminary analyses

A checking and debugging process was carried out on the database, which was subsequently used to conduct the planned statistical tests. The first check ensured that there were no duplicate or missing cases. Another aspect confirmed was that the data entered in the database were within the range expected for each of the proposed items. The Mahalanobis distance was also calculated to identify multivariate outliers. According to Muñoz and Amón (2013), this distance establishes an inflection point indicating that the participants are moving considerably away from the centre of mass and, therefore, can be treated as outliers. The distance value was 54.47, which led to the elimination of 88 participants, setting the final study sample at 756 students.

Multicollinearity was another of the parameters checked. This procedure identified possible redundant information among the items. To do so, an item-by-item bivariate correlation analysis was carried out, obtaining values of  $r \leq .85$  for all cases. Following the proposals of Holgado et al. (2019), these values suggested that the questions posed were sufficiently discriminant with each other. The normality of the data was also examined, a necessary aspect for decision-making on the type of analysis to be performed. To this end, skewness and kurtosis were analysed, and the Shapiro-Wilks and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were performed, obtaining p values of  $\leq .0$  for all cases. According to George and Mallery (2001), the results indicated the abnormality of the data obtained.

Finally, the reliability of the Likert-type grading scales used in the questionnaire was analysed by calculating Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and McDonald's Omega ( $\omega$ ) coefficients, whose scores (Table 3) were excellent ( $\geq .90$ ) according to the interpretative values set by Oviedo and Campo-Arias (2005).

**Table 3.***Reliability analysis*

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	McDonald's Omega ( $\omega$ )
Academic satisfaction	.91	.94
Engagement	.96	.97
Adaptability	.97	.98
Total	.98	.99

## Procedure

Data gathering was carried out in February, March and April 2021. Due to the Covid-19 situation, the decision was taken to administer the questionnaire online through the Google for Education platform. To this end, we contacted different educational institutions in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands that provided vocational training. The centres were informed by email and by telephone about the purpose of the study, and their collaboration was requested. They were asked to share the link to the questionnaire with the teachers of the centres so that it could be applied in the classroom sessions (physical or online) with the students.

During data collection, the deontological and ethical codes of the research process were respected, guaranteeing anonymity and offering voluntary participation in the study. Likewise, the provisions of Organic Law 3/2018, of December 5, on Personal Data Protection and guarantee of digital rights were taken into account.

## Data analysis

The data gathered were processed and analyzed using R-Studio software and Microsoft Excel for Microsoft Windows 10 operating system. To this end, the database generated automatically by the Google Forms platform was downloaded in .csv format.

With this file, the following statistical analyses were carried out: frequency analysis and central tendency (mean, median, and standard deviation), reliability analysis (skewness, kurtosis, Shapiro-Wilks and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests), multicollinearity analysis (bivariate correlation), study of normality, calculation of the Mahalanobis distance, correlational analysis (Spearman's Rho), and contrast analyses (Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U).

For interpretation of the correlations identified in the analyses, we took into account the contributions of Martínez et al. (2009): 0-(±)0.25 (little or no correlation); 0.26-(±)0.50 (weak correlation); 0.51-(±)0.75 (moderate to strong correlation); 0.76-(±)1.00 (strong to perfect correlation).

## Results

### Descriptive analysis

In general terms, the dropout intent of the students taking part was low ( $\bar{x}$ = 2.47;  $sd$ = 2.002;  $M_e$ = 1). The Kruskal-Wallis tests tested showed no differences according to the training modality (ordinary attendance, dual, semi-remote) of their courses ( $p$ = .349). As for the training family, it was image and sound that showed the highest intention to drop out ( $p$ = .016; average range= 527.29).

The results revealed that 13.8% ( $n$ =104) of students had repeated a subject. Likewise, 38.2% ( $n$ = 289) stated that at some point they encountered training difficulties in passing the subjects of the studies they were taking. Despite this, 96.0% ( $n$ =726) intended to complete their current studies. The differential analysis showed that students who repeated a subject in the training cycle ( $p$ = .000; average range= 457.17;  $P_{sest}$ = .37) and those who encountered training difficulties ( $p$ = .000; average range= 446.78;  $P_{sest}$ = .70) were those who showed the greatest intention to drop out.

### Academic satisfaction

The data showed that students had high levels of satisfaction with the studies they were pursuing ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.10;  $sd$ = 1.49;  $M_e$ = 5.50). In fact, it was notable that participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with their chosen training course ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.55;  $sd$ = 1.75;  $M_e$ = 6), their relationship with the teaching staff ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.35;  $sd$ = 1.73;  $M_e$ = 6) and with their classmates ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.21;  $sd$ = 1.81;  $M_e$ = 6).

### Engagement

Of the dimensions analyzed, it was in engagement that students obtained relatively high scores ( $\bar{x}$ = 4.79;  $sd$ = 1.50;  $M_e$ = 5.09). Participants obtained high ratings in making sense of the studies they were pursuing ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.38;  $sd$ = 1.79;  $M_e$ = 6), the relationship they tried to establish between the learning they acquired in the different subjects of the cycle ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.30;  $sd$ = 1.70;  $M_e$ = 6), and the personal challenge they faced when undertaking vocational training ( $\bar{x}$ = 5.24;  $sd$ = 1.95;  $M_e$ = 6). To a lesser extent, they emphasized aspects related to their ability to study continuously for long periods

( $\bar{x}$  = 4.18;  $sd$  = 1.99;  $M_e$  = 4), their eagerness to attend classes daily ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.43;  $sd$  = 2.03;  $M_e$  = 5), and losing the notion of time when they were carrying out training activities associated with the qualification they were pursuing ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.49;  $sd$  = 1.92;  $M_e$  = 5).

## Adaptability

Regarding adaptability, the overall levels obtained were high ( $\bar{x}$  = 5.37;  $sd$  = 1.45;  $M_e$  = 5.88). The highest ratings identified in this dimension were related to knowing that the decisions they made could condition their future ( $\bar{x}$  = 5.93;  $sd$  = 1.59;  $M_e$  = 7), to what they thought their future professional development would be like ( $\bar{x}$  = 5.75;  $sd$  = 1.72;  $M_e$  = 7), and to their curiosity to discover new employment opportunities ( $\bar{x}$  = 5.64;  $sd$  = 1.69;  $M_e$  = 6). The least outstanding aspects were related to questions such as the search for information on the state of the professional world ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.73;  $sd$  = 1.96;  $M_e$  = 5), overcoming the problems encountered in their trajectory ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.98;  $sd$  = 1.69;  $M_e$  = 5), and the acquisition of skills and knowledge to help solve problems in their future career path ( $\bar{x}$  = 5.08;  $sd$  = 1.68;  $M_e$  = 5).

## Correlational analysis

Since the data distribution did not follow the normality curve, according to Camacho-Sandoval (2008), the type of correlational analysis to be performed should be based on Spearman's Rho test. The correlation between the intention to drop out of vocational education and overall satisfaction was significant and inverse ( $r_s$  = -.270;  $p$  < .000). Thus, the lower the level of satisfaction with the studies pursued, the higher the intention to abandon the training initiated. Looking more closely at the items included in this first dimension (Table 4), it was found that the strongest significant inverse correlations for the intention to drop out, albeit with low intensity, were associated with satisfaction with the vocational training chosen ( $r_s$  = -.256;  $p$  < .000) with the usefulness of the contents that were being worked on in the training cycle ( $r_s$  = -.225;  $p$  < .000), and with the academic outcomes the students were achieving ( $r_s$  = -.212;  $p$  < .000).

**Table 4.**

*Spearman's correlation coefficient: dropout intent and satisfaction with studies*

		Dropout intent	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	
Spearman's rho	Dropout intent	Correlation coefficient	1	-.256	-.115	-.219	-.212	-.225	-.210
		Sig.	-	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000
		n	756						

Regarding engagement, significant and weak inverse correlations ( $r_s = -.314$ ;  $p < .000$ ) with dropout intent were obtained. In fact, among the questions included in this dimension (Table 5), regular class attendance ( $r_s = -.402$ ;  $p < .000$ ), enthusiasm and motivation to perform academic tasks ( $r_s = -.368$ ;  $p < .000$ ), and the ability to study continuously for long periods of time ( $r_s = -.306$ ;  $p < .000$ ) stood out as having the highest significant correlations in terms of the intention to drop out.

**Table 5.**

*Spearman's correlation coefficient: dropout intent and engagement*

		Dropout intent	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	
Spearman's rho	Drop-out intent	Correlation coefficient	1	-.368	-.296	-.402	-.346	-.306	-.159	-.228	-.185
		Sig.	-	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		n	756								
		Dropout intent	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	C14	C15	C16	
Spearman's rho	Drop-out intent	Correlation coefficient	1	-.217	-.139	-.242	-.167	-.265	-.187	-.131	-.167
		Sig.	-	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		n	756								

Finally, the results obtained showed that adaptability was the dimension which, despite having significant inverse correlations, had the lowest intensity for the intention to drop out ( $r_s = -.198$ ;  $p < .000$ ). More specifically, the strongest correlations in this dimension were found in being optimistic about the possibilities of finding a job ( $r_s = -.230$ ;  $p < .000$ ), in being prepared to face their professional future ( $r_s = -.226$ ;  $p < .000$ ), and in overcoming the problems they face on a daily basis ( $r_s = -.199$ ;  $p < .000$ ) (Table 6).

**Table 6.***Spearman's correlation coefficient: dropout intent and engagement*

		Dropout intent	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	
Spearman's rho	Drop-out intent	Correlation coefficient	1	-.66	-.049	-.226	-.151	-.113	-.142	-.230	-.117	-.082
		Sig.	-	.070	.178	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.001	.024
		n	756									
		Dropout intent	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17		
Spearman's rho	Drop-out intent	Correlation coefficient	1	-.054	-.065	-.148	-.108	-.199	-.163	-.147	-.128	
		Sig.	-	.142	.072	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000	
		n	756									

## Discussion and Conclusions

The relationship between academic satisfaction, commitment and adaptability with the intention to abandon studies in vocational training students was the main objective of this research. We must not lose sight of the fact that, although vocational training has sometimes been considered a less demanding level of studies compared to Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and Bacalaureate, students in the different cycles face a variety of learning activities and have to endure considerable workloads that, on many occasions, generate stress, demotivation, doubts about their abilities, and, in the worst case, even the possibility of abandoning their studies (Belhumeur et al., 2016; McGrath et al., 2019; Salvà-Mut et al., 2020).

Although in the past, vocational training was considered a training alternative for those students who did not have the ability to take university degrees, in the last decade there has been a significant reevaluation of these studies, which has led to a considerable increase in the number of students who have been opting for this path (Rego-Agraso & Rial-Sánchez, 2017). However, we share with Cerdà-Navarro et al. (2020) the need and urgency to delve deeper into academic abandonment in the context of vocational training, where very high rates have been recorded. For this reason, research such as the one we present is significant in identifying factors that may influence school dropout.

Specifically, the analysis of the three factors that we have analyzed in relation to the intention to drop out at this educational level is relevant, given the predictive value of these variables. As previous research shows (Bresó & Gracia, 2007; Salanova et al., 2005), engagement is a relevant factor that forms part of the profile of persistent students who adapt well to their studies based on their involvement and enjoyment of the learning process. Therefore, it will be necessary to include actions for students to develop skills related to this factor in educational practice.

Regarding satisfaction, the work carried out by Sánchez-Martin et al. (2017) reflected that the students of the first year of intermediate and higher vocational training in two centers were satisfied with the choice of their studies. Adaptability is another determining factor in relation to success in studies, the clarification of goals and the planning of academic-professional trajectories (Álvarez-Pérez and López-Aguilar, 2020). Analyzing these factors in relation to the problem of early school leaving, with the aim of transferring knowledge into practice, could be very useful to correct and redirect decisions on disengagement from studies.

The results obtained are quite satisfactory, since the dropout intention values among the students who participated in this research were quite low. It must be taken into account that more than 90% of the participants had favorable expectations regarding the completion of their studies, which is a relevant indicator of the students' interest and confidence in their academic possibilities. This is closely related to the engagement dimension, as many of the participants saw the training they were taking as a personal challenge and found meaning in what they were studying. It is also related to the academic satisfaction dimension, as the students said they were very satisfied with the cycle they were taking, with the teachers, and also with their classmates. And it is linked to the adaptability dimension, as the students stated that they were aware of the importance of the studies they were taking for their professional future and that the training would help them discover job opportunities for their professional future.

In other studies, such as the one carried out by Sarceda-Gorgoso and Barreira-Cerqueiras, (2021), it was shown that students consider that basic vocational training contributes to the acquisition of skills for professional development and school continuity. Furthermore, they considered that they had a medium or even medium-high level of skill development to carry out the training they were taking. In our research, only in those cases in which students had repeated subjects in previous years and had had educational difficulties, the intention to drop out became evident.

Therefore, in relation to the purpose of the study, a significant and inverse correlation was confirmed between the intention to leave and the three factors studied. That is, those students who achieved high scores in

academic satisfaction, commitment, and adaptability had no intention of abandoning their vocational training studies. According to Liébana-Presa et al. (2018), the greater the self-confidence, the greater the involvement, with less frustration and burnout and, therefore, better academic results. From this perspective, we share with Sarceda-Gorgoso and Barreira-Cerqueiras (2021) and Sarceda-Gorgoso et al. (2017) that vocational training can be an important way to reduce the levels of early school leaving and to improve the possibilities of access to the labor market for young people.

The study carried out constitutes an approximation to the students' own perception of the importance they attribute to the three factors analyzed. It would be necessary in the future to contrast this information by evaluating other types of qualitative data, based on the analysis of reports obtained through other nominal procedures such as interviews, which would allow a more in-depth analysis of these opinions. Likewise, it would be interesting to delve into the reality of those students who intend to abandon their vocational training studies to identify the variables that are influencing this reality.

The analysis of these factors can provide relevant information for the implementation of preventive information and orientation programs, to reinforce from previous levels the idea that training is a key factor for professional development. At the same time, systems of support for vocational training students should be enabled to help them overcome all difficulties, of various kinds, that may interfere with their personal, academic and professional development, while encouraging young people to pursue these studies (Núñez, 2010; Rego & Rial, 2017). In any case, the research carried out opens new ways to delve into an educational level little studied to date (Echeverría & Martínez-Clares, 2019) and also poses the challenge of understanding the reality of the students who are studying and in the environment that surrounds them.

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