

International Journal of Human Sciences Research

THE CHOICE OF CAREER IN THE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF THE “MINUTO DE DIOS UNIVERSITY CORPORATION, UNIMINUTO”

Carlos Martínez Padilla

Research-Professor at the Autonomous
University of the State of Hidalgo (UAEH)

Mireya Hernández Ramírez

Professor at UTEL university

Araceli Jiménez Pelcastre

Research Professor at the Autonomous
University of the State of Hidalgo (UAEH)

All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).



Abstract: The objective of this article is to offer elements that explain the career choice of university students of the “Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios. ONE MINUTE”. The question that seeks to answer is how influence the socioeconomic variables of students to choose a virtual educational program? The school enrollment database of the same institution from 2005 to 2013 was used. The interpretation of the information was carried out with the theory of the context of action Young, Valach and Collin (2002). It is concluded that single women from 19 to 21 years of age who study an undergraduate degree, mainly occupational health administration, psychology and public accounting, and who come from a low socioeconomic level, choose such careers because their labor market expectations are high and, they fulfill the function of fulfilling themselves as people in said careers.

Keywords: Distance education, career choice, Colombia, student profile.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 15th century, there have been studies on the orientation of the choice of careers. However, Frank Parsons' text “Choosing a Vocation” published in 1909 established a trait and factor theory of career choice, which to this day remains one of the most influential theories of career choice. This theory maintains that the choice of a vocation is made through the relationship that the subjects have with their environment. One must also take into account the understanding of oneself, as well as the conditions of success, opportunities and perspectives in different subjects (Brown, 2002).

His theory held sway until 1942 when Carl Rogers declared that thought has little control over traits and factors in career guidance practice. Other theories that followed held that professional development is a lifelong

development process, or that career choices are characterized by commitment and, once made, are almost irreversible. There were also theories that early childhood settings predisposed children to enter certain occupational groups (Brown, 2002).

In recent years, the theory of gravitation has had a wide influence on career choice studies. This theory considers cost-benefit and decision making. It establishes that students take into account the external Community, that is, the labor market of their profession and the family tradition. They also take into account the factors found in the University, such as their self-interest and the conception they have of themselves as outstanding or “rejected” students (students with little training, or who “chose” a career as a second or third option). According to this theory, outstanding students in Spain choose Law and Medicine, while non-outstanding students prefer to choose another career such as Chemistry, that is, they are students (Latiesa, 1989).

In general, many high school students, before choosing a career to study at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) have other options in mind. These options are discarded according to their motivations, interests, values, personality, friends, family, personal experiences, abilities or demands of the labor market. This process is the most difficult because you must first identify your options and then identify a career goal (Bratsch, 2001).

Students not only consider the labor market but also to fulfill themselves as people in their professional life. Feel satisfied with your achievements. Feeling rewarded for their efforts and being recognized that what they are doing is really important (Bratsch, 2001). In addition, the perception that the group of students has about the professions is stereotyped and responds to the roles socially assigned to women and men, according to

which the former are linked to reproductive activities while men are assigned preferential activities. of production (Barberá, Candela and Ramos, 2008).

This could explain why school enrollment is concentrated in some careers such as Law or Medicine. Many of the students who choose these careers, regardless of their age, sex, or social origin, consider that they have a good job opportunity and, professional success in the career, much better than the rest of the careers. However, the Medicine career also provides high risks of failure (Latesa, 1989).

THE CONTEXT OF THE ACTION TO EXPLAIN THE CAREER CHOICE

This theory uses the context of action to explain career choice. Career choice involves interests, goals, plans, intentions, and other elements. However, these elements do not make sense without referring to the context and the action of the subjects. The action of the subjects can be explained from their manifest behavior, the internal processes of the subjects and their social meaning. It is hierarchically regulated and is cognitively and socially driven. It presents a sequence of previous, parallel and subsequent actions. It is organized as a system that has hierarchical, sequential, and parallel dimensions (Young, Valach, and Collin, 2002).

Human action is a social construction that allows us to keep together all the relevant information so that other subjects can understand the meaning of our own behavior. In this sense, the career choice presents three constructions: (1) joint action, (2) project, and (3) career. The first refers to the action that people perform together, and also includes the manifest behavior, internal processes and meaning of such actions. The second defines the objectives and tasks of the subjects, which are redefined as they engage in actions and

activities and face life circumstances. The last construction,

The elements of the actions include physical and verbal behavior and have a function, that is, a series of contiguous behaviors in which an action is inserted. Both the elements of the action and their function have a goal, that is, an intention of the subjects (Young, Valach, and Collin, 2002).

VIRTUAL EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

Virtual education is associated with increased connectivity and the low costs that this type of education offers. Therefore, it corresponds to a technical-economic model that is based on the intensive use of information and communication technologies, thus allowing the birth of virtual network education linked to digitization and the creation of educational industries, such as the Internet, teaching platforms and self-learning resources and software (Rama, 2013).

Studies have shown that the learning results of these modalities with respect to face-to-face do not show significant differences. Other studies go so far as to maintain that learning is better with the use of practice or self-study software and that there is no significant difference by educational coverage. Distance education is characterized by being “based on constructivist and connectivist axes, generally associated with self-education processes” (Rama, 2013).

In Colombia, virtual and distance education began in 1947 with the Radio Schools, Acción Cultural Popular. Radio was the first channel of distance education. Later, in 1954, the distance education channel was television, providing primary education up to high school. In 1958, this medium was also used for distance training for teachers. In 1972, this type of education was offered for the first time at the higher education level. In

that year, the Open University System of the Javeriana University was created, aimed at offering training to teachers and, the following year, the Research Center of the Faculty of Education of the University of Antioquia also offered distance training to teachers. In 1975, of Education. Subsequently, other universities continued to offer virtual and distance education (UTB, 2013).

The educational coverage of higher education in Colombia has improved considerably in recent years. In just four years, its educational coverage grew by 8%. If in 2009 the Colombian university system was made up of one million 493 thousand 527 students, in 2012 it already had one million 890 thousand 507 students, reaching a coverage of 42.3%. See Table 1.

It is important to mention that some Universities come to offer limited access for students to certain careers while others offer open access to students without guaranteeing a professional qualification (Latiesa, 1989). In addition, these limitations are observed from secondary education. Although many secondary education institutions have specialized software to identify the possible career options that students can choose, they do not have the necessary spaces and infrastructure so that all students have access to this information (Muñoz-Carril y, González- Sanmamed, 2014).

Year	Students	Coverage	Variation
2009	1,493,527	35.3%	+1.20%
2010	1,587,928	37.1%	+1.80%
2011	1,819,304	39.7%	+2.40%
2012	1,890,507	42.3%	+2.60%

Table 1. Students in higher education in Colombia and educational coverage 2009-2012

Source: selected data from Alvarado (2013)

In this sense, the educational coverage of higher education is hampered by the high

costs of education in Colombia. The value of the semester enrollment exceeds the family income, in addition to the fact that access to higher education is only found in the large cities of the country and in the Andean zone. Bogotá, the capital of the country, grouped 33% of the national enrollment between 2002 and 2009 (Alvarado, 2013).

MINUTO DE DIOS UNIVERSITY CORPORATION, UNIMINUTO

The Minuto de Dios University Corporation (hereinafter Uniminuto) has its history with the founding of the Minuto de Dios College in 1958 by Father Rafael García Herreros. The College had as its objective the formation of human and Christian communities for the integral development of people. Uniminuto officially arose on August 31, 1988, through the act of constitution of the Minuto de Dios University Corporation, which also includes the Minuto de Dios Charismatic Center and the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudist Fathers).

Subsequently, on August 1, 1990, the Ministry of National Education recognized the legal status of Uniminuto and approved its statutes, previously issued by the Founders Council. From 1991 to 1993, the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education (ICFES) granted an operating license to the programs of Administration for Social Development, Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science, Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy, Bachelor's Degree in Basic Primary -with emphasis on Aesthetics-, Administration, Civil Engineering and Social Communication -Journalism-. Uniminuto began its activities in January 1992 with 240 students (www.uniminuto.edu).

At the end of the 1990s, five decisions consolidated the institution: 1. the integral formation of its students, with Christian values and university social service; 2. new

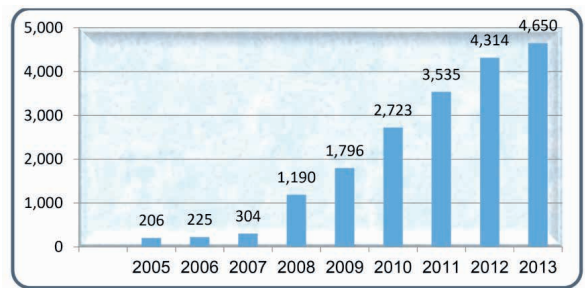
forms of financing for students and for the institution; 3. educational quality through self-assessment for purposes of accreditation of academic programs; 4. the diversification of the academic offer and; 5. Expansion of educational coverage to different regions of Colombia.

In 2009, Uniminuto acquired the character of a University Institution and is characterized by a multi-campus system, with a central headquarters, a section and regional extensions organized as rectories or vice-rectories, called headquarters, which operate regional centers, addresses, tutorial centers and Regional Centers. of Higher Education (CERES). Currently, it has 120,000 students at different levels and academic programs ranging from secondary education, undergraduate, postgraduate, job training and continuing education.

STUDENTS AT UNIMINUTO

Uniminuto can be synthesized in three historical moments: its foundation, recognition and constant expansion. The first period would comprise from the creation of this Institution of Higher Education (HEI) in 1992, until 2008. In this period, the growth of Uniminuto's school enrollment is static, even with a lower enrollment than that of its foundation. If Uniminuto started its activities with 240 students in 1992, by 2005 it only had 206 students enrolled, that is, a 14.0% reduction in school enrollment. See graph 1.

The second period that we call reasoning would comprise from 2009 when Uniminuto is recognized by the Ministry of Education as an HEI, until 2011. In just three years, it tripled its school enrollment. This process of constant growth has been observed since 2008, which would indicate that it was not only the recognition of Uniminuto as an IES, but other factors that the University had, even since 2007. See Graph 1.



Graph 1. Educational coverage of Uniminuto in Colombia

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data

The last period that we call constant expansion would comprise from 2012 to date. This period is characterized by a rapid expansion of school enrollment, generated mainly by virtual and distance education. Just in 2012, the enrollment of students enrolled in virtual education programs more than doubles that of students in face-to-face education programs. See Graph 1.

In general terms, Uniminuto's school enrollment in 2013 is divided into five programs. The One Minute Virtual and Distance program –UVD- is the one that represents the highest enrollment of the institution and comprises almost half of all school enrollment (49.49%). The programs with the Agreement with the University of Tolima represent the second highest enrollment of the institution with 30.80%. The Minuto de Dios in-person University program (UMD) constitutes 16.85% of the school population. Virtual and distance postgraduate programs are made up of 1.80% of students. Finally, continuing education programs only make up 1.0%. See table 2.

The university level has been the level that has grown exponentially during the period 2005-2013. During this period, school enrollment grew a little more than 25 times. The level of technological training has grown at a much lower rate than the university level. In this same period, its enrollment has increased

just four times. There have even been years in which school enrollment fell, as happened in 2011 or 2013. On the contrary, the rest of the training levels, such as the Professional

Technician, remain almost static, or with a drop in school enrollment for Specialization and Continuing Education. See Table 3.

Year	UVD*	DMU*	UNITOLIMA	Postgraduate Unitolima	UVD Postgraduate	continuing education	Total
2005		56	150				206
2006		55	170				225
2007		148	119	37			304
2008		361	797	32		5	1,195
2009	eleven	407	1,220	79		17	1,734
2010	47	509	1,978	95	fifteen	82	2,726
2011	743	641	2054		58	97	3,593
2012	1688	767	1781		62	6	4,304
2013	2326	792	1447		85	49	4,699

*Virtual and Remote Uniminute**University Minute of God

Table 2.- Uniminuto School Enrollment in Colombia by type of educational program

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data

Level	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Professional Technician	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	eleven	6
Technology	67	82	74	320	325	443	437	386	292
university	139	143	193	838	1313	2147	3035	3855	4267
Specialization	0	0	37	32	158	130	58	62	85
continuing education	0	0	0	5	17	82	97	6	49
Total	206	225	304	1,195	1,813	2,805	3,632	4,320	4,699

Table 3. Uniminuto School Enrollment in Colombia by level of education

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data

The heterogeneity presented in the different levels of training may be due to the fact that, during the choice of a career, even while studying a career, students may experience fear of change. On the contrary, others may experience that the career they are going to choose corresponds to their identity and self-esteem. The future that they visualize has a relationship with their "I" and the present. However, they must develop and implement an action plan to make the career they are going to choose a reality (Bratsch, 2001).

UNIMINUTO VIRTUAL AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

The relationship between certain occupations and gender stereotypes is observed from the careers that women are studying. Men and women choose a "typically" female or male career due to psychosocial gender differences. Many of them choose careers in care or related to teaching. On the contrary, men are more oriented towards more instrumental careers (López, 1994). This could explain the fact that two educational programs constitute more than half of Uniminuto's school enrollment: the Bachelor of

Occupational Health Administration (30.4%) and Psychology (22.4%). Other programs that have a large school population are also: Public Accounting (18%) and Pedagogy (13.9%). The school enrollment of these four academic programs constitutes 84.7%. See table 4.

Empirical studies have shown that there is little relationship regarding job opportunities with difficult careers. The careers of Psychology, Geography and History or Philosophy are considered easy careers, but the job market they have when the graduate looks for a job is bad. The opposite case may occur. Philology or Law is easy and has a very good job opportunity. It can also be the case of difficult careers such as Medicine, Physics and Chemistry, but with good job opportunities. Finally, there may be difficult careers such as Biology and, with a bad job opportunity (Latesa, 1989).

The socioeconomic level is divided into five strata. Stratum one would include students who do not have the minimum conditions, or do not have access at all to the following primary goods: food, housing, education, health, and decent income. On the contrary, stratum five includes that population of students with the use and consumption of these primary goods. In Uniminuto, 66.0% of the students are in stratum 1 and 2. See table 5.

	Frequency	Percentage
Health Administration	733	30.4
Psychology	541	22.4
Public accounting	434	18.0
Pedagogy	335	13.9
Financial administration	170	7.1
Business Administration	100	4.1
Project Management Specialist	75	3.1
Esp. Educational Management	10	.4
Agro crops production technology	6	.2
Production technology cattle, meat and milk	4	.2

Professional soil and water management technician	2	.1
Livestock production technology	1	.0
Total	2411	100.0

Table 4. Uniminuto School Enrollment by virtual and distance education educational program 2013

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data.

	Frequency	Percentage
1	547	22.7
2	1041	43.2
3	765	31.7
4	49	2.0
5	9	.4
Total	2411	100.0

Table 5. Socioeconomic level of Uniminuto in virtual and distance education programs 2013

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data

Studies have shown that career choice in low socioeconomic levels is due to a personal and gender predisposition. Students choose the career according to the information they have from the labor field and, from the family support they can receive, especially families that have higher education, have a more active role in the student's decision. Similarly, students take into account the vocational guidance they receive from their schools or from their teachers and friends. Among the obstacles they take into account are: studying non-traditional careers, with less social or economic prestige due to a lack of information about these careers. In the same way, they consider the score requested to be able to enter the Institution (Carrasco, Zúñiga and, Espinoza, 2014).

The majority of the population that studies a distance program is made up of women. In Uniminuto they come to represent a little more than three quarters of the entire

school population (78%). Gender stereotypes promote discrimination between professions, limit job opportunities. The ideas that students have about certain professions such as Psychology and Engineering do not conform to the real demands of the labor market but rather to stereotypes about professional gender roles. This fact determines the choice of career. Occupations socially assigned to women have less prestige and recognition (Barberá, Candela and Ramos, 2008).

However, the feminization of school enrollment would not only respond to the distance program, but many of the distance programs offered by Uniminuto respond historically and structurally to the choice that women have for said careers (psychology, pedagogy, administration in occupational health, etc.). It is important to mention that it is women in Colombia who demand this type of educational programs and the fact that men do not have the same demand in predominantly masculine programs stands out.

The marital status of students in virtual and distance education programs is predominantly single (76.9%). Likewise, there is almost a quarter of the students who live with their partner (married -11.3%- and in free union -11.0%-). The rest of the students are divorced, widowed or have another situation. See table 6.

The most frequent ages are represented by the ages of 19, 20 and 21 years. Only these three ages represent 694 students, which constitute 28.8 of the entire school population. The sum of the population aged 18 and 22 represents 1,065 students, which would mean 44.2% of the school population. The rest of the students comprise ages ranging from 16 years to 59 years. See table 7.

	Frequency	Percentage
Single	1854	76.9
Married	272	11.3
Free Union	266	11.0
Divorced, widowed and others	19	.7
	2411	100.0

Table 6. Marital status of Uniminuto students in virtual and distance education programs 2013

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data

Age ranges	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	732	30.4
21-25	851	35.3
26-30	450	18.7
31-35	224	9.3
36-40	84	3.5
41-45	47	1.9
46-50	14	.6
51-55	8	.3
56-60	1	.0
Total	2411	100.0

Table 7. Ages of Uniminuto students in virtual and distance education programs 2013

Source: Own elaboration based on Uniminuto data

CONCLUSIONS

The feminization of school enrollment is not only found in face-to-face university programs but also at a virtual level. The case of the Minuto de Dios University Corporation, UNIMINUTO shows that close to the enrolled women are studying the careers of Health Administration, Psychology, Pedagogy and Public Accounting. Although the institution does not have data on the labor market, it is very likely that the same phenomenon will also occur in other regions of the continent. In other words, university enrollment has been feminized, but at the time of practicing the profession, men continue to occupy most of

the positions in the labor market.

Gender stereotypes continue to occupy a central role in the interests, objectives, plans, and intentions of women. The choice of careers corresponds to the expectations of women from the low socioeconomic levels to which they belong. They believe that these careers will provide them with satisfaction and fulfillment as people, because that is how successful women have been conceived.

Although the data presented does not show

the schooling of the parents, it can be inferred that the choice of the career, in addition to the gender stereotype, was influenced by the family and friends of the students who reproduce the gender stereotypes.

It is important to carry out qualitative studies to know in detail the joint action carried out by the students, as well as the projects they seek to achieve with the choice of their career.

REFERENCES

- Alvarado, M. (2013). Statistical Diagnosis and Trends in Higher Distance Education in Colombia. In *Distance and Virtual Higher Education in Colombia: New Realities*. Colombia: ACESAD / VIRTUAL EDUCA. Available at http://virtualeduca.org/documentos/observatorio/la_educacion_superior_a_distancia_y_virtual_en_colombia_nuevas_realidades.pdf
- Barberá, E., Candela, C. and Ramos, A. (2008) Career choice, professional development and gender stereotypes. *Journal of Social Psychology: International Journal of Social Psychology*. 23(2). 275-285.
- bratsch. KS (2001). *Career Choices. A Career Exploration Guide*. USA. American Book Business Press.
- Carrasco, E., Zúñiga, C. and Espinoza, J. (2014). Career Choice in Low Socioeconomic Level Students from Highly Selective Chilean Universities. *Quality in education*. 40.
- Brown, D. (2002). *Introduction to Theories of Career Development and Choice: Origins, Evolution, and Current Efforts*. At Duane Brown and Associates. Career Choice and Development. fourth edition. USA. Jossey-Bass.
- Carrasco, E., Zúñiga, C. and Espinoza, J. (2014). Career Choice in Low Socioeconomic Level Students from Highly Selective Chilean Universities. *Quality in education*. 40.
- Latesa, M. (1989). Demand for higher education: Evaluations and conditioning of students in the choice of career. *Spanish Journal of Sociological Research*. 46.101-139.
- López-Sáez, M. (1994) Cultural and individual processes involved in gender stereotyping. An empirical approach to career choice, *Social Psychology Journal*. 9(2). 213-230.
- Muñoz-Carril, P. and González-Sanmamed, M. (2014). Possibilities of web 2.0 in educational guidance: an exploratory study on its presence on the websites of high school guidance departments. *REOP*. 25(3). 36-55.
- Rama, C. (2013). The context of virtualization reform in Latin America. In *Distance and Virtual Higher Education in Colombia: New Realities*. Colombia: ACESAD / VIRTUAL EDUCA. Available at http://virtualeduca.org/documentos/observatorio/la_educacion_superior_a_distancia_y_virtual_en_colombia_nuevas_realidades.pdf
- Bolívar Technological University (2013). *Distance Education Model*, Colombia: UTB. Available at <https://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&resrc=source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiFt6ec0PXKAhVEWCYKHQf8BtwQFggkMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.unitecnologica.edu.co%2Feducacionadistancia%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FInvestigaci%25C3%25B3n-%2520Documento%2520Creaci%25C3%25B3n%2520CEaD%2520UTB.pdf&usq=AFQjCNE1lLuwir7924vOrU8met2MyBfCswww.uniminuto.edu/>

Young, R., Valach, L., & Collin, A. (2002). A contextualist explanation of career. At Duane Brown and Associates. Career Choice and Development. fourth edition. USA. Jossey-Bass.