

ARTICLE ANALYSIS: TINTO RETENTION

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Higher Education Retention

Tinto's purpose was to make a theoretical model to express why college students drop out. This would help not only share why students drop out, but predict which students would drop out and how to retain students. Previous studies shared why adults drop out of society. These studies did not show the social interaction piece that helped complete the research more (Tinto, 1975).

Using Durkheim's, (1961) theory of suicide in higher education, William Spady (1970) related higher education suicide data to higher education to dropout data. Tinto (1975) used this drop out data to predict his theory of retention verses drop out rates for his model. Spady (1970) defined voluntary withdrawal as suicide and dismissal or forced early withdrawal due to grades not being achieved or poor choices of social behaviors. Tinto had decided to use the predictive instead of the descriptive model due to the model he was using that was already predicting. Personal accountability and achievements, decided the level of participation according to Spady (1970).

The process Tinto (1975) applied his theory to higher education was by comparing the social interaction of pupils within their communities. If the student is in a college and the college is their social community, it was a fitting match just as Spady (1970) predicted suicide was a match using Durkheim's studies (1961). The prediction was that if a student did not feel they fit in or were not doing well, they would find something else to do.

Spady's 1970 theory stopped short of explaining college completion rates using Durkheim's (1961) theory of suicide rates compared to drop out rates did not explain how students' behavior and social interaction related. Tinton's (1975) model added characteristics in the study documenting measures of social interactions at the institutions, difficult to measure

characteristics of the student prior to attending college, what they expected from them, what their families expected of them academically and their own motivational expectations.

The two primary college systems that Tinto used as his primary identifiers to measure educational expectations focus for his theory included the level of education the student placed themselves, 2 or 4 year degrees or commitment that he believed would predict the student's predetermination to complete and if the student had an end goal of a specific attainment. If the student was not capable to attend due to financial hardships, the student would leave early. If the family had strong expectations, they might stay in longer. Were they happy with the type of institution or the program had strong indicators of completion.

The central argument of Tinto's theoretical model of dropout depended on the student's individual characteristics, family background. Past educational experiences, goal commitment, but mostly the interactions with institution (Tinto, 1975).

Tinto, (1975) believed the previous drop outs from one student did not determine if the student would drop out, if the challenges were not taken care of and still lingered, the previous reasons for dropping out would determine if the student would drop out again. The interactions with the same student and same college's atmosphere and connection or lack of connection could determine if the student would continue with dropping out. This meant that if the student was not happy with the social structure, they would not stay in.

The indicators of academic integration are the match of what classes the student (or their household) wants to take and how well the student performs in those classes. The indicators of social integration were measured by how well the student fit into the surroundings and social communities much more than the student's personalities alone. The three institutional factors or

characteristics associated with college persistence were the institutional type matching with the student's expectations, the quality of the college and the size of the institution (Tinto, 1975). Of all the individual characteristics Tinto identified in his 1975 theory that relate to dropout challenges, I feel I am at the most risk of dropping out because of social interaction. I do wish there were more of an option for religion classes or at least church services for distance learning classes. It was part of an expectation. It's not an option. Fortunately, I do have my own church, so it's ok. I also wish there were the unpopular group projects. As an introvert however, I feel comfortable being alone most the time. It is working good. The instructors all communicate well and the discussion boards help. I do not yet feel a group present amongst my peers. I could begin something or join a community, but I am concentrating on my studies.

The characteristic that will influence my continuation and see me through the entirety is my commitment to my own goals of learning to research and integrate a biblical worldview into my parenting programs. I am resilient and want to find gaps that will benefit the adults that I instruct. I am determined to obtain results to answers that I have. I just need to learn more about how to find the answers, the gaps. And of course, as silly as it sounds, I like the name Dr. Sonja Loraine Howell. My concluding thought is that I want to set a criterion for my children to become great at whatever they want. I want this and I want to be great. Monkey-See, Monkey-Do! Family expectations help, perseverance. (Tinto, 1975)

References

Durkheim, E. (1961) *Suicide* (J. Spaulding & G. Simpson, trans). *Glencoe*: The Free Press.

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