

## An analysis on the perceptions and lived experiences from the phenomenon of educational persistence in undergraduate students subject to special cases commission (case study: University of Kashan)

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to explore the perceptions and life experiences of the continuing undergraduate course students who referred to Special Cases Commission at the University of Kashan in order to identify effective factors in increasing the students' academic years through studying, categorizing and analyzing the collected experiences. It is an applied study which was conducted via qualitative method and the findings of the study were collected through interview and phenomenology method. The statistical population of the study included all undergraduate students in academic year 2021-22 who were studying at the University of Kashan and purposive or judgmental method was applied to do the sampling process, the interview process continued up to reaching theoretical saturation. reliability of interview instruments, was investigated according to four criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and the data analysis of the study was conducted via Strauss and Corbin method. The findings showed that the number of extracted open codes as a result of interview with the students was 1161 which were respectively categorized in three main cores of individual-familial factors with the frequency of 637 (48.24%), educational-organizational factors with the frequency of 410 (39.20%) and social-economic factors with the frequency of 114 (12.56%). Regarding the most frequent mentioned categories related to each core, it can be said that the axial code "psychological challenges" has the highest frequency in individual-familial factors with the frequency of 85 (13.34%), axial code of "weakness in curriculum" has the highest frequency in educational-organizational factors with the frequency of 68 (16.59%) and the axial code "financial effectiveness" has the highest frequency in social-economic factors with the frequency of 45 (39.47%). Finally, the findings of the study showed that the academic persistence is an important multi-dimensional dilemma that many different facts should be paid attention to in order to prevent it. Therefore, meta-departmental cooperation is needed to solve the problems and remove the impediments. Hence, interaction and cooperation of different departments such as university, professors, family and society is of high necessity in order to apply preventive and supportive policies.

**Keywords:** Extending of academic years, Commission of special cases at the University, Students' persistence, undergraduate course



## Introduction

One of the significant features of a pioneer and qualified university is that the students graduate from it at its due time and according to the plan of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, which at higher level has the duty of giving necessary specialty to the student and directing the manpower, its graduated student should enter the competitive cycle of work and occupation on time. On the one hand, not graduating at due time and lengthening the education time especially in under-graduation period are raised among important educational challenges. On the other hand, the management of educational affairs, as a subset of educational deputy of the university and one of the most important university managements, has the responsibility of supervising good rule enforcement, educational procedures, steady investigation of educational service processes and optimal use of all the factors offering educational services. Considering the fact that one of the important duties of educational affairs management at the University of Kashan which is consistent to the strategic plan and communicated by the university is "decreasing the students' average of persistence", doing research in this regard and analyzing the reasons of their persistence in under-graduation period is of necessity.

## Methodology

It is an applied study which was conducted via qualitative method and the findings of the study was collected through semi-structured interview. The statistical population of the study included all undergraduate students in academic year 2021-22 who were studying at the University of Kashan. Purposive (judgmental) method was applied to do the sampling on the students, who were Subject to the commission of special cases at the University of Kashan, to receive continuing undergraduate course permit and the interview process continued up to reaching theoretical saturation (23 individuals) such that the saturation was achieved after interviewing with that twenty-third person and the interview process led to nothing except repetition in the achieved data, and two other students were interviewed to make sure about the saturation. Validity of interview instruments was confirmed after numerous investigations by the specialists and its reliability, too, was investigated according to four criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in a way that in order to guarantee the credibility, the interviews were sent to the interviewees after preparing and implementation by the researchers to confirm the findings appropriateness. To guarantee the transferability, male and female students in various majors from first as well as second course educational periods were used considering being endemic or nonendemic. In order to guarantee dependability, the research was conducted under the experts' supervision in a way that the codes were given to the specialists and the final codes were achieved after necessary modifications and in order to guarantee confirmability, the researchers tried to prevent the intervention of any presupposition or bias and finally the data analysis of the study was conducted via Strauss and Corbin method.

## Findings

The findings showed that the number of extracted open codes as a result of interview with the students was 1161 and the number of axial codes was 35 which were respectively categorized in three main cores of individual-familial factors with the frequency of 637 (48.24%), educational-organizational factors with the frequency of 410 (39.20%) and social-economic factors with the frequency of 114 (12.56%). Frequency percentage related to persistence factors and increasing educational years is given in table (1).

**Table 1**

*Frequency percentage related to persistence factors and increasing educational years*

Selected code	Number of axial codes	Number of open codes	frequency	percentage
individual-familial factors	18	96	637	48.24
educational-organizational factors	13	78	410	39.20
social-economic factors	4	25	114	12.56
sum	35	199	1161	100.00

Regarding the most frequent mentioned categories related to each core, it can be said that the axial code “psychological challenges” has the highest frequency in individual-familial factors with the frequency of 85 (13.34%), axial code of “weakness in curriculum” has the highest frequency in educational-organizational factors with the frequency of 68 (16.59%) and the axial code “financial effectiveness” has the highest frequency in social-economic factors with the frequency of 45 (39.47%). Moreover, regarding the least frequent axial code among three main cores, “weakness in studying skills” can be pointed out with the frequency of 4 (0/63%).

## Conclusion

According to the analysis, while studying, the students face different individual and familial issues and it influences their academic performance both directly and indirectly and it can lead to various academic damages. Therefore, it is necessary for the students to be screened and identified regarding individual and familial condition effective on educational status and minimize negative effects through doing preventive measures. In addition, the analysis of the achieved percentages reveals that educational problems and the dominant organizational condition on the university, too, has been effective on the students' academic status. Regarding the selected code, it can be said that one of the important steps in increasing education quality and also realizing higher education purposes is to make the teaching process and class management ideal, and increase the professors' scientific and academic level which are of very high importance in a way that in most educational systems today, it is attempted to change the uneventful atmosphere of the class and make more interaction between professors and students. Therefore, the professors should engage the students in class and the content of different lessons through making positive competitive atmosphere and new teaching methods and apply the students' assistance and cooperation to have more effective education and learning.

Finally, the findings of the study showed that the academic persistence is an important multi-dimensional dilemma that many different facts should be paid attention to in order to prevent it. Therefore, meta-departmental cooperation is needed to solve the problems and remove the impediments. Hence, interaction and cooperation of different departments such as university, professors, family and society is of high necessity in order to apply preventive and supportive policies.

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