









# Determinants of study motivation of undergraduate university students in Chile

Óscar Espinoza <sup>a</sup>, Catalina Miranda <sup>b</sup>, Luis Sandoval <sup>c</sup>, Bruno Corradi <sup>a</sup>,  
Luis González <sup>d</sup> and Noel McGinn <sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Facultad de Educación y Humanidades, Universidad de Tarapacá, Arica, Chile; <sup>b</sup>Departamento de Sociología, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile; <sup>c</sup>Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana, Santiago, Chile; <sup>d</sup>Programa Interdisciplinario de Investigaciones en Educación, Santiago, Chile; <sup>e</sup>Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, USA

## ABSTRACT

Students' academic motivation is a critical factor in understanding the choices that they make over the course of their educational careers. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that determine students' motivation to complete their undergraduate studies. Working with a sample of 2032 undergraduate students from 11 universities in Chile, an ordinal logistic regression model was constructed to estimate the effect of students' sociodemographic characteristics, their academic performance and the characteristics associated with the university and the degree program they were pursuing, on their academic motivation. The results show that students' motivation to complete their studies is determined primarily by their socioeconomic status, the allocation of financial aid, their relationship with professors, and their level of integration into the social and academic environment of the university. Students with low socioeconomic status have higher levels of academic motivation compared to those with higher level of status. However, there is no difference in the level of motivation among students in different fields of study. The paper concludes that the significance of socioeconomic status as a factor influencing motivation may be due to the promise of social mobility associated with obtaining a university degree, which provides access to better jobs and salaries. Additionally, a high degree of integration in the university and good relationships with professors can increase motivation by alleviating anxiety during the transition from university to the labor market.

## ARTICLE HISTORY



Received 18 January 2024  
Accepted 28 May 2024

## KEYWORDS

Academic integration;  
academic motivation; social  
integration; social mobility;  
socioeconomic status

## Introduction

The journey along the road to university graduation includes a series of obstacles. During their time at university, and for various reasons, some students are likely to perform poorly academically (Wildschut, Megbowon, and Miselo 2020), fall behind in their degree (Yue and Fu 2017), temporarily or permanently drop out of their studies (Adroque and de Fanelli 2018; Krötz and Deutscher 2022), and experience a deterioration in their mental health (De Barros and Peixoto 2023). One of the factors that can make a difference during the university experience is the students' level of academic motivation (Gutiérrez and Tomás 2018; Sánchez-Bolívar, Escalante-González, and Vázquez 2022).

**CONTACT** Óscar Espinoza  oespinoza@academia.cl  Facultad de Educación y Humanidades, Universidad de Tarapacá, 18 de Septiembre 2222, Arica, Chile