

FINAL PROJECT

ACADEMIC TOURISM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA AND ITS INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

(El Turismo Académico: Un Análisis del Programa Erasmus en la Universidad de La Laguna y su
Interrelación con las Universidades Alemanas)

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ABSTRACT

In the last decade, the processes of internationalisation and student mobility at European level in the context of university education have undergone considerable growth. This research study aims to analyse the degree of consolidation of the Erasmus Programme between the University of La Laguna and the German universities during the 2006/07 and 2016/17 academic years. With that purpose, the evolution in the number of students who have participated in this Programme, the number of Erasmus agreements and the number of German partner universities will be thoroughly examined, among other aspects. The quantitative data used in this study were extracted from the academic reports published by the University of La Laguna, information that was complemented with a survey to students of the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of that university. In conclusion, the study manages to reflect the increase and consolidation of the Erasmus Programme among these universities during this period.

Key-words: Academic Tourism, Erasmus Programme, German Universities, University of La Laguna.

RESUMEN

En la última década, los procesos de internacionalización y de movilidad estudiantil a escala europea en el contexto de la educación universitaria han sufrido un considerable crecimiento. Este trabajo de investigación pretende analizar el grado de consolidación del Programa Erasmus entre la Universidad de La Laguna y las universidades alemanas en el periodo comprendido entre los cursos académicos 2006/07 y 2016/17. Con ese propósito, se examinará, entre otros aspectos, la evolución del número de alumnos participantes en dicho Programa, el número de convenios Erasmus y el número de universidades alemanas colaboradoras. Los datos cuantitativos manejados en este estudio fueron extraídos de las memorias académicas publicadas por la Universidad de La Laguna, información que se complementó con una encuesta realizada al alumnado de la Facultad de Economía, Empresa y Turismo de dicha universidad. Como conclusión, este estudio refleja el incremento y la consolidación del Programa Erasmus entre las universidades durante este periodo.

Palabras clave: Turismo Académico, Programa Erasmus, Universidades Alemanas, Universidad de La Laguna.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of temporary stays by university students in foreign countries, thus consolidating the concept of "academic tourism". These stays have been promoted by different international student mobility programmes which reflect the principles of the European Union's education and training policy, being the Erasmus Programme the best known and most consolidated on this scale.

This research study aims to analyse the evolution of the Erasmus Programme over the last decade, i.e. between the 2006/07 and 2016/17 academic years, between the University of La Laguna and the participating German universities. This project will focus exclusively on student mobility through the analysis of the main variables that define it, including the number of incoming and outgoing students, and the number of Erasmus agreements between these universities, among others. Quantitative data were extracted from two different sources of information for this study. The first part of the research was based on the information obtained through the academic reports of the last ten years published on the website of the University of La Laguna. The second part of the study was carried out using data from an anonymous survey that was designed for this purpose. This survey presented two participation requirements: firstly, to be a student of some of the degrees offered in the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism and, secondly, not having participated in the Erasmus Programme. With these premises, the aim was to gather the opinion of the students of this Faculty on the current Erasmus+ Programme.

This survey was carried out between April 3-5, 2018 at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna in which a random sample of 172 students participated. This sample was made up of students of both genders (109 women and 63 men) between the ages of 18 and 42. The survey included first, second, third and fourth year students from the following degrees: Tourism (41 students), Accounting and Finance (47 students), Business Administration and Management (32 students) and Economics (52 students).

I would like to point out that part of the objectives of this research have been conditioned by the public information provided by the University of La Laguna, since it has been impossible to freely access all the desired information for administrative and data protection reasons and I had to adjust and reformulate my initial objectives to the data published on the official website of the University, which is why I decided to complete this study with the survey described above.

Finally, since this study focused exclusively on student mobility between the University of La Laguna and German universities, it would be interesting to continue with this line of research by extending the field of study to the rest of the European universities that have Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research can be summarized as follows:

1. Highlight the most relevant aspects of the regulation through which the Erasmus+ Programme was created.
2. Study the evolution of the number of German universities with Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna, between 2006/07 and 2016/17.
3. Study the evolution of the number of Erasmus agreements between the University of La Laguna and the German universities, between 2006/07 and 2016/17.
4. Quantify the number of incoming German students to the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna who participated in the Erasmus Programme; and the number of outgoing students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna who participated in the Erasmus Programme in Germany, between 2013/14 and 2016/17.
5. Determine the reasons why students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism would or would not participate in the Erasmus+ Programme.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF TOURISM

The concept of tourism is an ever-changing, flexible one, subject to different and varied interpretations over the years, as it can be analysed from a range of perspectives and disciplines. Tourism began to be studied academically in universities between the First and Second World War (1919-1938). During this stage, it is worth noting the work of European economists like Glucksmann, Schwinck and Bormann, both belonging to the well-known Berlin school (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998). At the University of Bern, during the Second World War, specifically in 1942, professors Walter Hunziker and Kurt Krapf defined tourism as: "The totality of the relationship and phenomenon arising from the travel and stay of strangers, provided that the stay does not imply the establishment of a permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerative activities" (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998, p.43). This first approach to the concept is considered too broad and indeterminate. However, it will be the starting point for further definitions (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998).

Four decades later, in 1981, Burkart and Medlik conceptualized tourism as follows: "Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and their activities during their stay at these destinations" (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998, p.43). Like the previous one, this definition is somewhat incomplete since it does not quantify the duration of a short-term movement. Additionally, it does not include travelling for business reasons and holidays in second homes as a kind of tourism (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998).

In 1982, Mathieson and Wall made a great contribution to the definition of tourism by limiting the temporality of tourism activity, and by emphasizing the satisfaction of tourists' needs. Thus, they affirmed that tourism is: "The temporary movement of people, for periods shorter than one year, to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs"¹ (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998, p.44).

In 1994, the main intergovernmental organization dedicated to tourism (UNWTO), stated that: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998, p.44). This definition summarizes the most relevant characteristics of the concept of tourism, highlighting that the activity takes place before and during the stay, which is performed outside the tourists' usual environment, the time period is limited to one year and the main reasons for the trip are specified (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998). The following year, in 1995, UNWTO clarified the term "usual environment", used in the aforementioned definition. It states the following: "The usual environment of an individual, a key concept in tourism, is defined as the geographical area (though not necessarily a contiguous

¹ My own translation.

one) within which an individual conducts his/her regular life routines" (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998, p.44).

The above-mentioned definitions share a series of elements, despite the particularities of each of them. They all refer to tourism in the following terms: the trip and the activities developed during the stay, the movement of people outside their place of residence, the temporary stay in the destination, and the set of products and services created to meet the tourists' needs (Organización Mundial del Turismo, 1998).

3.2. CLASSIFICATIONS OF TOURIST ACTIVITY

Once the concept of tourism has been broadly defined, it is important to highlight the different classifications the tourist activity is subject to: the main purpose of the trip, types of tourism products, duration of travel, origin and destination, means of transport and types of accommodation (United Nations, 2010). In this research study I will focus on the first element, that is, purpose of the trip. "The main purpose of a trip is defined as the purpose in the absence of which the trip would not have taken place" (United Nations, 2010, p.24). The classification of tourism according to the main purpose of the trip will be the basis for developing this project. This classification is the following:

1. "Personal
 - 1.1. Holidays, leisure and recreation
 - 1.2. Visiting friends and relatives
 - 1.3. Education and training
 - 1.4. Health and medical care
 - 1.5. Religion/ pilgrimages
 - 1.6. Shopping
 - 1.7. Transit
 - 1.8. Other
2. Business and professional"² (United Nations, 2010, p.24).

On the one hand, the "personal" section refers to that tourist activity that is not included in "business and professional". On the other hand, the section "business and professional" "includes the activities of the self-employed and employees as long as they do not correspond to an implicit or explicit employer-employee relationship with a resident producer in the country or place visited, those of investors, businessmen, etc." (United Nations, 2010, p.25). These activities can be: "attending meetings, conferences or congresses, trade fairs and exhibitions; giving lectures, concerts, shows and plays; promoting, purchasing, selling or buying goods or services on behalf of non-resident producers (of the country or place visited) [...]" (United Nations, 2010, p.25).

According to the previous classification, the subsection "education and training" will be the central axis that will support this project. According to the United Nations in 2010, "education

² I am following the epigraph format of the original source.

and training" refers to various forms of short-term training, including the formal and informal study programmes, and language, professionals or other courses.

3.3. EDUCATION AND TOURISM

The wide interrelation that exists between the fields of education and tourism activity has given rise to the term "educational tourism". In this form of tourism, the main reason for the tourist trip is educational. As reported by Genis in 2007, and cited by the author Pawlowska in 2011, educational tourism is tourism "that combines the tourist experience with education"³ (p.16). This definition, although brief in its formulation, largely encapsulate the meaning of the term, since it includes scientific tourism, cultural tourism, language tourism, etc. (Soto-Leiva, 2012). However, none of the aforementioned typologies specifically define student mobility. Due to the significant increase of the student mobility in recent decades, a new term that includes this movement has emerged: "academic tourism" (Pawlowska, Martínez-Roget & Pereira-López, 2011).

3.4. ACADEMIC TOURISM

3.4.1. Definition of the Concept of Academic Tourism

Academic tourism includes stays of less than one year taking place in institutions of higher education outside the usual environment of the student. The main reason for the trip is to complete university studies and/ or attend courses to improve language skills. This definition includes the educational component, the type of institution, the type of visitor, the duration of the stay and the main motivation of the trip. Depending on the destination where the training takes place, there exists a difference between national academic tourism and international academic tourism (Pawlowska, Martínez-Roget & Pereira-López, 2011). For example, in Spain there are two major and consolidated student mobility programmes: the SICUE Programme at national level and the Erasmus Programme at international level.

It should be noted that the SICUE Programme encourages the mobility of Spanish students who wish to undertake a period of university studies at any other university in Spain, as a complement to their studies at their home university and with equal guarantees of academic recognition. With regard to the Erasmus Programme, it will be analysed in-depth later.

3.4.2. Profile of International Academic Tourists

In 2012, Rodríguez, Martínez-Roget & Pawlowska studied the profile of the international academic tourists and compiled a series of essential characteristics. Among these characteristics, it is worth noting the main objective of the stay: to complete the studies in institutions of higher education. In addition, the duration of the stay in the destination of an academic tourist is usually greater when compared with that of the conventional tourist. Regarding the type of accommodation, this segment is usually characterized by staying in shared apartments, family homes, student residences, and not in a common tourist accommodation. This last characteristic shows that the consumption patterns of academic tourists are more similar to

³ My own translation.

that of the local population than that of conventional tourists. (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015).

With regard to the motivations that favour international student mobility, Arteaga-Acosta in 2004 and Krzaklewska & Krupnik in 2005, highlighted the interest in discovering new cultures. Other authors such as Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe in 2008, refined and expanded this idea emphasizing the students' enjoyment of all those attractive elements of the destination, both natural and cultural (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015).

It can be stated that international students make a very relevant economic contribution to their place of destination, as a result of the costs generated by their stay – either to cover the needs of food, lodging, travel or to enjoy leisure activities, according to Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe in 2008. The destination also benefits from an increase in tourist arrivals because academic tourists often receive visits from family or friends during their stay (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015).

3.4.3. Key Factors Influencing the Choice of Host Country and University

The choice of destination and university of study by international students is conditioned by a series of key factors. As for the pull factors that influence the choice of a tourist destination by international academic tourists, several resources stand out. As established by Crouch & Ritchie in 1999, Melián-González & García-Falcón in 2003, and Crouch in 2011, infrastructure is the main element conditioning this decision. Other authors, such as Enright & Newton in 2004, Fuchs & Weiermair in 2004, and del Bosque & Martín in 2008, considered that the natural resources of the destination are what academic tourists take into account the most. Moreover, Kozak & Rimmington in 2000, Yoon & Uysal in 2005, and Alegre & Garau in 2011, stated that prices are what ultimately leads them to choose one destination or another (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015).

In addition to the above information, a fundamental factor when choosing a study destination is the local language, according to Pietro & Page in 2008 and Meri in 2011 (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015). Language plays a significant role in choosing a destination. For example, a student who wants to learn or improve a certain language will choose a country where that language is spoken.

With respect to the main factors that lead international students to choose a specific university over others, there is a number of crucial factors. Franklin & Shemwell in 1995, highlighted infrastructure as the fundamental element in this decision. Bailey, Bauman & Lata in 1998, focused on the importance of human capital for students, both professors and administrative staff. Nevertheless, Helgesen & Nettet in 2007, established that the image of the university was the determining factor for choosing a university. In addition, if the university offers possibilities beyond the academic field, it is an interesting aspect that is taken into account when choosing a university or another according to Etkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt & Terra in 2000 (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015). The pull factors that influence the choice of a particular destination or university by the academic tourist are increasingly broad and varied. A

wide range of opportunities, combined with the financial and administrative support provided by the European Union, has led to an increase in international student mobility.

3.4.4. Background of International Student Mobility

In 2010, Naidoo stated that “The growth in the number of international students shows a shift in overseas study from an elitist experience to one involving mass movements” (García-Rodríguez y Mendoza-Jiménez, 2015, p.177). What we currently know as international student mobility reflects the essence of the Grand Tour's aristocratic tradition. In the 18th century, young English aristocrats completed their education with a trip through Europe. Between the 18th and 19th centuries, Great Britain experienced a period of strong growth, driven by the Industrial Revolution. In this way, a large number of families of lower social class had access to higher education and had the financial means to complement it abroad (Cisa, 2017).

Nowadays, these trips for educational purposes are highly demanded by students, due largely to the creation of international student mobility programmes that regulate and facilitate these movements. Of course, the European Union has played a major role in shaping and securing academic tourism. International education programmes reached their peak from 2007 onwards, after the establishment of the European Union and especially after its subsequent extensions in 2004 and 2007. The process of convergence of European higher education systems (1999-2010) had as one of its main objectives to promote and boost student mobility. As a consequence of this process, the internalization of university education has gradually increased (Pawlowska & Martínez-Roget, 2009).

3.4.5. The Erasmus Programme

Within the international education programmes, the Erasmus Programme is extremely well-known, and it attracts a substantial number of people. It should be noted that in the past thirty years, nine million people have participated in this Programme (Comisión Europea, 2017). Specifically, in 2016, 725,000 people travelled abroad to study, train, teach, work or volunteer through the support of the funds granted by the Erasmus+ Programme (European Commission, 2017). The Erasmus Programme was officially created on June 15, 1987 at the initiative of the student association AEGEE Europe, founded by Franck Biancheri. Its main aim was to promote the mobility of European university students and professors across the nations of Europe. "Erasmus" is the acronym for the official name "European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students". The acronym is related to the well-known Dutch philosopher and humanist Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1466-1536). “In the first year of its existence the Programme involved 11 countries, with 3,244 students travelling abroad for study stays” (Fricova, 2016, para. 3). Currently, the twenty-seven-member states of the European Union, as well as other non-member countries such as Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey, are participating in this Programme (Pawlowska & Martínez-Roget, 2009).

The Erasmus Programme has experienced a whole range of changes since its creation. In 1995, the Erasmus Programme became part of the Socrates Programme, which was focused on higher education. In this way, teacher mobility activities and international cooperation activities between universities were added to the student mobility activities (Fricova, 2016). The Socrates-

Erasmus Programme finished in 2006, as it was replaced by the EU's 'Lifelong Learning Programme' in 2007, which was in force six years (Fricova, 2016). In 2014, the well-known Erasmus+ Programme (which will run until 2020), was created boosted by the European Commission for Education, Training, Youth and Sport (Comisión Europea, 2017), replacing the above-mentioned Programme and integrating it with two other programmes that had emerged in parallel: Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus (Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2013).

The current Erasmus+ Programme entails much more than just mobility. "Erasmus+ currently offers a wide range of opportunities in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult education, youth and sport for students, educators and youth workers"⁴ (Comisión Europea, 2017, p.1). In addition, it has closer relations with the labour market than previous programmes; students have the possibility of doing internships in foreign companies, thus preparing them for their future employment (Comisión Europea, 2017). One of the highlights of the Erasmus+ Programme is its special emphasis on "promoting social integration, strengthening intercultural understanding and developing a sense of belonging to a community"⁵ (Comisión Europea, 2017, p.2). In this sense, various surveys confirm that 92% of the students who have participated in the Erasmus Programme consider that this experience allowed them to be more open-minded. Moreover, 87% of them state that they have become more tolerant and cooperative after having completed their studies abroad (La Información, 2017).

In short, it must be emphasized that the stay abroad of an academic tourist is not only focused on learning the local language and acquiring new knowledge. Above all, one of the most relevant aspects of this experience is that it promotes the development of a series of intercultural skills and abilities that allow the person to know and deal with cultural differences. This will greatly favour his or her integration into the community and the strengthening of values such as respect and tolerance. As the great Greek philosopher Aristotle once stated, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all".

⁴ My own translation.

⁵ My own translation.

4. CORPUS

4.1. REGULATION (EU) NO 1288/2013 ESTABLISHING THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

In the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 29 June 2011 entitled 'A budget for Europe 2020', the European Commission proposed the creation of a single, integrated programme for education, training, youth and sport, with a focus on the development of skills and the mobility of human capital. This programme was to comprise the following programmes:

- Decision No 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing the Youth in Action programme for the period 2007 to 2013. "The general objectives of the Programme shall be: to promote young people's active citizenship [...]; to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people [...]; to foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries; to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organizations in the youth field; to promote European cooperation in the youth field".
- Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning. "The general objective of the Lifelong Learning Programme is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations".
- Decision No 1298/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 establishing the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 action programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries.

Thus, the Erasmus+ Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport of the European Union was created on 11 December 2013 with the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and following the repeal of the previous Decisions. In the following pages, I will highlight the most relevant articles of this Regulation to acquire a solid knowledge of the main principles by which the Erasmus+ Programme is governed, as well as its most outstanding characteristics and particularities.

As laid down in Article 1 (Chapter I: General Provisions) of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, "This Regulation establishes a programme for Union action in the field of education, training, youth and sport called 'Erasmus+' (the 'Programme')". In addition, it specifies that the period of application of this programme runs from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020. Finally, this article states that the Programme covers the following fields:

- (a) “education and training at all levels, in a lifelong learning perspective [...]”. In this sense, “lifelong learning’ means all general education, vocational education and training, non-formal learning and informal learning undertaken throughout life [...]”.
- (b) “youth (Youth in Action), particularly in the context of non-formal and informal learning”. Non-formal and informal learning will be distinguished here. The first one means “learning which takes place through planned activities [...] but which is not part of the formal education and training system”. On the contrary, the second one means “learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure [...] it may be unintentional from the learner’s perspective”.
- (c) “sport, in particular grassroots sport.” This refers to “organised sport practised at local level by amateur sportspeople [...]”.

As set out in Article 3 (Chapter I) of this Regulation: “The Programme shall support only those actions and activities which present a potential European added value, and which contribute to the achievement of the general objective as referred to in Article 4”. This added value will be achieved through the transnational nature of the programme, complementarity and synergy with other programmes and the effective use of the Union’s transparency and recognition tools.

In relation to the above, Article 4 (Chapter 1) sets out the general objectives of the Programme. These are the following:

- (a) “the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, including the headline education target;
- (b) the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’) [...];
- (c) the sustainable development of partner countries in the field of higher education;
- (d) the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018);
- (e) the objective of developing the European dimension in sport [...];
- (f) the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union”.

Then Article 5 (Chapter II: Education and training) details the specific objectives that this Regulation states for the Erasmus+ Programme. These are:

- (a) “to improve the level of key competences and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society [...];
- (b) to foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions [...];
- (c) to promote the emergence and raise awareness of a European lifelong learning area designed to complement policy reforms at national level and to support the modernisation of education and training systems [...];
- (d) to enhance the international dimension of education and training [...];

- (e) to improve the teaching and learning of languages and to promote the Union's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness;
- (f) to promote excellence in teaching and research activities in European integration [...]”.

Another article to be highlighted is article 6 (Chapter II), since it determines the actions being carried out in the field of Education and training that allow the achievement of the aforementioned objectives. These actions are as follows:

- (a) “learning mobility of individuals;
- (b) cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; and
- (c) support for policy reform”.

Chapter III of the Regulation focuses on the Youth field, and specifically Article 11 sets out the specific objectives developed in this field. These objectives are the following:

- (a) “to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, as well as to promote participation in democratic life in Europe and the labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity [...]”;
- (b) to foster quality improvements in youth work [...]”;
- (c) to complement policy reforms at local, regional and national level and to support the development of knowledge and evidence-based youth policy as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning [...]”;
- (d) to enhance the international dimension of youth activities and the role of youth workers and organisations as support structures for young people [...]”.

Following this line, Chapter IV is focused on the field of Sport, and the article 16 details the specific objectives for this field:

- (a) “to tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, such as doping, match-fixing and violence, as well as all kinds of intolerance and discrimination;
- (b) to promote and support good governance in sport and dual careers of athletes;
- (c) to promote voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, equal opportunities and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity through increased participation in, and equal access to, sport for all”.

Leaving the objectives behind, Article 18 (Chapter V: Financial provisions) determines the budget for the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme. This will be €14,774,524,000 in current prices, with the European Parliament and the Council authorising the annual appropriations within the limits of the multiannual financial framework.

It is also worth highlighting that “The funds for the learning mobility of individuals [...] shall be allocated on the basis of population and cost of living in the Member State, distance between capitals of Member States and performance”. This distribution “shall avoid substantial reductions

in the annual budget allocated to Member States from one year to the next and shall minimize excessive imbalances in the level of grants allocated”.

Reference should also be made to Article 21 (Chapter V: Performance, results and dissemination) of this Regulation, which states that “The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall regularly monitor and report on the performance and results of the Programme as measured against its objectives [...]”. Moreover, last year the Commission presented a mid-term evaluation report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “in order to assess the effectiveness of the measures taken to achieve the Programme's objectives and to evaluate the efficiency of the Programme and its European added value, accompanied, if appropriate, by a legislative proposal to amend this Regulation”.

Then Article 22 (Chapter V) states that “The Commission, in cooperation with Member States, shall ensure the dissemination of information, publicity and follow-up with regard to all actions and activities supported under the Programme, as well as the dissemination of the results of the previous Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus programmes”. In this way, the 'Erasmus+' brand will be used to disseminate all types of information relating to the Programme, using the following sub-brands for the different sectors:

- ‘Comenius’, associated with school education;
- ‘Erasmus’, associated with all types of higher education within the Programme countries;
- ‘Erasmus Mundus’, associated with all types of higher education activities between the Programme countries and partner countries;
- ‘Leonardo da Vinci’, associated with vocational education and training;
- ‘Grundtvig’, associated with adult learning;
- ‘Youth in Action’, associated with non-formal and informal learning in the field of youth;
- ‘Sports’, associated with activities in the field of sport”.

Chapter VI of this Regulation specifies the principles for access to the Programme, in particular Article 23 says that “Any public or private body active in the fields of education, training, youth and grassroots sport may apply for funding within the Programme”. Furthermore, it establishes that both when selecting participants and granting scholarships, “the Commission and the Member States shall ensure that particular efforts are made to promote social inclusion and the participation of people with special needs or with fewer opportunities”.

Additionally, Article 26 (Chapter VII) states that the European Commission and the National Agencies, at Union and national level respectively, shall be responsible for the proper implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Chapter VIII of this Regulation determines the control system that will guide this programme. In this regard, Article 31 states that “The Commission shall take appropriate measures ensuring that, when actions financed under this Regulation are implemented, the

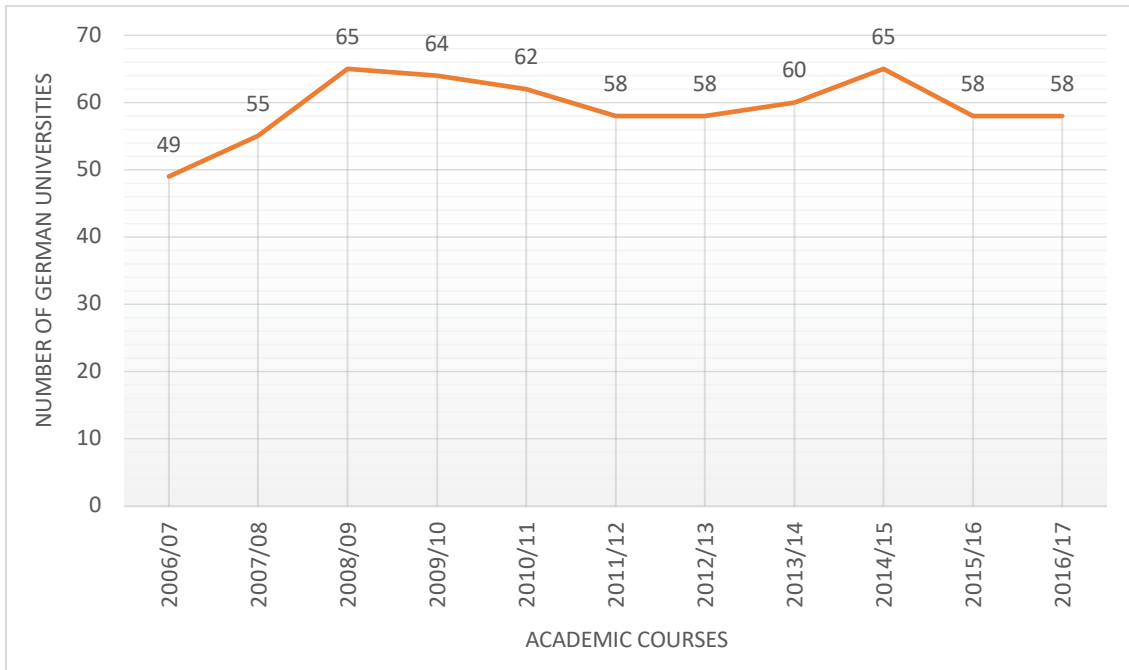
financial interests of the Union are protected by the application of measures to prevent fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities [...]”.

Finally, Chapter IX should also be highlighted (Delegation of powers and implementing provisions), and in particular Article 35, which lays down the principles for the implementation of the programme. That Article mentions that “In order to implement the Programme, the Commission shall adopt annual work programmes [...]. Each annual work programme shall ensure that the general and specific objectives set out in Articles 4, 5, 11 and 16 are implemented annually in a consistent manner and shall outline the expected results, the method of implementation and its total amount”.

With the creation and publication of this regulation, the aim was to include in a single official document all the aspects that the Erasmus+ Programme comprises, and in this way to be able to develop this Programme in any participating country with the same guarantees of quality, safety and legality for its correct implementation. Without this document, it would be impossible to carry out a programme of this magnitude efficiently, since this Programme involves very heterogeneous countries in terms of language, culture, customs, etc. Therefore, this document is necessary to maintain the education, training, youth and sport of all those who participate in it.

4.2. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF GERMAN UNIVERSITIES WITH ERASMUS AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA, BETWEEN 2006/07 AND 2016/17

Graph 1. Evolution of the Number of German Universities with Erasmus Agreements with the University of La Laguna, between 2006/07 and 2016/17.



Source: own elaboration based on the data collected from the academic reports.

Analysing graph 1, it is worth noting that throughout this decade there has been a slight increase, albeit with some significant upturns, in the number of German universities that have established Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna.

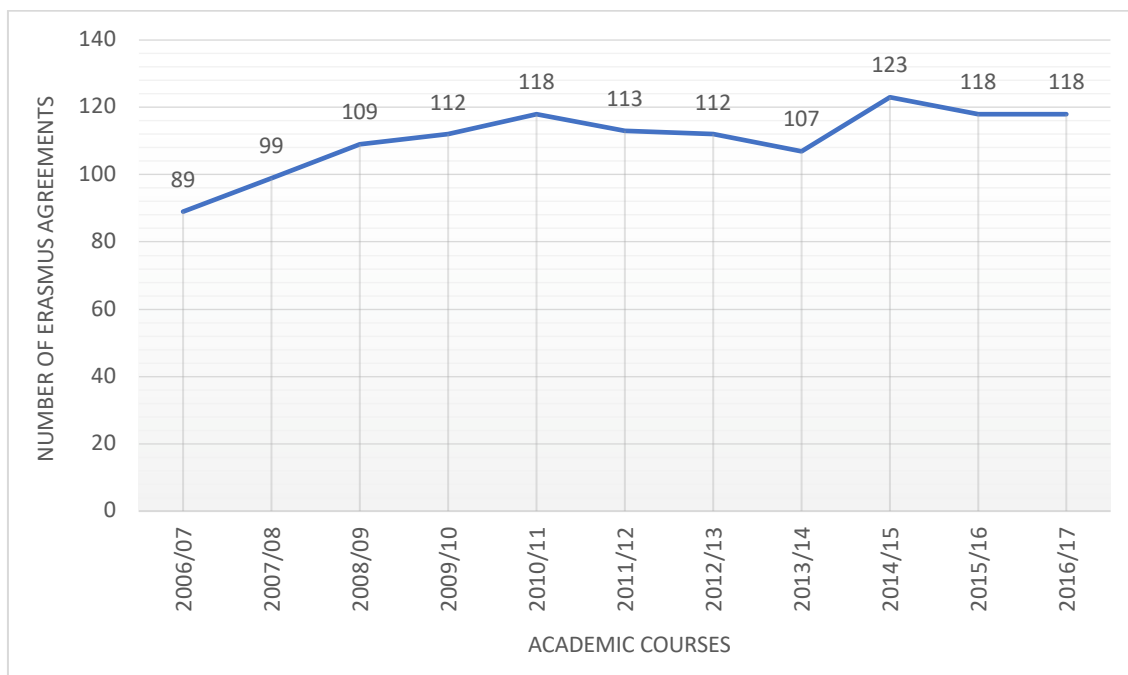
This study begins in the 2006/07 academic year, in which a total of 49 German universities collaborated with the University of La Laguna and ends in the 2016/07 academic year with 58 German partner universities. This means a remarkable increase of 9 German universities compared to the year in which this research began. It should be noted that in the 2006/07 academic year the number of German universities involved was the lowest in the whole study. In the following year (2007/08) there was an increase of 6 universities over the previous year, reaching a total of 55 German partner universities. Later on, in the 2008/09 academic year, this increase was maintained, and 10 universities were added, reaching a total of 65 German partner universities.

In the following three academic years, the number of German universities with Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna gradually declined, reaching a total of 64, 62 and 58 German universities respectively. Moreover, the latter figure remains stable in the 2012/13 academic year. The following two years showed a slight increase in collaboration with German universities, reaching again the figure of the 2008/09 academic year. Thus, in 2013/14, two German universities were incorporated and five more were added in the following academic year (2014/15), with a total of 65 German universities cooperating with the University of La Laguna. Subsequently, in 2015/16, a decrease of 7 universities was observed, obtaining again the figure of 58 German universities with Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna, a figure that is maintained for the following academic year (2016/17) and with which this study finishes. It should be noted that the number of German universities that have established Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna over the last ten years has been positive, showing an upward trend. Despite some ups and downs the numbers have stood above the starting number (49 universities), reaching the highest number (65 universities) in the 2008/09 and 2014/15 academic years.

In conclusion, it is worth pointing out that this continuous increase in the number of German universities cooperating with the University of La Laguna shows the efforts of both universities to maintain and strengthen the mobility of the university community between Spain and Germany.

4.3. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ERASMUS AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA AND THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES, BETWEEN 2006/07 AND 2016/17

Graph 2. Evolution of the Number of Erasmus Agreements between the University of La Laguna and the German Universities, between 2006/07 and 2016/17.



Source: own elaboration based on the data collected from the academic reports.

Analysing graph 2, it is worth mentioning that during this decade there has been a significant increase in the number of Erasmus agreements between the University of La Laguna and the German universities.

This study begins in the 2006/07 academic year, with a total of 89 Erasmus agreements between the University of La Laguna and the German universities. During the 2007/08 academic year, there was an increase of 10 Erasmus agreements approved with respect to the previous year, reaching a total of 99 agreements. In 2008/09 this trend remained positive with the formalisation of another 10 agreements, resulting in 109 Erasmus agreements. Subsequently, in the 2009/10 academic year, there was a slight increase of 3 agreements compared to the previous year, and in 2010/11, it increased by 6 agreements, reaching the figure of 118 Erasmus agreements. In the following three academic years (2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14), there was a continuous decrease in the number of agreements formalised, reaching a total of 113, 112 and 107 Erasmus agreements, respectively. Thus, 11 agreements have disappeared since the 2010/11 academic year. In 2014/15 there was a large increase in the number of Erasmus agreements, with 123 agreements. Subsequently, this figure fell again, and 5 agreements were eliminated, reaching in 2015/16 the quantity of 118 Erasmus agreements, a figure which was also kept the following academic year (2016/2017).

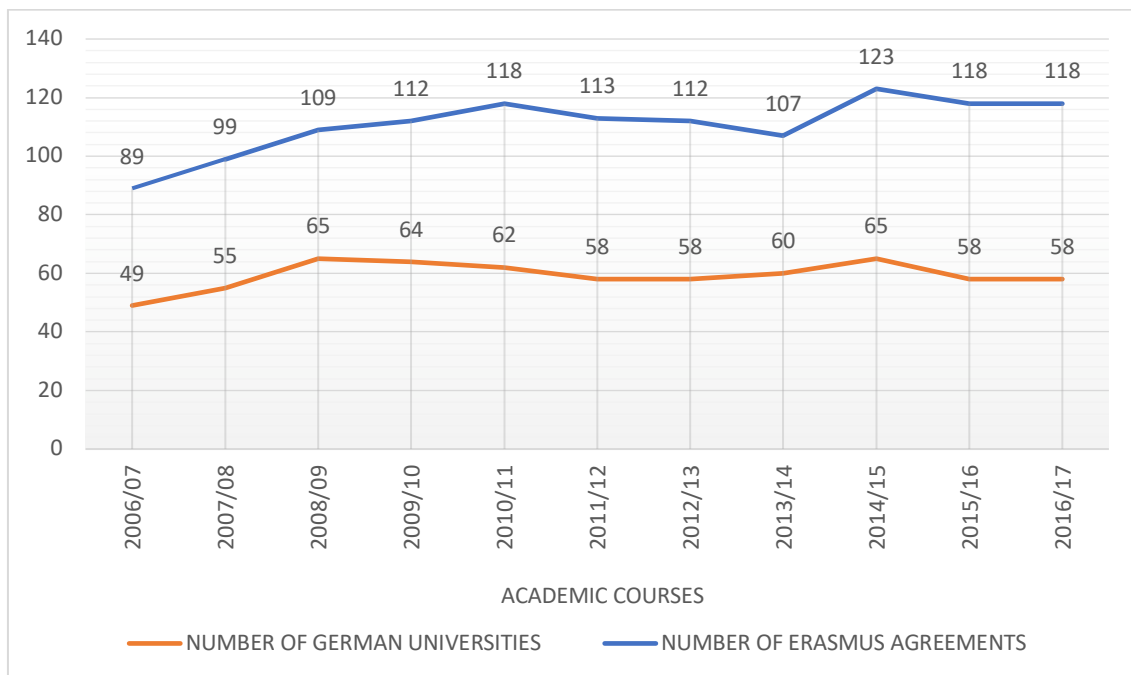
By studying this graph in broad terms, we can observe a progressive and significant growth in the number of Erasmus agreements from the academic year in which this research began to 2010/11, with an increase of 29 agreements. From 2010/11 to 2013/14, there was a notable decrease in the number of Erasmus agreements, with an absence of 11 agreements. It is

also worth noting a significant increase of 16 agreements in the following academic year (2014/15).

Therefore, it can be said that there has been a great effort to preserve Erasmus agreements between the German universities and the University of La Laguna. Thus, the number of Erasmus agreements has either remained steady or has increased over the last ten years studied, which reflects the growing interest of the university community in expanding the mobility offer between these universities.

4.4. COMPARISON BETWEEN SECTIONS 4.2. AND 4.3.

Graph 3. Comparison of Graphs 1 and 2.



Source: own elaboration based on the data collected from the academic reports.

Analysing graph 3, it is worth noting that in general terms both variables have a very similar and parallel growth, generally at the same time as the number of German universities with agreements with the University of La Laguna increases, the number of Erasmus agreements also increases. However, examining the two variables, the one on to the number of Erasmus agreements shows the greatest fluctuation, while the one on the number of German partner universities has undergone little variation in these ten years.

The two variables mentioned above show their lowest figure in the academic year of the beginning of this study. This means that in 2006/07 a total of 49 German universities maintained 89 Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna.

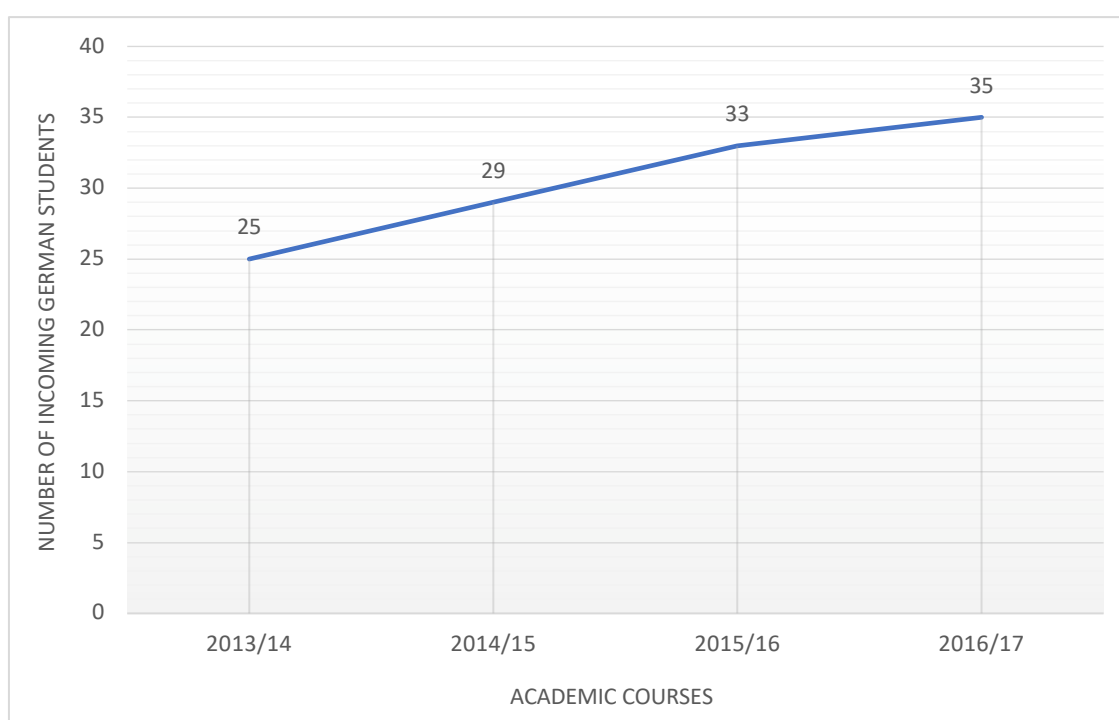
The figures of both variables increased progressively from the 2006/07 to the 2008/09 academic year, with 65 German universities collaborating with a total of 109 Erasmus agreements signed with the University of La Laguna. In the 2010/11 academic year, the Erasmus

agreements variable rose by 9 agreements, while the German partner universities variable fell by 3 universities compared to the academic year 2008/09. Likewise, 62 German universities collaborated in 118 Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna. Later, in the 2013/14 academic year, the number of Erasmus agreements had its greatest decrease since the study began, as 11 Erasmus agreements between the University of La Laguna and the German universities disappeared, compared to the academic year 2010/11. However, the largest drop in the number of German partner universities was in the academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13, when the number of universities fell to 58. In the 2014/15 academic year, the highest figure was reached in the Erasmus agreements variable as well as in the German partner universities variable (this last figure was also reached in 2008/09). Thus, 65 German universities maintained 123 Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna. Finally, it should be noted that this study concludes with positive results, as a total of 58 German universities collaborated in 118 Erasmus agreements with the University of La Laguna in the 2016/17 academic year.

In conclusion, there has been a growing trend over these ten years of study, which shows that the Erasmus Programme between the University of La Laguna and some German universities has been consolidated over this period.

4.5. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF INCOMING GERMAN STUDENTS TO THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND TOURISM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME, BETWEEN 2013/14 AND 2016/17

Graph 4. Evolution of the Number of Incoming German Students to the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna who Participated in the Erasmus Programme, between 2013/14 and 2016/17.



Source: own elaboration based on the data collected from the academic reports.

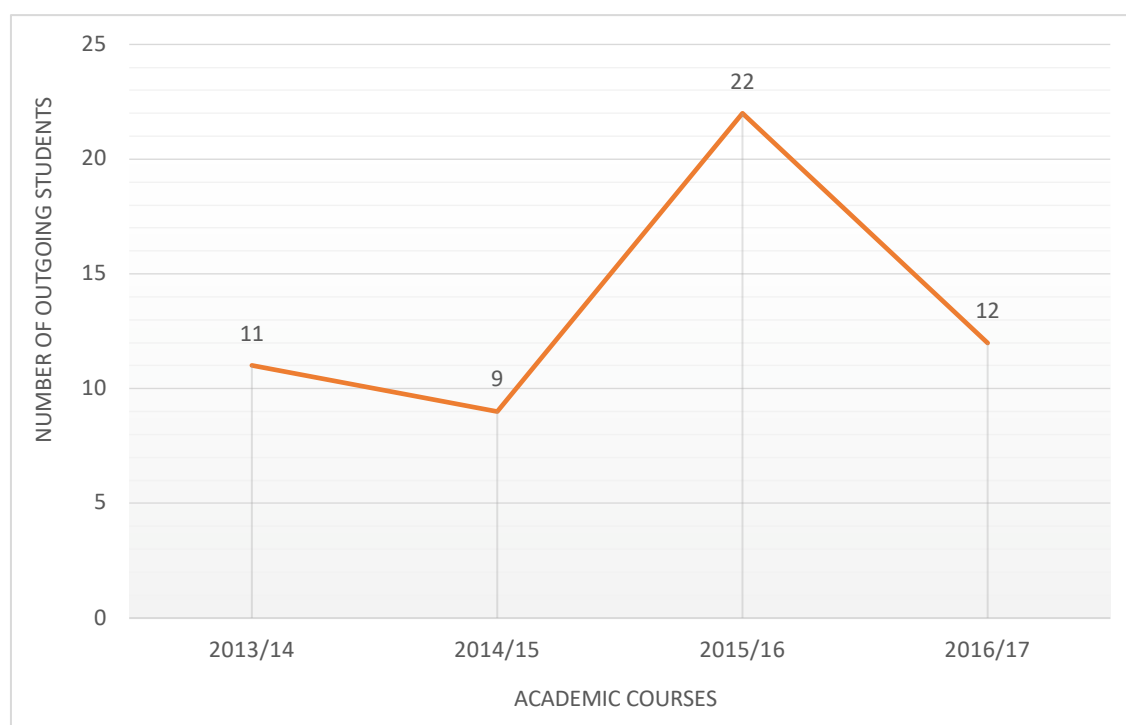
Analysing graph 4, it is worth noting that during these four years the number of German Erasmus students studying at the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna has followed a progressive upward trend.

In the 2013/14 academic year, the Faculty received 25 German Erasmus students, a figure which increased by 4 students the following academic year, bringing the total to 29 German students in 2014/15. Subsequently, in the 2015/16 academic year, the number of German students who were accepted at the Faculty reached 33, which translates into an increase of 4 German Erasmus students compared to the previous year. Finally, in the 2016/17 academic year, 2 German students were added to the above-mentioned figure, i.e. a total of 35 incoming German students participated in the Erasmus programme at the Faculty.

To conclude, it should be noted that the lowest number of German incoming students coincides with the academic year in which this study began (2013/14), and the highest with the academic year in which this research was completed (2016/17), with an increase of 10 German incoming students over this period. It is also worth mentioning that this figure did not fall or remain constant at any time, but rather increased continuously and slowly.

4.6. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF OUTGOING STUDENTS FROM THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND TOURISM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME IN GERMANY, BETWEEN 2013/14 AND 2016/17

Graph 5. Evolution of the Number of Outgoing Students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna who Participated in the Erasmus Programme in Germany, between 2013/14 and 2016/17.



Source: own elaboration based on the data collected from the academic reports.

Analysing graph 5, we can see how it shows a rather irregular tendency, featuring very significant peaks and drops.

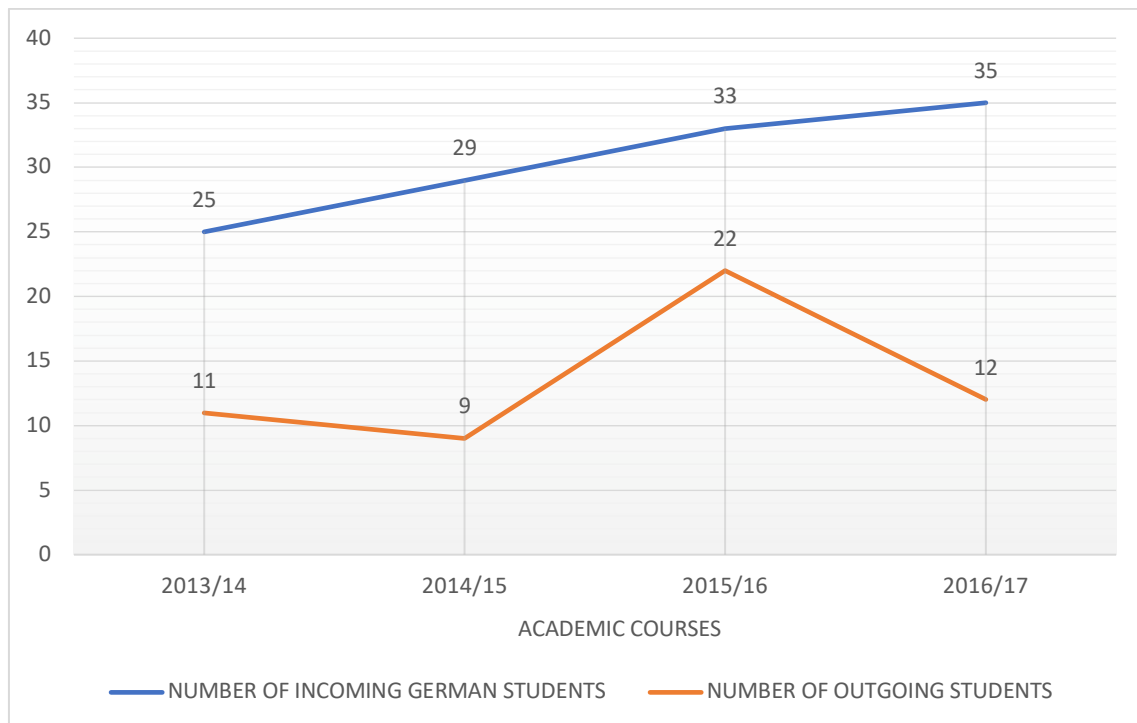
In the 2013/14 academic year, 11 Erasmus students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism participated in the Erasmus Programme while studying at a German university. The following academic year (2014/15), this figure dropped slightly to 9 students, which means a reduction of 2 outgoing students. In the 2015/16 academic year, there was a very significant peak in this figure, increasing by 13 students compared to the previous year, which means that there were 22 outgoing students. Finally, the graph shows a notable drop in this number in 2016/17, with a decrease of 10 students, reaching a total of 12 students from the Faculty who studied in Germany in the last academic year analysed.

In short, it is worth highlighting some important data from this graph. First of all, despite their irregular evolution, the starting and ending figures of this study are very similar, with 11 and 12 outgoing students respectively. Secondly, it should be stated that the lowest figure of the study is reached in the 2014/15 academic year with 9 outgoing students, obtaining in the following academic year (2015/16) the maximum of 22 outgoing students to Germany.

Finally, I would like to mention that during the 2016/17 academic year, I was part of this group of 12 outgoing students who left the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism to live the Erasmus experience in Germany, specifically I studied at the Hochschule Harz.

4.7. COMPARISON BETWEEN SECTIONS 4.5. AND 4.6.

Graph 6. Comparison of Graphs 4 and 5.



Source: own elaboration based on the data collected from the academic reports.

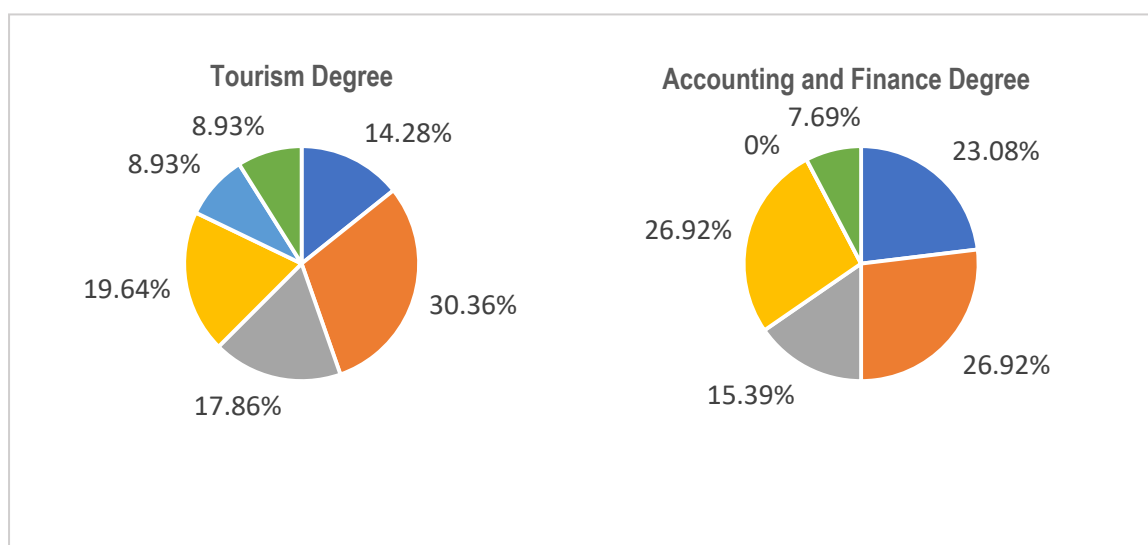
Analysing graph 6, it can be observed that both variables follow very different trends, while the incoming German students' variable follows a progressive upward trend without noticeable variations, the outgoing students' variable is largely irregular.

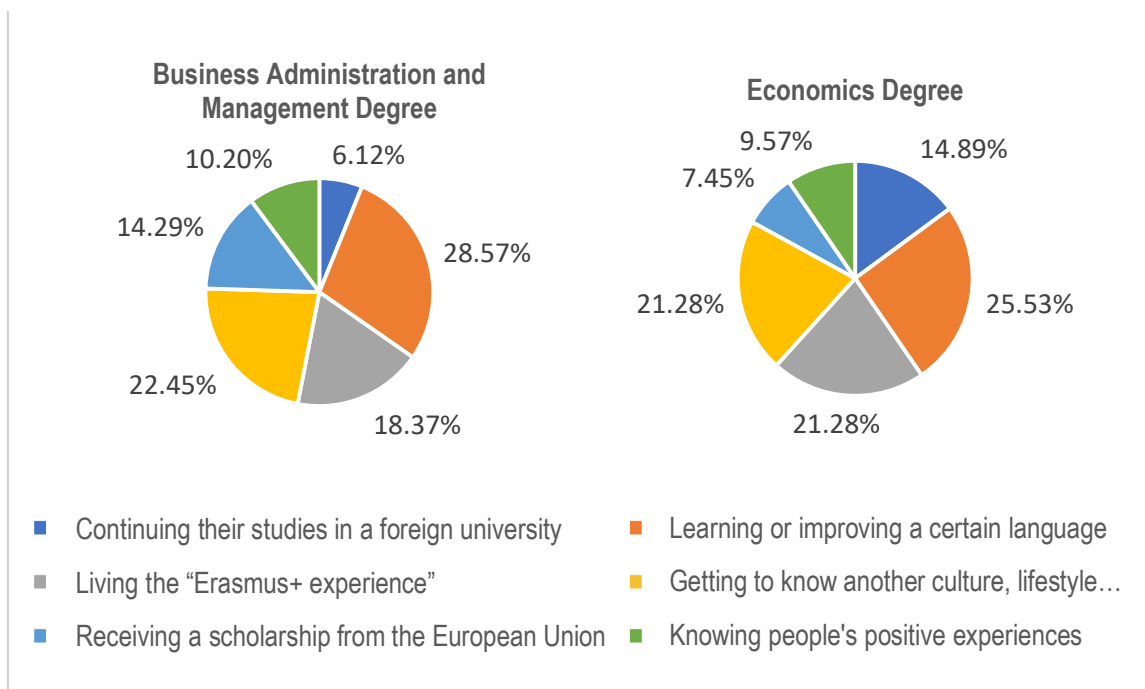
The study begins in the 2013/14 academic year with a total of 25 incoming German students and 11 outgoing students from the Faculty of Business, Economics and Tourism, with a difference of 14 students between the two variables. In the following academic year (2014/15), the incoming German students variable continued its upward trend, while the outgoing students variable suffered a slight decrease, increasing the distance between them to a total of 20 students. In 2015/16, the outgoing students variable resembled the incoming German students both showing an upward trend, the latter reaching the figure of 33 students and the former achieving the figure of 22 students, and reducing the distance between them by half with respect to the previous year. However, this tendency did not last long, since in the 2016/17 academic year the outgoing students variable fell sharply, increasing the distance between the two by 23 students, being the academic year with the greatest difference between these variables.

Finally, during this period the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna has received more German Erasmus students than the Erasmus students it has sent to the German universities. In view of these results, the need to continue working on the recruitment of Erasmus students is evident, in order to ensure that student mobility between these universities increases in parallel and is strengthened over time.

4.8. REASONS WHY STUDENTS FROM THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND TOURISM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

Graph 7. Reasons why Students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna Would Participate in the Erasmus+ Programme by Degrees.





Source: own elaboration based on the results of the survey.

Graph 7 shows the reasons why students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism would participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, making a comparison between the different degrees taught in this Faculty. It analyses six variables, which will be detailed below.

Analysing the variable "continuing their studies in a foreign university", it can be observed how the students of the Accounting and Finance Degree are the students of the Faculty that have chosen this option the most with 23.08% (6 votes out of 26), followed by the students of the Economics Degree with 14.89% (14 votes out of 94) and the students of the Tourism Degree with 14.28% (8 votes out of 56). Finally, the students of the Business Administration and Management Degree are the ones who have considered this option as the least important reason to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, with 6.12% of the votes (3 votes out of 49).

Studying the variable "learning or improving a certain language", it is worth noting that the four degrees of the Faculty have given it a similar importance. Likewise, the students of the Degree in Tourism are the ones who have considered this option as the most important with 30.36% (17 votes out of 56). They are followed by the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management with 28.57% of the votes (14 votes out of 49), the students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance with 26.92% (7 votes out of 26) and, finally, the students of the Degree in Economics with 25.53% of the votes (24 votes out of 94).

Going deeper into the variable "living the Erasmus+ experience", the graph shows how the students of the Economics Degree are the ones who have chosen this variable the most with 21.28% (20 votes out of 94) as the reason for participating in the Erasmus+ Programme. They are followed, with very similar figures, by the students from the remaining three degrees, that is,

students from the Business Administration and Management Degree with 18.37% (9 votes out of 49), students from the Tourism Degree with 17.86% of the votes (10 votes out of 56) and, finally, students from the Accounting and Finance Degree with 15.39% (4 votes out of 26).

Researching the variable "getting to know another culture, lifestyle, etc.", it should be noted that, out of the four degrees, the students who give the most importance to this variable are the students of the Accounting and Finance Degree with 26.92% of the votes (7 votes out of 26), followed by the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management with 22.45% (11 votes out of 49) and the students of the Degree in Economics with 21.28% of the votes (20 votes out of 94). Finally, these students who consider this variable as the least significant reason to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme are the students of the Degree in Tourism with 19.64% of the votes (11 votes out of 56).

A comparison of the variable "receiving a scholarship from the European Union" shows very different results across the four degrees. The students who give more relevance to this variable are the ones from the Degree in Business Administration and Management with 14.29% of the votes (7 votes out of 49). In an intermediate position, the students of the Degree in Tourism with 8.93% (5 votes out of 56) and those of the Degree in Economics with 7.45% (7 votes out of 94), have voted this variable. Finally, it should be noted that no student of the Degree in Accounting and Finance has considered this option.

Examining the variable "knowing other people's positive experiences", very similar results are observed among the four degrees, being the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management who considered this option as the most central one with 10.20% of the votes (5 votes out of 49), followed by the students of the Economics Degree with 9.57% (9 votes out of 94), and the students of the Tourism Degree with 8.93% (5 votes out of 56). Finally, the students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance with 7.69% of the votes (2 votes out of 26) are those who saw this variable as the most marginal reason to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme. Moreover, each of the variables already mentioned will be analysed with each degree independently below.

It should be emphasised that the students of the four degrees of the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism consider the variable "learning or improving a certain language" as the main reason for participating in the Erasmus+ Programme, followed by the variables "getting to know another culture, lifestyle, etc." and "living the Erasmus+ experience", in second and third place respectively (students of the Degree in Economics give these two variables the same number of votes).

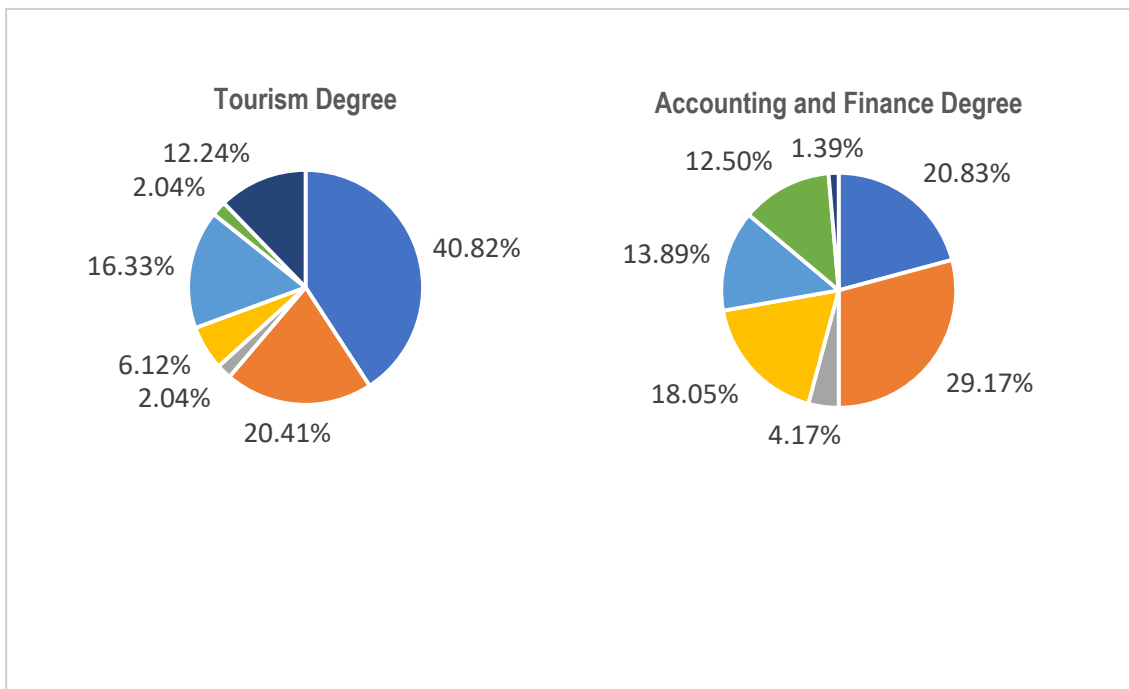
Tourism Degree students chose the variable "continuing their studies in a foreign university" as number four and both the variable "receiving a scholarship from the European Union" and "knowing other people's positive experiences" as their fifth option with the same percentage of votes. Accounting and Finance Degree students consider the variable "continuing their studies in a foreign university" as the fourth reason for which they would participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, being the fifth reason "learning about other people's positive

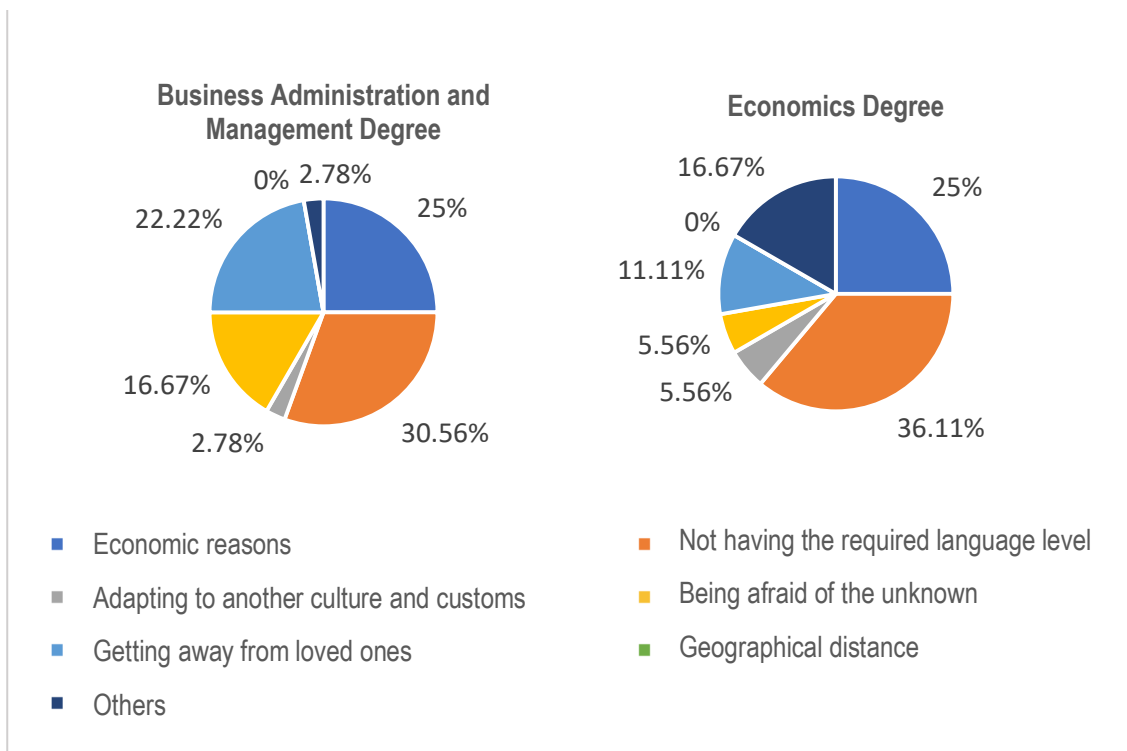
experiences”, without considering the variable “receiving a scholarship from the European Union”. The students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management, unlike the students mentioned above, consider the variable “receiving a scholarship from the European Union” as the fourth reason for participating in this Programme, followed by the variables “knowing other people’s positive experiences” and “continuing their studies in a foreign university” as the fifth and sixth reason respectively. Finally, the students of the Degree in Economics assign the fourth place to the variable "continuing their studies in a foreign university" and the fifth to the variable "knowing other people's positive experiences". They consider the variable “receiving a scholarship from the European Union” the final reason for deciding to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the variable that attracts the most attention is "receiving a scholarship from the European Union", since of all the variables analysed, this is among the least valued by the students of the Faculty, even no student of the Accounting and Finance Degree has considered this option as a reason to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme. This result contrasts significantly with the conclusions obtained in the following graph.

4.9. REASONS WHY STUDENTS FROM THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND TOURISM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LA LAGUNA WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

Graph 8. Reasons why Students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism of the University of La Laguna Would not Participate in the Erasmus+ Programme by Degrees.





Source: own elaboration based on the results of the survey.

Graph 8 shows the reasons why the students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism would not participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, making a comparison between the different degrees taught in this Faculty, as in the previous graph. In this graph, seven variables are analysed, these are detailed below.

Analysing the variable "economic reasons", it should be noted that by far the students of the Degree in Tourism are those who see this variable as the most important one with 40.82% of the votes (20 votes out of 49). Secondly, both the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management and the students of the Degree in Economics have valued this variable with 25% of the votes (9 votes out of 36 respectively). Finally, the students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance are those who believe the variable "economic reasons" to be the least important reason for not participating in this Programme with 20.83% (15 votes out of 72).

Observing the variable "not having the required language level", it can be stated that the students of the Degree in Economics are those who consider this variable the most important one with 36.11% of the votes (13 votes out of 36), followed by the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management with 30.56% (11 out of 36) and the students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance with 29.17% (21 votes out of 72). Finally, the students of the Degree in Tourism are the ones who consider this variable the least significant a reason for not participating in this Program, with 20.41% of the votes (10 out of 49).

Studying the variable "adapting to another culture and customs", it should be emphasised that in general students do not think of this variable as an important reason for not participating in

the Erasmus+ Programme. Thus, the students of the Degree in Economics with 5.56% (2 votes out of 36) are the ones who value it the most, followed by the students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance with 4.17% (3 votes out of 72) and, finally, with very similar percentages, the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management and the students of the Degree in Tourism, with 2.78% (1 vote out of 36) and 2.04% (1 vote out of 49) respectively.

Comparing the variable "being afraid of the unknown", it can be observed that the students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance are the ones who take it into account the most with 18.05% of the votes (13 votes out of 72), followed by the students of the Business Administration and Management Degree with 16.67% (6 votes out of 36) and the students of the Tourism Degree with 6.12% (3 votes out of 49). Finally, the students of the Degree in Economics are those who take it the least into account as a reason for not participating in the Programme, with 5.56% (2 votes out of 36).

Going deeper into the variable "getting away from loved ones", with 22.22% of the votes (8 votes out of 36) the students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management are the ones who most value this variable, followed by the students of the Degree in Tourism and the Degree in Accounting and Finance, with 16.33% (8 votes out of 49) and 13.89% (10 votes out of 72) respectively. Finally, those who take it the least into account are the students of the Degree in Economics with 11.11% of the votes (4 votes out of 36).

Examining the variable "geographical distance", large differences arise between the four degrees. It should be noted that with 12.50% of the votes (9 votes out of 72), the students of the Accounting and Finance Degree are the ones who most consider it as a reason for not participating in this Program, followed by the students of the Tourism Degree with 2.04% of the votes (1 vote out of 49). Finally, it should be noted that no student from the Degree in Business Administration and Management and the Degree in Economics has considered this option.

Considering the variable "others", it can be stated that the students of the Degree in Economics are the ones who have chosen this option as the most important to determine the reasons why they would not participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, with 16.67% (6 votes out of 36). In second place, those who selected it the most were the Tourism Degree students with 12.24% of the votes (6 votes out of 49), followed by the Business Administration and Management Degree students, and the Accounting and Finance Degree students, with 2.78% (1 vote out of 36) and 1.39% (1 vote out of 72) respectively. In addition, each of the variables already mentioned will be analysed with each degree independently below.

The students of the Degree in Tourism consider that they would not participate in the Erasmus+ programme mainly for "economic reasons". Other important reasons are "not having the required language level" and "getting away from loved ones", in that order. Fourthly, they have chosen the variable "others" and added the following reasons: "age", "they are already finishing their studies at the university", "need for stability to focus on studies" and "commitments to a sports team". In fifth and sixth place are "being afraid of the unknown", "adapting to another

culture and customs" and "geographical distance" (the last two variables received the same number of votes).

The students of the Degree in Accounting and Finance state that "not having the required language level" is their main reason for not participating in this Programme, followed by "economic reasons", "being afraid of the unknown", "getting away from loved ones" and "geographical distance" ordered from most to least importance. In sixth and seventh place, with considerably fewer votes, the variables "adapting to another culture and customs" and "others" are placed, respectively. The latter variable was not specified by the students who chose it.

The students of the Degree in Business Administration and Management have distinguished mainly four clear reasons why they would not participate in the Erasmus+ Programme, from more to less important are: "not having the required language level", "economic reasons", "getting away from loved ones" and "being afraid of the unknown". With the same number of votes, the variables "adapting to another culture and customs" and "others" are in fifth place. The student who chose the latter variable adds that "the Erasmus+ Programme does not attract his/her attention, he/she prefers to travel". Finally, it should be noted that for them the "geographical distance" is not a reason not to participate.

Finally, students of the Economics Degree consider that their main reason for not participating in this Programme is "not having the required language level", followed by "economic reasons". Thirdly, they have chosen the variable "others" by specifying the following reasons: "not enough places", "some have low qualifications and cannot compete with others for a place", "it is difficult to combine the studies abroad with work" and "some of them are already completing their studies at the university". Fourthly and fifthly, they have placed the variables "getting away from loved ones", "adapting to another culture and customs" and "being afraid of the unknown" (the latter two with the same number of votes). Finally, the variable "geographical distance" is not taken into account by them as a reason for not participating in the Erasmus+ Programme.

In conclusion, it should be noted that in those degrees in which language subjects are not taught such as the Degree in Economics and the Degree in Business Administration and Management, as well as the Degree in Accounting and Finance where only one subject of "Business English" is taught, students consider that their main reason for not participating in the Erasmus+ Programme is "not having the required language level". Otherwise, in the Tourism Degree where four subjects of "English for Tourism Communication" and three of "German for Tourism Communication" are taught, students value this variable in second place, being "economic reasons" their main reason for not participating in the Erasmus+ Programme. In contrast, the three degrees mentioned above considered "economic reasons" as the second most important variable.

From the aforementioned analysis, we can argue that not having the minimum language level as well as economic reasons, represent the key elements preventing the students of the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism from participating in the Erasmus+ Programme.

This contrasts with the conclusions of the previous graph, as the students of this Faculty do not see "receiving a scholarship from the European Union" as an extremely central element, but at the same time they consider "economic reasons" as one of the main reasons for not participating in this Programme. It should be noted that the European Union scholarships are not received at the beginning of each academic year but months later. This means that the families have to make a significant financial outlay to support the student waiting to receive the scholarship. But not all families can cope with this, so most students decide not to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme for financial reasons. In addition, it should be noted that the amount of the scholarships does not cover a whole academic year, so in this case, family financial support is also required.

Another aspect to note is the fact that the students of the Degree in Tourism also consider the level of language as an obstacle. They or "we" are supposed to be the best trained people in terms of languages because as professionals in this industry, our working future will undoubtedly be linked to interacting with foreign people. For all this, it would be necessary to increase the number of language subjects taught in every single degree of this Faculty, as well as to increase the budget of the European Union scholarship so that all the students can access the Erasmus+ Programme. With a solid knowledge of the foreign language that will allow students both to get along in the daily life of the host country and to excel in their university studies there, supported by a European Union scholarship covering the entire mobility period and received at the same time as the "Erasmus experience" begins, all of the students' fears and their main reasons for not participating in the Programme would disappear.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In the same way that society has evolved over time and new needs and interests have arisen, the Erasmus Programme has also undergone numerous modifications since its implementation in 1987 to the present day as a result of social and cultural changes. These changes provide the Programme with a dynamic and flexible character, open to be continually reviewed so as to adapt the objectives to the current social circumstances. Given that the above-mentioned changes occur relatively frequently, this longitudinal research project which covers ten years, between the 2006/2007 and 2016/17 academic years, includes three different historical moments in the development of the Erasmus Programme. Firstly, the Socrates-Erasmus Programme which ran until 2006, secondly, the Lifelong Learning Programme which operated until 2013, and finally, the Erasmus+ Programme which will be implemented until 2020.

In view of the results obtained, it can be said that during the last decade there has been a consolidation of the Erasmus Programme between the University of La Laguna and the different German universities, since throughout this study both the number of German universities participating and the number of Erasmus agreements between them has followed a progressive upward trend. The increased involvement of universities together with the increase of Erasmus agreements brings about numerous advantages. Firstly, the ratio of participating universities is higher, and the mobility offer is being extended to students, who each year have more and more options to choose universities that best suit their academic interests. In other words, the more universities that participate in the Programme, the more agreements will be created, the more places will be offered and the more varied they will be, which will have a very positive and direct impact on the students, their knowledge and their academic curriculum. Secondly, it is important to highlight the personal growth acquired during the stay abroad, as this means leaving the comfort zone and adapting to changes. Thirdly, this growing trend brings with it greater interculturality, promoting diversity, respect, tolerance, empathy, etc. These are the fundamental pillars on which the Erasmus+ Programme is based.

I cannot, however, draw such positive conclusions when addressing the number of incoming German students and outgoing students from the Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism (ULL) participating in the Erasmus+ Programme. While conducting the research, I noticed a great mismatch. While the Faculty has received more and more German students during the last four academic years, the same is not true of the outgoing students to Germany, which do not follow a specific trend and there are very significant variations from one year to the next. From this idea, the need for a good recruitment campaign for the Erasmus+ Programme is obvious, with a focus on ensuring that the numbers of incoming German students and outgoing students to Germany grow in parallel while consolidating. Since if the Programme does not reach students and does not achieve a certain stability, the survival of the agreements between the universities would be jeopardised.

Analysing the unstable trend mentioned above, it is worth mentioning that the main reason given by the students of the Faculty to participate in the Erasmus+ Programme is to improve their knowledge of a certain language. However, in most cases, students are not

qualified to access this Programme because they lack the minimum language level required to be able to obtain a place at the host university. This situation pinpoints that students do not apply for a place in the Erasmus Programme because they do not have the required or compulsory language level, but they cannot achieve this level because university education does not give them the necessary training to do so, leading to a dead-end loop. Only those students who have completed their university education with parallel language training are those who do meet the minimum requirements for access to the Erasmus Programme. This situation is aggravated in the case of students who study the Tourism Degree. These students do receive university language training, nevertheless, they consider their language level as an obstacle, as in most cases students arrive at university with poor language skills. Another contradictory fact that emerges from this study is the fact that the students of the Faculty consider that they do not have sufficient economic level to access the Erasmus Programme. At the same time though, they do not consider receiving a grant from the European Union as a reason to participate in the Erasmus Programme. This may be due to students' lack of knowledge of the positive and negative aspects of this type of scholarship.

It can be stated that, over the last ten years, the Erasmus Programme between the University of La Laguna and the various German universities has been consolidated, but it is also necessary to correct and improve certain aspects that are poorly designed such as promoting the Erasmus+ Programme's information campaigns among university students, giving greater visibility to language courses, adapting financial funding to the length of each student's stay and offering grants at the beginning of each academic year.

I conclude this research by stressing the importance of having a sustainable and consolidated student mobility programme such as the Erasmus+ Programme, which allows students to travel around Europe with quality and safety, and to obtain a solid academic education based on the principles of interculturality that are so absolutely necessary in the 21st century.

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⁶ For the sake of brevity, I have merged in just one bibliographical entry the ten official University of La Laguna documents used to gather statistical information on the Erasmus Programme.