

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor's thesis is dedicated to the study of first-generation students who decided to drop out of university within one year of starting their studies. The aim is to examine the reasons that led them to make this decision, the positive aspects of their studies and their subsequent completion and, finally, to identify the key moments and barriers to continuing their studies at university.

The theoretical part of the thesis examines social identity, the phenomenon of belonging, motivation and support from family and the university. In addition, the harmonisation of work and study habits and the occurrence of imposter syndrome among first-generation students are discussed.

The empirical part describes the qualitative research from the research problem to the methods of data interpretation. Nine respondents participated in the research and the qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, then analysed and interpreted using the method of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The findings show that the reasons for dropping out of higher education are many and varied. These include a fading sense of belonging, a search for stability in life and financial optimism. Furthermore, there was a discrepancy between the idealised image of university life and its real version. On the other hand, positive benefits of higher education were identified, such as enrichment of personal identity and sense of belonging. Significant barriers to further study were also identified, including time management difficulties, lack of understanding of the higher education system, inadequate family support and pressure to become independent.

## **KEYWORDS**

first generation university students, social identity, belonging, academic motivation, imposter syndrome, family support