

Improving the Quality of Higher Education Through the Student Satisfaction Analysis

Zorica Lazic^{1}*

¹*Faculty of Engineering, Sestre Janjic 4, 34000 Kragujevac, Serbia
E-mail: zoricalazic29@gmail.com*

** PhD Student.*

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Summary: *Orientation towards users of higher education is one of the basic principles of the Bologna Declaration. Feedback from users of education, in this case students, perceiving their priority needs usefully direct the curricula of faculties, as well as the overall provision of higher education services. This paper presents an analysis of the research about the satisfaction of students with the aim of improving the quality of higher education.*

Key words: *Quality, higher education, student satisfaction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality is the word that is often used in everyday communication [1]. The quality is being argued in various places, written about daily, mentioned in reports and discussions. We are constantly improving the quality and quality assurance is considered a key activity of any quality management system.

The education system must be continually improved and changed in accordance with changes in the competitive environment factors. Education is an imperative for the future and the condition for the survival of every society. The impact of higher education on national development is large and increases with the development of society [2]. With quality higher education human potential is developed, while economic development rises to a new level.

The main tasks of the higher education system in the 21st century are the continuous provision, improvement and quality assurance of higher education. The implementation of these tasks depends on the competitiveness of not only higher education institution, but also the national higher education system as a whole. Higher education institutions need to constantly improve the quality of their services, to attract as many students as possible and thus fulfill their requirements.

Orientation towards users of higher education, is one of the basic principles of the Bologna Declaration. Feedback from users of education, in this case students, perceiving their priority needs, usefully direct the curricula of faculties [3], as well as the overall provision of higher education services.

Given the importance of the role of students as active partners in the process of providing and improving the quality of teaching, systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and work of teachers and associates, which are carried out through periodic surveys of students, are some of the most important activities that involve students.

2. BENEFICIARIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Orientation towards users of higher education (Table 1) is one of the basic principles of the Bologna Declaration. Feedback from users of education and attention on their priority needs, usefully direct the curricula of faculties [3]. Division of users of the Teacher's Faculty of Education is given in Table 1, where you can see the division to internal users:

- professors,
- lecturers,
- assistants,
- teaching staff.

External users are:

- indirect users (parents of students, employers, preschools and primary school, society, state)
- direct users (students).

Table 1. Users of the Services of Teacher Training Faculty in Uzice

Internal users	External users	
Profesors	Indirect users	Direct users
Lecturers	Parents of students	Students
Assistants	Employers / primary schools / preschools	
Teaching stuff	Society / state	

Students as beneficiaries of higher education. Student in any society should be an independent person who grew up during the study undergoes a process of maturation into an expert who has the knowledge, capable of contributing to the development of society. Student participation in decision-making at colleges and universities is essential to improve the quality of teaching, research and overall service of higher education.

Students as the main beneficiaries of education must be involved in the process of quality improvement at the local level (self-evaluation of the institution), the national level (national agencies and commissions that determine the quality of institutions and make recommendations) and international level (a common educational scope of Europe).

Evaluation of quality in higher education by students is a system in which through a questionnaire students express their opinions and make suggestions on improving the teaching process, study program, study conditions.

3. TEACHING PROCESS

The quality of the teaching process is provided through interactive teaching, the inclusion of examples in their teaching, professional work of teachers and staff, adoption and respect of plans of work according to subjects, as well as monitoring the quality of teaching and undertaking the necessary measures in cases where it is found that quality of education is inadequate.

The quality of teaching process is related to components of the process (Figure1), namely: preparation of classes, classes, lectures, textbooks, assessment, exams, term papers and diploma papers.

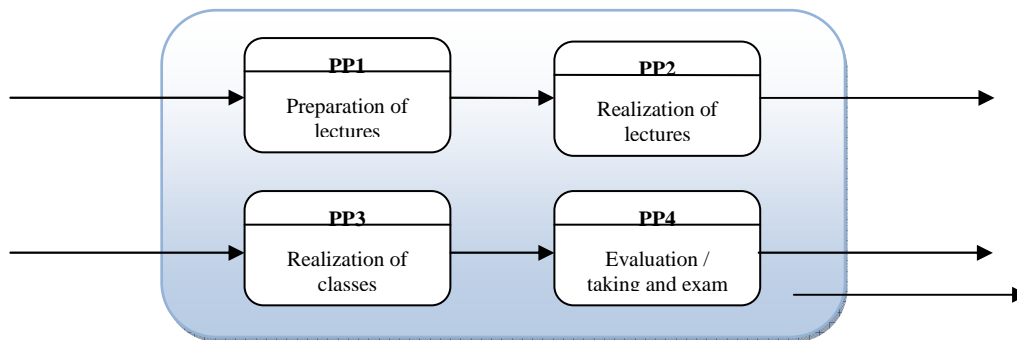


Figure 1. Teaching Process
(Source: Author)

Preparation for Teaching PP1, (terms and premises) involves the schedule publication on the notice board and website of the faculty, according to the formed groups for certain aspects of the pre-exam activities (laboratory exercises, practical work, defense of seminar papers and student projects). Preparation of seminar papers and student projects require the organization of computerized classrooms and installed computerized systems.

Subject teachers are responsible for the preparation of teaching materials that students need to use in the teaching process. Textbooks for lectures and practicum for the exercises, in addition to vocational work should include defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of particular cases, the structure of matter, methods of teaching, manner of evaluation of pre-exam activities and final evaluation, and other related activities.

Realization of lectures PP2. Each item in the module or program, as well as teaching unit within the specific subject is constantly analyzed and prepared by the appropriate teachers for possible modification and customizing to trends of improving higher education and the demands of consumers. Teaching materials should be illustrated by examples and evidence to make it easier to understand and remember the presented material.

The choice of teaching methods is the next level which depends on the teaching material, maturity and abilities of students, group size, environment ii professional commitment of teachers. Oral presentation is the most common form of lectures, which can be followed by writing and drawing on the blackboard or using slides as visual information, power point presentations. T the speed of exposure and the amount of material that can be exposed to students depends on the method applied, and also the method of monitoring the lectures by students, which is decided by the teacher while preparing the appropriate teaching materials.

Realisation of exercises PP3 is conducted so the students acquire practical skills working on the proposed equipment or facilities provided. Students' working areas should be set up so that everyone can use equipment with the help of assistants or operators. Each exercise should have an

introduction with the explanation of the task and objective of the exercise. It is recommended to write reports with exercises and their interpretations by the students.

Student evaluation PP4 is an academic activity of testing the knowledge in the teaching process when determining the level of acquired knowledge and skills acquired in relation to the defined and anticipated outcomes of learning. The evaluation procedure provides important feedback on the results of the teaching and learning process, which in the reference system of higher education define the quality achieved. There are different methods of assessment, whose procedures should be ensured by the college. Evaluation must be transparent, fair and documented by statistical analysis of data with the adopted format reports.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

As part of the research conducted at the Teacher Training Faculty in Uzice there were surveys of students, teaching staff and graduate student. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was related to the quality of curriculum and lectures, while students in the second part of the study evaluated the conditions of studying. Total number of students who participated in the survey was 207 students, both study programs (educator, teacher).

To view and analyze the results of student surveys there are appropriate reports in textual and graphical form. Typical reports on the level of organizational units provide an overview of the services, the organization of studies and teaching staff, study program and year of study.

Hereafter this paper presents the analysis results of the Survey itself with tabular graphical displays. The process of teaching is evaluated through a questionnaire in which 147 students participated in the second, third and fourth year, both study programs (educator, teacher).

The following presents the analysis of the results obtained from the work questionnaire that was related to the quality of teaching, the quality of the study program, study conditions, the quality of teaching process.

The quality of teaching students evaluated through a questionnaire of 11 questions pertaining to the quality of lectures and exercises, relations professor to students in class. Plan and schedules of lectures and exercises are in line with the needs and capabilities of students, are known before the beginning of the semester and are consistently enforced. Plan and schedule of lectures (and classes) are generally aligned with the needs of students, but also the specifics of the study subjects (especially regarding working in training schools primary schools in Uzice). Distribution of assessment is presented in Figures 2 and 3 and Tabele 2.

Average rating of the quality of teaching is 8.2.

Teachers and associates of the Teacher Training Faculty in Uzice during the lectures and exercises act professionally and have a correct relationship with the students, which students perceive. The survey results show that approach of teachers to students is rated as 8, and that is 52% of students. Based on the results of the surveyed students we can review the Quality of study program, which students are evaluated through questions on the syllabus, the available literature. Is the teaching content modern, interesting and applicable in practice, students evaluated in the following manner:

- 55% of students agreed that the teaching content is interesting, while 37% of students disagreed with it. 63% of students partially agree that the teaching content is modern.
- On the applicability of educational content in practice the data shows that only 20% of students agreed that the teaching content can be applied in practice, 63% of students partially agrees with this, while other students can not estimate whether they agree or not (17%).

- Average rating of quality of the study program, which was obtained on the basis of the collected data of the surveyed students, was 7.8.
- With the strategy of quality assurance Teacher Training Faculty in Uzice, rules that ensure the quality of the teaching process are defined. The quality of the teaching process provides the quality programs and syllabi, quality work plan, lectures and classes, publications, teaching quality, quality assessment procedures and quality professional performance of teachers and staff.
- Average rating of the quality of teaching process is 7.6.

Of the total number of surveyed students, (Figure 2), 56 students (38%) gave a score 8. Lowest score was 6, which was given by 17 students (11.5%) who evaluated the quality of the teaching process.

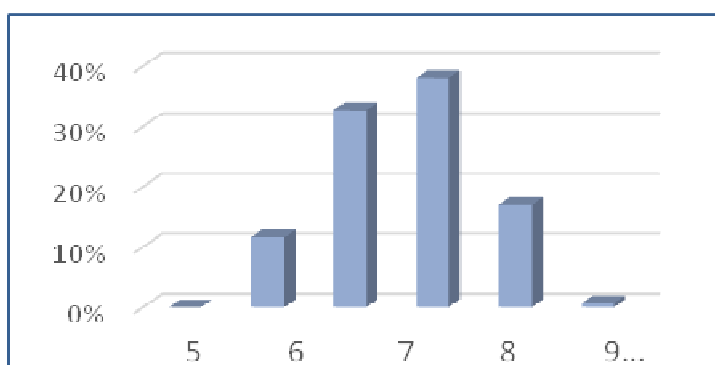


Figure 2. Distribution of the Assessment of the Quality of the Teaching Process
(Source: Author)

Based on data collected following the survey a brief analysis of the results was made, obtained from the second part of the questionnaire that related to study conditions:

- Of the total number of surveyed students (207), 36% of students evaluated informing of students the lowest (Figure 3), as well as the working hours of student service by 32% of students. Students demand and expect that the informing students on all activities at the university is significantly improved, and that the work and working hours of student services align the needs of students.
- Average score by which students assess study conditions is 8.1.

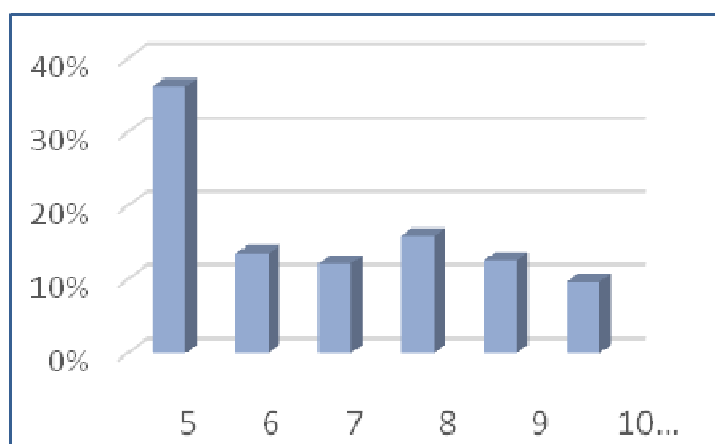


Figure 3. Distribution of Informing Students Evaluation
(Source: Author)

The part of the questionnaire where students have been able to, in addition to the answers, add something else related to the topic of the questionnaire, most often discontent with informing students and faculty site could be seen: 62% of students thought that the site of the Faculty should be modernized, which would significantly improve the informing of students.

In order to better inform students, and prospective students, on study programs it is necessary to regularly update information relating to all study programs (structure, objectives, outcomes, syllabi, information on the practice and the like).

In order to provide better and more interactive teaching at the Teachers Faculty at lectures, classes and in other forms of teaching a wide range of learning activities is applied (Table 2). Interviewing the students showed how a variety of learning activities were present-represented in the set. Reported estimates show that teaching is interactive, with plenty of examples and encourage the activity of students.

Table 2. Rating of Students (Study Program of Undergraduate Studies - teacher), the Quality of the Teaching Process [%]

Examinee sample N=147	I	II	III	IV	The average score on all years of study
Encouraging students to adopt content	8,22	8,11	7,76	8,21	8,07
Encouraging students to ask questions	8,37	8,98	7,81	8,16	8,08
Encouraging students to active learning	8,40	7,87	7,87	8,21	8,09
Encouraging students to mutual cooperation	8,14	7,56	7,47	8,02	7,79
Term papers	6,40	32,15	37,15	43,34	29,76
Term discussion	2,24	6,24	5,17	1,13	3,69
Debate	6,46	13,46	17,32	13,32	12,64
Other	86,46	61,75	57,67	46,23	63,03
Individual work	76,33	68,97	42,34	51,23	59,72
Group research	13,56	16,56	21,42	17,67	17,30
Demonstration classes	10,00	2,11	6,23	5,14	5,87
Analysis of conducted classes	–	15,57	4,42	23,33	14,44

Analysis of the teaching quality in the assessments of students in relation to individual objects on different years of studies shows inconsistent ratings (although there isn't an extremely low-grade) depending on the subject, indicating that the context of the course content, but also the approach of teachers and staff contributes to the fact that some subjects that represent the items of the interactivity are slightly lower valued, which is mainly conditioned by the plenary, concurrent, teachers work with students of two study programs (Teacher study program and Educator study program as a total of about 150 students).

The role of students in the process of quality assurance at the Faculty is realized through the work of the Student Parliament and organizations and student representatives in the bodies of higher education institutions, as well as through questionnaires about the quality of higher education institutions.

In addition to being in line with the abilities and needs of supporting the activities of student organizations, the Faculty in accordance with the Constitution allows and encourages the involvement of students in the work of faculty in all important areas, through student vice-dean and representatives of the Student Parliament of the Faculty authorities. Student Parliament was in the past actively involved in the work of the Faculty.

Student representatives are members of the Quality Assurance Committee and participate in the activities of monitoring and evaluation of quality in different areas as well as in the process of periodic self-evaluation of the Faculty. The Commission for quality, in addition to four members from the teaching staff and two members from the non-teaching staff, are 2 members from the ranks of students, and student vice-dean and regular student.

As members of these three bodies - the Academic Council, Faculty Council and the Commission for Quality Assurance - students have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of quality management system, the formulation of the Strategy for quality assurance, through the processing and analysis of data in different areas of quality assurance, to the formulation of action plans and corrective actions and monitoring their implementation.

Another important way in which students are directly involved in the process of monitoring and improving the quality of students is a survey, which aims to include the attitudes and opinions of students in the process of quality improvement.

In the academic year 2015/16 an extensive questionnaires for students about their perception of the quality of work of the Faculty were carried out (administrations, non-teaching support, computer center, library), as well as the quality of study programs and teaching process, in accordance with the standards and procedures for quality assurance of the faculty.

5. CONCLUSION

Students' satisfaction as the direct beneficiaries of higher education and the fulfillment of their demands is one of the main objectives of providing higher education services. Opinions of students should be used by teachers and institutions as a material to be used in the reorganization of education in terms of raising the quality and finding ways to achieve optimal effects in teaching students and have echoes in the work of teachers and staff. Student participation is very important in checking and improving the quality of higher education institutions.

The strategy of quality assurance of the Teacher Training Faculty in Uzice fully reflects the mission and values of the faculty of higher education in Serbia. Strategy of quality assurance is planned as permanent commitment of the faculty:

- to continually and systematically develop, foster and promote the culture of quality,
- to ensure the continued development of Social Sciences and Humanities and applying the results of scientific research in the teaching process and all other forms of the Faculty,
- that in all forms of the Faculty provide connectivity for educational, scientific, artistic and professional activities,
- that in all forms of the Faculty meet the needs of students, teaching and non-teaching staff and society as a whole,
- to timely see the deficiencies in teaching and other forms of work at the Faculty, and take measures to ensure the quality of study programs, teaching and non-teaching staff, teaching, students, professional services, library, technical, laboratory and other equipment necessary for teaching and scientific research,
- that the system of measures and procedures to ensure quality through the systematic monitoring and periodic quality checks is determined by the Ordinance on quality assurance and self-evaluation,
- that the strategy for quality assurance of the Faculty is periodically reviewed and improved,
- as for the results obtained by the conducted research, they can be one of the relevant indicators of the direction in which further research should be carried out with the aim of improving the

quality of service, the quality of the teaching process, the quality of study programs at higher education institutions.

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