ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT FEEDBACK METHODS AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF FACULTY PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *In this article we deal with quality measurement, which is one of the key parts of the quality assurance process in Higher Education. There are several documents that establish important and fundamental guidelines, but the regulation of processes and procedures for implementation depends on the institutions. It is therefore a uniform requirement that higher education institutions carry out regular and effective surveys, achieving high participation rates. Therefore, the Universities and other Higher Education Institutions use different quality assurance systems to control their processes. These processes have changed in our country in the past two decades. Our aims are to present the main stages of this development, as well as the peculiarities and operation of the student satisfaction survey developed because of the process. Nowadays there is no uniform and defined methodology for measuring student satisfaction in Hungarian Higher Education. Significant differences can be observed between Higher Education Institutions (HEI) regarding the processes and measurement tools of student satisfaction measurement, the frequency of measurements, and the method of their implementation. The subject of our research is a special tool for satisfaction measurements: the student review questionnaire of teaching work, which examines satisfaction with education and teaching work through student feedback. However, practical experience shows that most of the processes developed for student review need to be improved; we also examined the reasons for this.*

Keywords: *Higher Education, customer satisfaction; quality measurement; student survey; quality development*

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance in higher education institutions has become increasingly important in recent decades due to numerous changes. [1] The question of quality has become increasingly important for universities and higher education institutions, and today it is perhaps one of the most important issues. [2] The changes resulting from this fundamentally determine the operation of all higher education institutions. These include the Bologna Process and the resulting international competition between universities, as well as demographic changes. With the mass growth of higher education and the increase in the number of programs and universities, competition for students intensified. These processes have encouraged and still encourage universities to place increasing emphasis on

quality education and improving the quality of their services. This ambition of higher education institutions is reinforced by the principles and guidelines of quality assurance within the European Higher Education Area and the Law on Higher Education. The standards [3] and expectations set out therein provide a framework and direction for the quality assurance activities of institutions. [4] If we interpret education as a service based on [5] we can see that the generally used concept of service is quite different. In contrast to most services, during education, participants spend a very long time in the service process, as they regularly interact with each other for at least one semester or even across semesters. This increases the time spent assessing the quality of service. [6] As a result, students have more time to form an impression of the educational quality. This time interval is

enough to establish a personal relationship between the instructor and the student. In the case of most services, the consumer-supplier relationship is clear; the customer expects quality in return for money in relation to a service, after which he can rightly judge it. At the same time, the teacher-student relationship is based on a delicate, trusting relationship, where the student strives to complete the subject as easily as possible, and the instructor strives to transfer knowledge and to hold him accountable as fully as possible. Education differs from other services because the assessment is carried out by the instructor and service provider based on the performance of the consumer, i.e., the student. This is why people appreciate the teacher's role in the process. [7,8]

The most important goal of quality assurance is to maximize profit, which the service provider or manufacturer tries to ensure by satisfying consumer needs. The aim is therefore to achieve the highest possible level of satisfaction. There are many factors that influence an individual's satisfaction with a product or service. It is also difficult to determine its extent because it is not constant in time. With experience and constantly achieving new stimuli in connection with the product, the satisfaction of the individual also changes. Therefore, we can only measure and evaluate it at the specific moment. [9]

The aim of our research is to examine the practices of individual higher education institutions, to point out the problematic areas of current processes, and to propose a more efficient measurement process that serves quality improvement. When methodologically comparing the questionnaires on student reviews of teaching work in certain higher education institutions, we examine differences and opportunities for change. We are primarily looking for beneficial practices to solve the arising problems there, although we are convinced that due to the fundamental nature of the survey, many higher education institutions struggle with the same or similar problems.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer satisfaction forms even before purchase, so to measure consumer satisfaction, it is essential to know the product or service selection process of customers. Our prior knowledge about the object of our purchase can come from internal or external sources. An internal source can be one's own experience or a proven solution strategy. We can use this if we have already encountered the respective product or service. In case we have no previous knowledge, we must look for external information. This can be personal experience or a source of commercial information. [10] A beneficial example of the former can be the recommendation of an acquaintance, family member, or friend, while the latter is served as a model by advertisements and tests. Surveys, such as questionnaires, or qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups can measure consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction surveys differ from general opinion measurements in two important features. The first important difference is that research to measure customer satisfaction also serves communication purposes. In addition to customer feedback, this tool lets the company or service provider promote its effectiveness, services, and focus. The other is the expectation of respondents to receive feedback on the results of the research. Failure to provide this feedback may negatively affect respondents' willingness to conduct future research. [11] The purpose and result of consumer satisfaction surveys are twofold. In addition to supporting the organization in the development of products and services by mapping customer needs and satisfaction, it is also an important communication tool. It sends a message to consumers that the company cares about its customers. This is achieved by taking responsibility for your own activities. It strengthens consumers' relationship with the company. Satisfaction is not constant, so during the measurement we can only draw conclusions about the current state. A solution to this problem is continuous and regular monitoring of customer satisfaction. This eliminates the distorting effects of current events. [12]

Researchers define satisfaction based on two approaches. Satisfaction can be result-oriented, in which case it comes directly from experiences with consumption. These are primarily experiences that have an emotional impact on the consumer. In contrast, according to the

process-oriented approach, consumer satisfaction is a process in the development of which perception, logical evaluation, and psychological aspects all play a role. This approach prioritizes process evaluation. Based on this, education falls into the former category, i.e., it is result-oriented. The theory posits that student satisfaction directly stems from their educational experiences.

There is no consensus among professionals involved in quality assurance in education as to who can be considered consumers of higher education. To accurately define the circle of stakeholders is important for literature and other reasons. Since higher education institutions have to assess and then meet the needs of specific interest groups, it can be seen that the definition of key stakeholders has a fundamental impact on the functioning of the institution. There is a consensus among professionals engaged in higher education research that the student is one of, if not the most important, consumers of higher education.

The aim of higher education institutions is to increase market share by meeting students' needs, to increase their competitive advantage over competitors, and to create a positive image. [13] Student satisfaction is therefore the key to the future of institutions. That is why the primary consumer for universities is the student. This also explains why institutions focus their measurement practices on the student. [14] To meet the right needs, they must first be assessed. The tools for this are student satisfaction surveys, which, in addition to being suitable for determining students' needs and expectations, help to establish a long-term, lasting relationship between the institution and the students. [15] This relationship is the foundation of the alumni community, student loyalty, and the reputation of the institution. If the relationship established is good, phenomena such as drop-out, negative word of mouth, transfer, decrease in the number of students, or decrease in the quality of students admitted to the institution can be prevented or reduced.

Satisfaction surveys covering the whole or almost all students of the institution are best suited for mapping opinions about the services provided to students (e.g., dormitory care).

Faculty-level measurements should be conducted when we only want to collect information about services affecting students of the faculty. In this case, too, the subject of measurement is those services that affect all students. They rarely concern themselves with opinions about education and educators. [16] Surveys related to a given study program concern only a small proportion of students. Only students who have completed the training in question will be the focus of such surveys. Sometimes the institution also collects module-level feedback about a particular module or teaching unit. [17] This form of satisfaction measurement is less widespread in Hungarian higher education institutions. The module and course assessment questionnaire serves curriculum development. Finally, the last type is student reviews of teaching work. [18]

There are four main reasons and goals for collecting student feedback in the literature. The survey provides verifiable evidence that students had the opportunity to express their opinions about their instructors and courses. The institution uses the information from the surveys to implement developments and improve quality. In addition, it encourages students to think about learning. Thirdly, it enables evaluation of performance for institutions and gives students the opportunity to express their experience with the institution, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction with education. [19] We can divide the factors shaping student satisfaction into two groups. On the one hand, we can talk about personal factors, and on the other hand, institutional factors. The former group includes characteristics such as age, gender, workplace, student achievement, and learning style. In contrast, institutional factors identify the quality of education, teaching style, and teacher feedback. [20]

Other authors list aspects such as flexible curriculum, teaching ability, independence, student-centeredness, university atmosphere, prestige of the university, social conditions, and infrastructure among the factors influencing student satisfaction. However, there is also research showing that many physical aspects of university services are not important to students. The university's basic service and education,

primarily contributes to student satisfaction. However, there is a difference between prospective students and those already in education. While the quality of the physical environment may be an attractive factor for the former group, the satisfaction of existing students is mostly determined by the quality of education. Students are willing to endure infrastructure deficiencies as long as the quality of education is acceptable to them. [19] This is why it is extremely important to deal with student reviews of teaching work.

3. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Universities in Hungary continuously assess student satisfaction through various questionnaires. They measure not only the quality of education but also satisfaction with individual services, the shortcomings and weaknesses of the infrastructure approached from the point of view of students, and also strengths and weaknesses. The system of surveys is not uniform in universities. It is typical that students who have just entered the university are asked about their career choice and graduates about entering the labor market. In addition, student reviews of teaching work are not the only questionnaires that universities and colleges are required to conduct.

Student satisfaction surveys have many things in common with satisfaction measures used in other areas. Low response rates are one of the main problems of satisfaction surveys, which higher education institutions are constantly struggling with. Earlier, based on the literature, we found that customer satisfaction is partly formed in the consumer even before the purchase or consumption of services, based on prior knowledge, word of mouth, and reputation. The student collects information from a variety of sources during the career selection period. Family members, knowledge of the contemporary community, opinions of former students, programs organized by higher education institutions, and advertising campaigns all have an impact on the image that emerges in prospective students. On the one hand, these pieces of information provide decision-making factors for choosing a university, and on the other hand, they are also

sources of expectations placed on the institution and the resulting satisfaction.

Another important feature of satisfaction surveys, which is also characteristic of student satisfaction surveys, is that the customer, or in the case of university surveys, the student does not evaluate continuously. Thus, the formulated opinion records only a momentary state. In the time between consumption and filling out the questionnaire, the stimuli that hit the student influence the written opinion. In addition to being constantly changing, student satisfaction is the result of a long process and is not solely influenced by a single factor. The opinions of fellow students not only influence education and the teacher-student relationship but also shape student satisfaction. Moreover, the perception of other university services and the identity of those who provide them influence student satisfaction. During the student years, students gain more and more experience, because of which they constantly reassess their level of satisfaction. New experiences also affect their personal development; their needs and expectations may change, which also influences the perception of students and educational services. Student satisfaction is the result of a combination of several objective and subjective factors. Therefore, it is difficult to separate which ones reflect the quality of the activity provided by the institution and which relate exclusively to the feelings of the students. The main profile of the University is human services; the main indicator of its effectiveness and good work is how its partners judge its services. Some groups of partners are other elements of the University's services: students, lecturers, administrative staff, society, industrial companies, etc.

Universities think it is important to find out how their partners feel about the performance of services defined based on the revealed expectations, compliance with legal requirements, research results, etc. Its main stakeholders are students and staff. It intends to infer their opinion not only from indirect signs (e.g., complaints, spontaneous comments) but also in a direct, structured way, in the form of elaborated methods. Basically, it uses questionnaires as a tool for both students and staff for this purpose. This makes it easier to

quantify and compare results. Students have the opportunity to express their views both during training and immediately upon graduation through evaluation questionnaires developed for participants and graduates. Due to the nature of the training service, it is also important to know how students can utilize their acquired knowledge and qualifications in the long run. This is why the University uses 1, 3 and 5-year student tracking, from the data of which it can conclude about the adequacy of its services of a more general nature at the market level.

3.1 Different practices of the student survey system

The MyView system is specifically aimed at ease of use, making it a user-friendly review system for both students and teachers. The application, accessible from both laptops and mobile phones, provides students with quick and convenient access to the questionnaire. According to the procedure, the completion takes place in the last class of the semester; therefore, the teachers have the opportunity to describe the purpose and usefulness of the questionnaire. Filling in does not take up the student's free time, so the measure will hopefully increase the response rate. The developed program allows not only data collection but also visualization of data. The student can view the overall average and distribution just like the instructor. Of course, the latter group can learn the results in more depth. The information begins with the averages for their respective subjects, progresses through completion rates, and concludes with the overall response rate for each semester's class. In addition, the overall average result of university lecturers, the university completion rate, the number of students studying at the lecturer in each semester, and the number and proportion of respondents. The data displayed therefore include values such as the completion rate of all subjects taught in each semester for the instructor and the overall average of the evaluations given for the subjects.

The Unipoll data collection program also helps to improve the "feedback culture" and to increase cooperation between students and teachers, and to improve the quality of learning experience and teaching. With the help of the QR code-based system, teachers receive feedback faster about their work and teaching method, so they can react to it even in the next lesson. Based on the procedure, the QR code leading to the questionnaire is made available to the students by the instructor at the end of the lecture or practice. You can embed it in the lesson's projected curriculum or publish it on paper. Students have 25 minutes to complete the 9-10 question series. The code projected at the end of the term of study, in the last hour of each subject, refers to the assessment of the entire semester. Instructors receive and use anonymized responses almost immediately during the semester. We prepare faculty, departmental, and teaching statistics at the end of the semester using the data. This is the type of method that allows you to get immediate feedback.

The study system facilitates online student review. In this system, after the introduction of online data collection, students receive notifications in the Neptun system (an online educational administration system) about the start of the data collection period and information related to the questionnaire. With this, the all-course-to-all-student principle is achieved. Answers to a given course may be considered if at least 25% of the students admitted to the subject or at least five people completed the questionnaire. The online system ensures complete anonymity for students, which was previously questionable for some of the respondents and which, in many cases prevented them from answering. The conduct of the review, the monitoring of the response rate, and the analysis of data can be coordinated by a central organizational unit independent of the faculties. The method of data collection only facilitated and accelerated the process, thus creating the possibility of deeper analysis and more efficient use of data series. Another advantage is that the instructor can see the results immediately through the study system. The disadvantage is that students enter the study system by entering their own data, after which they no longer feel anonymity. Also, the system is not suitable for feedback on the results from students, so its use is rather one-sided. In

addition, student reviews are also carried out at the end of the training, which already contains extended questions, allowing them to be broken down into specializations in order to collect opinions lasting several semesters. In this case, the management receives a comprehensive overview of the entire training session.

3.2 Student survey procedure in our Institute

Our studies are based on the results of surveys conducted among students who passed the final exam in the 2021 and 2023 academic years. During this period, there were typically attendance and online final exams, so the surveys were conducted by students both online and in person. The data of the participation are presented in Table 1.

<div align="right">Table 1</div>

Participants of the survey in the different semester.

Semester	Participants (head)	Rate (%)
2020/2021/1	77	36
2020/2021/2	52	21
2021/2022/1	63	24
2021/2022/2	80	37
2022/2023/1	85	29
2022/2023/2	92	29

We also adapted the technical implementation of the review to this situation. We conducted reviews online, via email, and through personal reviews. The minimum acceptance level is 25%, so the evaluations given in the questionnaires are acceptable based on the results. In-person reviews are more effective than online. However, the 30% completion rate is still low, and it is important to develop proposals for improvement to increase this. The questionnaire used is structured as follows:

- Evaluation of educational activities of specialization (satisfaction [1-6] and importance [1-6]); 8 questions.
- Evaluation of general educational infrastructure (satisfaction [1-6] and importance [1-6]); 7 questions.
- Evaluation of the means to support the teaching of basic and vocational subjects

(satisfaction [1-6] and importance [1-6]); 5 questions.
- Evaluation of activities related to the organization of education (satisfaction [1-6] and importance [1-6]); 11 questions.
- Overall, I got what I expected from the training [1-6].
- If I were to start my studies again in this field, I would choose the same University again [1-6].
- Strengths-Weaknesses.

The diagram (Figure 1) represents the satisfaction and importance values for questions in each of the four topic groups in the survey questionnaire we used.
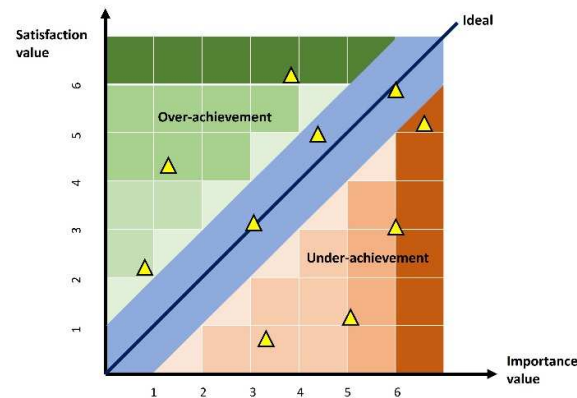

Fig. 1. The double evaluation diagram for the analysis of the survey.

The average value of the answers given in each question group is displayed on the so-called double evaluation scale. The vertical axis of the chart contains values for satisfaction, and the horizontal axis contains values for importance. The ideal level indicates the points at which respondents are as satisfied with the question as they find it important. At the ideal level, opportunities for improvement are found in moving towards the highest possible value. The chart area above the ideal level shows over-achievement. Services in this area are characterized by the fact that the reviewer's satisfaction rate is higher than they consider important. These can show areas where performance is better than expected. Points on the chart area below the ideal level represent under-achievement areas for improvement. We should primarily focus on these points when summarizing the results of the answers and

evaluations. At the same time, it is important to consider the location of the points within this territory. The further away the points are from the ideal lane, the greater the need for development in that area.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the surveys carried out during the period under review, we observed similar results year after year. We present the dual performance charts used for the last period, noting that we obtained the same results for the previous ones. Each chart shows data from surveys conducted at the end of the two semesters in a given academic year. Figure 2 presents the results of the educational activity of the specialization. Judging by the opinions of students, the points are in the so-called under-achievement field. The point closest to the ideal level is the accumulation of subjects.
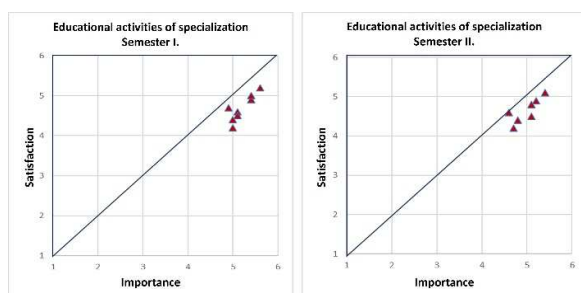

Fig. 2. The results of the educational activity of the specialization in double evaluation diagram.

Out of the eight questions, the professional and pedagogical preparedness of teachers was identified as the most important. The biggest difference between importance and satisfaction is the opportunity to participate in research. This is consistent with assessment, where students can identify strengths and weaknesses. Year after year, the preparedness of the teachers and the student-friendly attitude of the teachers consistently appear as strengths of the institution. At the same time, outdated, unnecessary theoretical knowledge stands out prominently among the weaknesses. Based on the results of the general education infrastructure question group (Figure 3), it can be determined that the opinions of the students differ slightly in the case of the two semesters. While in the first

semester, it was one of the topics examined in the over-achievement area, in the second semester, all points are already in the under-achievement area.
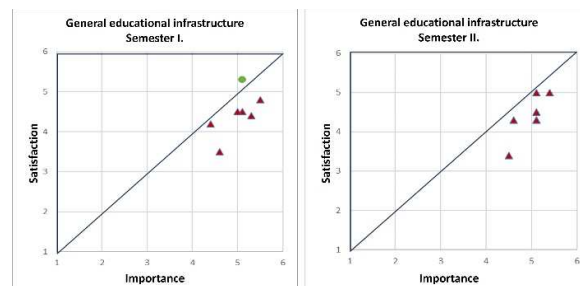

Fig. 3. Evaluation of the general educational infrastructure in double evaluation diagram.

The best performed service is the teaching and learning support by the university's library, the weakest is the dining facilities within the institution. The last issue is harmonizing fully with reality, because during the period under review there were no catering services, the improvement of which is still considered a priority by the management. The sports facilities are in the best position, approaching the ideal level. The biggest difference between importance and satisfaction is the educational infrastructure and the basic IT equipment. Our higher education institution has also recognized the need for development in this area and invested heavily in it. Figure 4 represents the results in the category of basic and professional subjects. The diagram clearly shows that the points are located in a very small area in both semesters. This means the students have a consistent opinion on these issues.
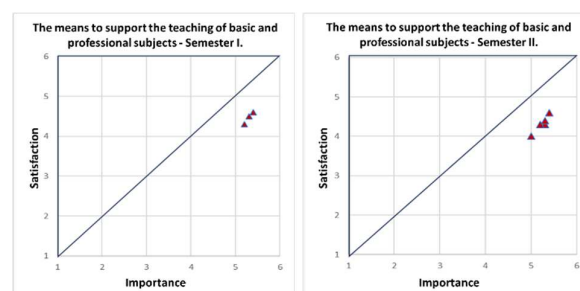

Fig. 4. Evaluation of the category related to the basic and professional subjects.

All points are in the under-achievement area, and the difference between importance and satisfaction is almost identical. This topic

contains feedback related to the facilities of the classrooms and laboratories and the quality of the learning materials and teaching methods. None of these points approach the ideal level.

The last category is the assessment of activities related to the organization of education. This group includes questions about lectures, timetables, and exams, as well as opinions from the educational office. Students can give feedback on the operation of the student office and the institution's information network in this area. These activities have a strong effect on the education life of the students and successful completion. Figure 5 presents the results.
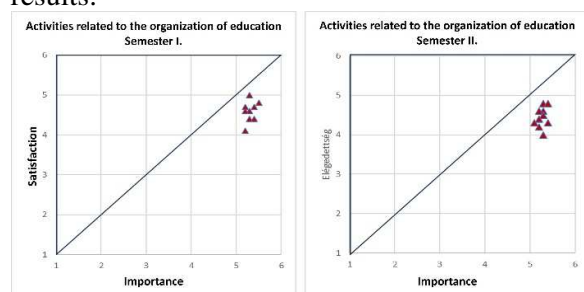

Fig. 5. The category activities of the organization.

The importance here is in every case more than 5.0, therefore significant attention should be paid to feedback. The organization of lectures and exams has the smallest difference between importance and satisfaction, which matches the fact that the teachers' student-centered approach is the institution's strength every semester. There is a medium deviation of the information system, which is since in recent years there have been many developments in this area. However, there are still areas that require improvement, such as the limited availability of English-language information on the website and the reduced activity of the student office. The biggest difference was the services of the educational office. Currently, students are only able to handle personal administration, which consumes a significant amount of their time and leads to their dissatisfaction. The development and application of electronic administration can be a turning point in this area.

5. CONCLUSION

Universities have given the issue of quality a central place in their operational practices to retain students. A lot of research has been dealing with the definition, development, and measurement of quality. Over the past few decades, there have been continuous studies that have focused on quality in general, as well as studies that have focused on specific areas of expertise. Higher education was no exception. For quality to be the subject of improvement, it became necessary to measure student satisfaction. We have presented the methods by which universities examine the satisfaction of their students. These procedures are continually changing with the constant change of needs and expectations and technology. Student reviews of teaching work have several not negligible characteristics, most of which are due to the development of student satisfaction. On the one hand, the student often evaluates the service they received much later than they experienced it. Thus, we can no longer regard the assessment as objective. The time elapsed between the service and the assessment and the experience of the student during that period distorts the original impressions. To overcome this, several higher education institutions are recently experimenting with the introduction of an immediate evaluation system, but practical experiences with its effectiveness are not yet available. Another attribute of student review, which is related to the assessment for a longer period, is the personal relationship between the service provider and the service user, i.e., the teacher and the student. During a semester, opinion is determined not only by the large number of impacts, but also by the student relationship and the presence or absence of sympathy, which ultimately affects the evaluation. In the same way, attitude, interest, or even the complete lack of interest in the given subject also affects the student's evaluation or lack of opinion. The student's goal with graduation, the attraction to certain specializations and interests, all have an impact on how seriously the student takes a subject. He listens to the units deemed unnecessary with less enthusiasm, which ultimately influences his opinion about the subject and the work of the teacher. One of the major issues is infrequent feedback, which often stems from a variety of other issues. Communication with students needs to be improved. This includes training

about surveys and quality assurance, as well as providing information on the results of questionnaires. It would be as much as important to motivate and inform teachers about the usefulness of the survey. The substantial contribution of the representatives of the student office in the review of the procedures shows that their more intensive involvement in the development of processes and closer cooperation with them would be useful and forward-looking. In addition, the discontinuity caused by frequent changes in the series of questions should be highlighted. Non-comparable sets of questions make it difficult to analyze data in the long term, so trends remain hidden. The conclusion is that although the survey system is continually changing, further improvements are needed. By sharing beneficial practices, student reviews carried out differently at different universities provide an opportunity to develop a uniform and effective measurement system over time.

Improving information and communication about the survey is essential to increase student confidence and participation in the evaluation. Furthermore, recommended development directions include interpreting surveys in a system and building databases to facilitate trend analysis. The range of corrective measures is endless, from which individual higher education institutions can freely choose according to their possibilities and needs. The only thing is certain, it is the continuous improvement demand of stakeholders towards institutions. The fundamental aspect of quality assurance thinking is the constant intention to improve.

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Evaluarea metodelor de feedback al studenților și îmbunătățirea performanțelor cadrelor didactice în învățământul superior

Rezumat: *În acest articol ne ocupăm de măsurarea calității, care este una dintre părțile cheie ale procesului de asigurare a calității în învățământul superior. Există mai multe documente care stabilesc orientări importante și fundamentale, dar reglementarea proceselor și a procedurilor de punere în aplicare depinde de instituții. Prin urmare, este o cerință uniformă ca instituțiile de învățământ superior să efectueze sondaje regulate și eficiente, obținând rate ridicate de participare. Obiectivele noastre sunt de a prezenta principalele etape ale acestei dezvoltări, precum și particularitățile și funcționarea sondajului de satisfacție a studenților dezvoltat datorită procesului. Pot fi observate diferențe semnificative între instituțiile de învățământ superior (IIS) în ceea ce privește procesele și instrumentele de măsurare a satisfacției studenților, frecvența măsurătorilor și metoda de implementare a acestora. Subiectul cercetării noastre este un instrument special pentru măsurarea satisfacției: chestionarul de evaluare a activității didactice de către studenți, care examinează satisfacția față de educație și activitatea didactică prin feedback-ul studenților. Cu toate acestea, experiența practică arată că majoritatea proceselor dezvoltate pentru evaluarea studenților trebuie să fie îmbunătățite; am examinat, de asemenea, motivele pentru aceasta.*

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