Kosovo Higher Education Teaching Quality Based on Students' Evaluations and Their Performances

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Abstract

The overall goal of this study is to identify, through undergraduate students, the evaluation level of teaching quality in the Kosovo Public University, "Hasan Prishtina". One of the main theses of this analytical study is to determine whether the quality of higher education in Kosovo is an influential factor in students' emotional wellbeing and academic achievements during their studies at the above University.

To identify the scope of this study, the quantitative research method has been used. The measuring instrument has been designed in the form of a questionnaire that was conducted with the 1006 students who are currently pursuing their BA degree at Hasan Prishtina University. For the conduction of the research, students were selected from the 12 different University departments. The research sample was determined for 1006 students, or 10% of students from the selected departments.

Results of the study indicate that a significant number of students of the Hasan Prishtina University are not satisfied with the teaching methods and assessments used by their University professors. Moreover, according to the survey, results can also imply that academic factors are impacting the students' emotional wellbeing.

Keywords: System of Higher Education in Kosovo; students' evaluations; emotional, psychological, challenges

1. Introduction

The overall goal of this study is to identify the undergraduate student evaluations on the teaching quality in the "Hasan Prishtina" University in Prishtina. The main aim of this

analytical study is to determine whether the quality of higher education in Kosovo is an influential factor in the academic achievements and emotional wellbeing of the above students throughout the completion of their undergraduate studies.

1.1 Literature Review

The "Hasan Prishtina" University, formerly known as University of Prishtina, was established in 1969. According to its status, one of the main University's goals is to be fully integrated into the European Integrated Zone of Higher Education, and take all the necessary and adequate steps for reformation in order to accomplish this goal (article 6, SU, 2012).

However, based on numerous evaluation reports conducted within the lasts years on Kosovo's Higher Education System, this system is still facing many challenges. The lack of motivation shown by academic staff at the "Hasan Prishtina" University to provide effective teaching was one of the key elements pointed out by the Organization for Security and Cooperation Mission in Kosovo (Attand, 2009). Similar evaluations year later have also brought attention to this factor (Canaj & Tahiri, 2010), evaluations these that consider improving the professionalism of academic and supporting staff to be one of the challenges for higher education at the University of Prishtina (p. 6).

In his study, (Attand, 2009) has also mentioned that the University of Prishtina is following its efforts in the implementation of key Bologna structures, tools and themes of the Bologna Process. However, according to the author, the University seems to be hovering somewhere mid-way of the whole reform process. Based on his study findings, the reforms on the University of Prishtina seem to be done in a very superficial way and without necessary monitoring. Moreover, according to Attard's evaluation, the students at the "Hasan Prishtina" University are not yet considered to be fully involved in the Bologna reforms (p. 19).

Worldwide theoretical perspectives on education and research conducted in the field, demonstrate that the education system approach together with other external factors have an impact on students achievements and their motivation to learn. According to Helme and Clarke, students carry out with themselves along with their studies, a number of characteristics which influence their cognitive development, skills, knowledge, dispositions, aspirations, expectations, perceptions, needs, values and goals (Helme & Clarke, 2001, p. 138). Therefore, the education system should be designed in a way that involves appropriate teaching methods, creates learning environment situation, and takes into consideration the prior conceptions of students as well (Kane & Russell, 2005).

Moreover, in order to positively affect students' achievements, teachers must be given the skills and knowledge to develop pedagogical content knowledge, to critique practice and challenge traditional pedagogy (Nuangchalerm, 2009; Nuangchalerm & Prachagool, 2010; Nuangchalerm, 2011).

Furthermore, since the assessments are considered the most important part of education that measure students' achievements, according to Goldberg and Stevens, "In a brain compatible classroom, assessment both measures achievement and provides motivation" (Goldberg & Stevens, 2001, p. 125), and assessment should be designed to fit the students, not vice versa

(Caine, Caine, McClinitic, & Klimek, 2005). Furthermore, according to Erlauer (2003), Immediate and constructive feedback from the teachers increases motivation and makes students aware of how to improve their work.

According to other theoretical perspectives, the emotional condition of students has an influence on their academic achievements as well. Students' emotional states influence their level of academic achievement. Therefore, the education system must provide a safe environment in which students are not anxious about their surroundings, but rather, open and receptive to new information (Caine et al., 2005).

Also, in order to improve the quality of teaching and protect students from major emotional distress, a series of theorists suggest that education policies along with being developed, should take into consideration drafting methods which contribute to building confidence in students and raising awareness of emotional concerns (Cowie, Boardman, Barnsley, & Jennifer, 2004).

2. Methodology

For the study, the quantitative research method has been used. The measuring instrument has been designed in the form of a questionnaire that was conducted with the 1006 students who are currently pursuing their BA degree at "Hasan Prishtina" University. For the conduction of the research, students were selected from the 12 departments of the University. The research sample was determined for 1006 students, or 10% of students of the departments selected.

Student participation in the research was voluntary, and completion of the questionnaire was anonymous. Participants in various forms completed data collection by visiting the respective faculties, by contacting students directly after their lectures, exams, stay in the library, at their student center, cafeteria or student gatherings.

The data collected from the questionnaire were processed through the social science statistical package SPSS. Interaction between the tested variables is presented through interactive analysis (cross-tabulation analysis), while the results for the standard deviation (SD) of the tested variables are tested and released through Pearson's chi-squared test (χ^2).

3. Results

The four below statements aim at identifying how teachers are evaluated from their students at the Hasan Prishtina University. As presented in the table below, there are different levels of student evaluations. A significant number of students agree that their teachers are adequately prepared, clearly indicate student responsibilities, and use teaching techniques that encourage students to relate their knowledge with their new experiences from practice. Yet, a certain number of students disagree with these statements and deem that their teachers do not consider students' suggestions seriously and do not highly evaluate their students' critical thinking (see Table 1).

Table 1. Assessing the quality of teaching by students

	I do not agree in any way	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Teachers clearly indicate the responsibilities of students	92 (9.1)	232 (23.1)	451 (44.8)	164 (16.3)	67 (6.7)
Accept the suggestions from the students seriously;	150 (14.9)	387 (38.5)	305 (30.3)	93 (9.2)	71 (7.1)
Highly evaluate students critical thinking;	121 (12.0)	319 (31.7)	390 (38.8)	103 (10.2)	73 (7.3)
Use teaching techniques that encourage students to relate their knowledge with their new experiences from practice;	118 (11.7)	308 (30.6)	319 (38.8)	127 (12.6)	63 (6.3)

Note: *Under the N sign, are presented the number of participants that took part in the survey, while as under the sign (%) are presented the percentages of the same numbers.*

Different result outcomes have been noticed while analyzing the students' evaluations about their teachers' evaluation qualities-techniques used to evaluate student performance. From the total number of students (N = 1006) who participated in the survey, the majority of students (N = 344, or 34.2) and (N = 141, or 14.0%) 'do not agree' and 'do not agree in any way' that their teachers evaluate their exams and assignments correctly. Moreover, the majority of the students who were part of the survey, also stated that they 'do not agree' (N-392, or 39.0%) 'do not agree in any way' (N= 139, or 13.8%) that their teachers offer individual feedback to their students on their assessments (see Table 2).

Table 2. Students evaluation on their teachers quality of students evaluation

	I do not agree in any way	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Teachers evaluate the students assignments and exams correctly;	141(14.0)	344(34.2)	340(33.8)	102(10.1)	79(7.9)
Teachers offer individual feedback on students exams and assignments;	139(13.8)	392(39.0)	302(30.0)	102(10.1)	71(7.1)

Note: *Under the N sign are presented the number of participants that took part in the survey, while as under the sign (%) are presented the percentages of the same numbers.*

3.1 The Interaction Between Teachers' Evaluation and Psychological Effects of Students

The data collected from the 1006 student who took part on the survey, show that students who have positively evaluated the quality of their teachers, appear to have less symptoms of burnout, energy reduction or lack of motivation to complete their studies. Of the total 1006 students who participated in this study, the number of students who agree and strongly agree that their professors clearly indicate the responsibilities of their students for successful completion of the course, compared to other students have less signs of burnout (See Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison between the evaluation of the quality of teachers and the burnout symptoms, or reduction of energy and motivation to complete studies

Professors clearly indicate the responsibilities of students for successful completion of the course.	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Do not agree	10 (12.8%)	21 (10.6%)	29 (10.8%)	32 (7%)
Do not agree in any way	15 (19.2%)	57 (28.6%)	67 (24.9%)	93 (20.2%)
Agree	35 (44.9%)	68 (34.2%)	120 (44.6%)	228 (49.6%)
Completely agree	12 (15.4%)	39 (19.6%)	30 (11.2%)	83 (18%)
Neutral	6 (7.7%)	14 (7%)	23 (8.6%)	24 (5.2%)

Explanation: According to the results of this analysis, performed with Pearson Chi-Square, the standard deviation in this case is (SD=0.08).

Also, the survey data analysis shows an interaction between the students' satisfaction with the way they are evaluated by their professors and their general emotional health. Students who have declared that they agreed that their professors evaluate exams and assignments correctly, have shown to have less symptoms of lack of confidence, and/or feelings of helplessness compared to students who did not agree that they receive fair evaluations from their professors (See Table 4)

Table 4. Comparison between student evaluation on the teachers evaluation and lack of self-confidence and sense of helplessness

Professors assess our tasks and exams correctly.	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Do not agree	10(17.9%)	11 (11.2%)	39 (13.7%)	81(14.3%)
Do not agree in any way	21(37.5%)	37(37.8%)	86 (30.2%)	200 (35.2%)
Agree	15 (26.8%)	32 (32.7%)	117 (41.1%)	176 (31%)
Completely agree	5 (8.9%)	10 (10.2%)	26 (9.1%)	61 (10.8%)
Neutral	5 (8.9%)	8 (8.2%)	17 (6%)	49 (8.6%)

Explanation: According to the results of this analysis, performed with Pearson Chi-Square, the standard deviation in this case is (SD =.235).

3.2 Connection Between Academic Performance and Psychological Changes

The study results also confirm the connection or interaction between academic performance of the "Hasan Prishtina" University and signs of panic and anxiety. Students who are moderately satisfied with their academic performance, have asserted that they have signs of panic or anxiety often (once a week) or several times a month (See Table 5)

Table 5. The comparison between the level of student satisfaction with their academic performance and signs of panic and anxiety

Level of student satisfaction	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	N (%)	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**
Not satisfied at all	7(10.9%)	5(2.8%)	7(2.7%)	16(3.2%)
Satisfied	7(10.9%)	38(21.5%)	32(12.2%)	77(15.3%)
Moderately satisfied	38(39.4%)	81(45.8%)	129(49.2%)	228(45.3%)
Fairly satisfied	8(12.5%)	39(22%)	68(26%)	134(26.6%)
Very satisfied	4(6.3%)	14(7.9%)	26(9.9%)	48(9.5%)

Explanation: According to the results of this analysis, performed with Pearson Chi-Square, the standard deviation in this case is (SD=.008)

4. Discussion

On a daily basis, there are numerous factors that influence a student's academic performance. These factors may have social, financial or educational backgrounds. The research survey conducted at Hasan Prishtina University with 1006 students has focused on one specific factor that regards faculty's influence in student academic performance. This conducted research helps analyze student views on their professors' teaching methods and how students feel, work and perform due to these methods.

What is clear from the surveyed students at this University, is that a great deal of the student body is unsatisfied with their professors teaching approaches and assessment. With a majority of students indicating that their professors would not take student suggestions seriously, the learning process in this University may very possibly be one-sided and majorly dominated by the professor. From the surveys above it is also clear that it is not uncommon for students to feel panic and anxiety at least once a week in their learning environment, this becoming a factor of undeniable impact on student academic performance.

5. Conclusion

Though the results of this research study encompass a great number of students, through data analysis it has become evident that these students' evaluations do not necessarily represent the opinions of the general student body at the given University. The results of this study may be utilized to reflect the local educational situation based on student opinions. Also, the author is skeptical that the results collected through these questionnaires are completely reliable for surveyed students have shown fear and insecurities in expressing their honest opinions on the matter at hand. Moreover, a common manifestation noticed throughout the research process,

was discovering different answers written on the questionnaire compared to those spoken out lout during conversation with those conducting the research.

However, from the both evaluation reports conducted within the last years in the field, and the survey results, it can be concluded that despite the progress that has been made within the Kosovo Higher Education system for reforming its education approach, the higher education system in Kosovo is still facing challenges. Moreover, the survey results also prove that students who are benefiting from this education system are not satisfied with their professors teaching methods and evaluation approaches. This lack of satisfaction has shown to have an influence in their academic achievements and emotional wellbeing, by contributing towards signs of panic or anxiety, lack of self-confidence, burn out symptoms, or lack of energy and motivation to complete their studies.

Therefore, the Kosovo Higher education system through its process of reforming, should always take into consideration the need to improve the teaching methodology and evaluations, while always cooperating with its beneficiaries, in this case with the students who attend this University. Ultimately, the emotional wellbeing of the students should not be ignored, since this is a factor that contributes on the students' academic performance and motivation to pursue their further education.

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