

Criteria that Ensure the Quality of Higher Education in Tourism and Sport Management Study Programme

Rimantas Mikalauskas, Edmundas Jasinskas, Biruta Svagzdiene

Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education

Sporto st. 6, LT-44221, Kaunas, Lithuania

e-mail: r.mikalauskas@lkka.lt, edmundas.jasinskas@gmail.com, b.svagzdiene@gmail.com

crossref <http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.ee.23.3.1204>

The quality of higher education is predominantly determined by the work of academic staff and organization of instructional process; the criteria of higher education institution's infrastructure are of moderate importance. Professional qualities of teaching staff that are related to communication with students during lectures are important for quality assurance; effective communication with others was found to be the most important personal quality of teaching staff. Professional qualities were evaluated as being more important than personal ones. The most effective teaching methods important to the quality of higher education are different types of group work in the classroom. In general, the teaching and learning methods used in delivering Sport and Tourism Management study programme were rated as effective. The following properties of learning materials used in Sport and Tourism Management study programme received the highest evaluation: information links to specialty, suitability, and applicability of theoretical knowledge in practice. The objective of the research is to diagnose and evaluate criteria that assure the quality of Sport and Tourism Management study programme. The main tasks set for the research were: to review the concept of the quality of higher education and aspects of its evaluation from the theoretical point of view; to discuss the general quality assurance criteria from the theoretical point of view; to evaluate the criteria that determine the quality of teaching and learning in Sport and Tourism Management study programme.

The object of the research is to establish criteria that determine the quality of teaching and learning in Sport and Tourism Management study programme. The problem of the research is to find criteria that assure the quality of teaching and learning in Sport and Tourism Management study programme.

Keywords: higher education; quality of higher education; quality assurance criteria; diagnosis, evaluation.

Introduction

On the European level *the relevance of the research to the quality of higher education* is emphasized and the directions for the improvement of quality of higher education are outlined in the key political documents of the Bologna process (The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, 2005). The Bologna process started in 1999 after the declaration to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was announced. The goal of the Bologna process is to create the area of European higher education where academic degree and quality assurance standards are set forth to be compared among the European states, especially among the signatories of Lisbon Convention. This declaration led to a number of reforms to enhance the compatibility, comparability, competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education to students and researchers from Europe and other continents. At present 47 countries, of these 27 European Union member states, are partners in the Bologna process. After signing of Bologna declaration in 1999, summit meetings of ministers for education were held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), and Leuven (2009). International conventions in the field of the quality of higher education, which started with unification of quality assurance standards in the European area, are now moving towards more global goals, whereas quality assurance

requirements are adjusted to the actual social and labour market needs.

Different definitions and constructs of higher education, the process of activity, and the quality of higher education are presented in research literature (Aleksandraviciene, 2005; Sailor, 2002). Most often the quality of higher education is related to the general perception of the quality of higher education institution's activity related to instruction management and delivery.

Some authors (Rossi, et al 2003; McLaughlin, et al 2002) have noticed similarities among the theoretical aspects in the assessment of the quality of study programmes. The research of the modern quality assurance concepts and their differences have revealed that some higher education institutions focus on approved and clearly defined study programme quality criteria and identification of the current condition, while other institutions tend to emphasize the role of self-assessment, building confidence in higher education institution, identifying the current condition and encouraging the improvement (Gudzinskiene, 2007; Ramanauskiene, 2008; Ramsden, 2000).

The analysis made by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on the challenges of education (2008) states that the development of quality assurance system has already started, however the process lacks a systematic approach. The main goal of quality assurance is to revise and to harmonize quality assessment

criteria and indicators and to provide for adequate monitoring methods.

There is a strong consensus (Stukalina, 2010; Serafinas, Ruzevicius, 2009; Pukelyte, 2009; Ginevicius & Gineviciene, 2009; Grundey, 2008; Zafiroopoulos & Vrana, 2008; Jasinskas, 2008; Neverauskas & Stankevicius, 2008) that evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is a complex process. The quality of higher education is perceived as the culture of higher education institution and its attitude towards values; therefore, the evaluation of the quality of education is an integral element of the organization's quality assurance process (Lea & Callaghan, 2006).

Specific classifications of evaluation criteria for tourism and sport study programmes are provided in research literature (Solnet, et al 2007; Kazlauskaite et al, 2009). The authors propose to evaluate the quality of tourism study programmes by programme goals, course structure, delivery of knowledge to students and the contents of knowledge, i.e. what part of the study programme is dedicated directly for the subject matter of tourism; the teacher's experience and competencies; important topics not included into the programme; skills developed by students; visiting teachers from other institutions and specialists from other fields; the importance given to job placements; whether the study programme gives the knowledge that is expected by potential employers of the graduates (Holland, 2006; Moore, Koul, 2007).

Authors report that partnerships with other organizations from education system, communication with employers, the funding of education and effective use of IT are important factors in education quality assurance (Moore, Koul, 2007).

Hopeniene, et al (2010), Malakauskaite & Navickas (2010), Aivaz and Vancea (2009), Savrina, et al (2008), Koneenik & Ruzzier (2008) have noted the growth of the tourism and sport sector. Well trained management specialists are necessary to ensure further growth of tourism and sport services (Auruskeviciene et al, 2010; Kazlauskaite et al, 2009; Urban, 2009; Kersiene & Savaneviciene, 2009; Kilijoniene et al, 2010;).

Knowledgeable staff has a direct effect on the company's competitiveness and the quality of services (Martinkus et al, 2009; Snieska & Bruneckiene, 2009; Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2009; Liepe & Sakalas, 2008; Jasinskas & Simanaviciene, 2008; Snieska, 2008; Melnikas, 2008).

Research problem addressed by this article is finding the criteria for the assessment of quality of higher education.

Goal of the article is to diagnose and evaluate the criteria that ensure the quality of Tourism and Sport Management study programme.

Object of the article is the criteria that ensure the quality of Tourism and Sport Management study programme.

Research methods used: analysis of scientific literature (to diagnose the criteria of effective quality assurance in higher education), a questionnaire survey of students, descriptive statistical analysis (to evaluate the criteria of effective quality assurance in Tourism and Sport Management study programme).

Research methodology

Survey sample. The questionnaire survey (case study) was done during the spring semester in 2011. The questionnaires were given to 3rd and 4th year Tourism and Sport Management students (38 respondents).

The following quality assurance criteria were investigated:

1. Factors that determine the quality of higher education. The respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of each factor for the quality of higher education. The block comprised 23 statements (factors determining the quality of higher education).

2. The role of teaching staff in the instructional process and their influence on the quality of higher education. The block comprised 33 statements (students' judgments of the effectiveness of certain qualities of the teaching staff).

3. The most effective methods of instruction (students' perception), i.e. factors determining the quality of lectures in Tourism and Sport Management study programme. This block of statements comprised 35 methods used in instructional process.

4. Learning resources for the subjects taught in Tourism and Sport Management study programme. This block of statements comprised 14 methods used in instruction.

Survey method. The survey was made by using a questionnaire designed by Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre in 2008. This questionnaire was designed for the survey of undergraduate students' (from colleges and universities) attitudes to the system of higher education in Lithuania in 2008 (What determines the quality of higher education, 2008). The questionnaire was based on the criteria developed in the research studies of factors determining the quality of higher education (Ruzevicius, (2007), Pukelis, Savickiene (2004), Moore, Koul (2007)).

The questionnaire statements were adjusted to Tourism and Sport Management study programme delivered in Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education. The responses were scaled by using a five-level Likert item. The questionnaire was anonymous.

The answers were processed by SPSS 13.0 and MS Excel programs. Given the response bias in the survey it can be stated that the survey presented in this paper is exploratory and conclusions are made within the sample limits without projecting the results on the entirety of the student population.

The process of evaluating the quality of Tourism and Sport Management studies

Theoretical analysis has revealed that evaluation of the quality of higher education is the key for the improvement of study programmes. The general criteria directly related to the quality assurance in higher education are based on the classification of factors that determine the quality of education by distinguishing higher education infrastructure and resources, technologies, internal and external factors, student attitudes, actions and competencies of academic staff, programme contents (what materials are presented),

and form (forms of instruction). Such classification of education quality assurance factors complies with the guidelines developed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter CQAHE) which served as a basis for this survey.

The authors researching the quality of higher education have highlighted the evaluation process implementation and evaluation models used as the most important items in quality assurance. Barnet (1992) has noted the importance of evaluation process and applied models in the evaluation of study programme quality. According to this author, the quality assessment in higher education not only assures the quality of study programmes (including Tourism and Sport Management study programme) but also clearly defines quality criteria, quality assurance goals and directions for the improvement of study programmes (including Tourism and Sport Management study programme).

Thune (1998) has distinguished two directions in higher education quality assurance and quality policy, namely the continental (prevailing in European countries) and British:

- the Continental approach to the evaluation of study programmes and higher education quality assurance focuses on the external side of the evaluation, i.e. the preparation of students to participate in the national economy. Such approach is based on the accountability of higher education institutions to national governments who finance higher education;
- the British higher education quality assurance and study programme evaluation systems have a higher level of independence. British universities are free to choose the quality assurance systems, evaluation methods and procedures as they are less dependent on the funding from the government.

At the turn of the 20th century greater attention was given to higher education quality assurance and evaluation of study programmes both on the national (external) and institutional (internal) levels in Europe as well as in the United Kingdom with the aim to improve the quality of higher education (Wersterheijden, 1992).

In the survey of higher education quality assurance and study programme evaluation systems in Scandinavia, Wahlen (1998) noted the importance given to quality assurance in these countries. In Denmark programme-level evaluation is done for all major education programmes. Different higher education quality assurance and programme evaluation system is used in Finland, where the Higher Education Evaluation Council was established in 1996. According to Wahlen (1998), the purpose of the Council is to assist both higher education institutions and the Finnish Ministry of Education in developing evaluation. Sweden, too, has an effective and well developed higher education quality assurance system. There are four forms of evaluation on national scale (Jacobsson, 1990).

D. Aleksandraviciene (2005) proposes to analyze the quality of higher education process by the quality of outputs. The outputs of higher education can be described as intellectual products and the quality management of such products is very specific. It should be noted that in

contrast to all other products, the intellectual product can be used many times and in the long run the properties of such a product do not deteriorate. On the contrary, the intellectual product reveals new, previously unnoticed properties and shows the ways for improvement.

Consequently, the quality of higher education process and its evaluation must be student-oriented because students have many roles in higher education. Firstly, after graduation they can be regarded as outputs of a higher education institution; secondly they are clients of education providers; thirdly, they are collaborators in the instructional process; fourthly, they are raw material for the instructional process because the teaching and learning output is knowledge and competences gained by the students of higher education institutions. On the other hand, students' parents, future employers, academic staff, alumni, sponsors, government authorities, and general public are interested in high-quality education and they all can be viewed as clients of a higher education institution.

Research results

After the theoretical analysis of general criteria used in higher education quality assurance, the factors affecting the quality of higher education were classified by distinguishing the infrastructure and resources, technologies, internal and external factors, student attitudes, performance and competencies of teaching staff, study programme content (what material is presented), and form (in what manner lectures are delivered). The first statement in the research read: "The following higher education quality criteria are important among others: work of the teacher, organization of teaching and learning, institution's resources". The summary of the evaluated influence of the teaching staff on the quality of higher education shows that respondents put more value on the actual characteristics of teacher demonstrated in lectures than on formal merits and credentials. These results confirm the initial estimation about the first statement "The following higher education quality criteria are important among others: work of the teacher, organization of teaching and learning, institution's resources." The importance given to the teacher's work is also common in research literature (Parini, 2004, Ramsden, 2000, and other authors).

In the evaluation of higher education institution's infrastructure many respondents marked the following factors as "rather important": timetable management and convenience, use of new technologies, suitability of classrooms for lectures, administrative procedures. Quite a number of the rating "rather important" was given to the abundance and access to study materials, library resources, facilities of the academy and financing of higher education. It should be noted that the importance of infrastructure and financing are also recognized in academic literature; the importance of infrastructure is emphasized by Watkins, Marsick (2003), and the importance of financing on the quality of higher education is noted by Ruzевичius (2007), Serafinas and Rucevicius (2009), Sileika, Tamasauskiene (2005).

Organization of instructional process was assessed as 'rather important' and 'moderately important' factor

influencing the quality of higher education. The biggest number of ratings 'very important' was given to the student's motivation to learn. It should be noted that the importance of the student's personal motivation to learn is emphasized by Sigala (2002).

The novelty of study programs, academic achievement assessment systems, the number of practical training sessions were rated the most, followed by the variety of subjects and the number of lectures. Almost 63% of respondents believe that the number of lectures influences the quality of higher education.

According to the questionnaire answers the most important instructional process factors influencing the quality of higher education are: the student's motivation to learn, academic achievement assessment systems and the number of practical sessions. Other factors, such as the number of lectures, the variety of subjects were assessed as factors having less importance to quality assurance.

The mean values enable to compare the assessments of different criteria. The mean values of ratings in the survey show that the highest ratings were given to the following

factors as having the greatest importance on the quality of higher education: qualification of the teaching staff (4.3 points of 5); student's motivation to learn (4.3), methods of instruction (4.1), innovative approaches used by the teacher (4), personal characteristics of the teacher (3.9), possibility for students to receive support (3.9). The following factors were considered to be the least important for quality assurance: the good-will of the education institution (2.7 points); teacher's age (2.8); number of lectures (3.1), administrative procedure (3.1), and variety of subjects (3.2) (Figure 1).

The strength of correlation between individual quality assurance factors was identified by using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient. Correlation between the factors was analyzed because factors with direct influence on quality assurance are associated and reinforce or weaken each other. Therefore the association of ranked factors and their ranking was analyzed (when $\rho < 0.05$). Factors with the strongest association (coefficient above 0.45) are presented in Figure 1.

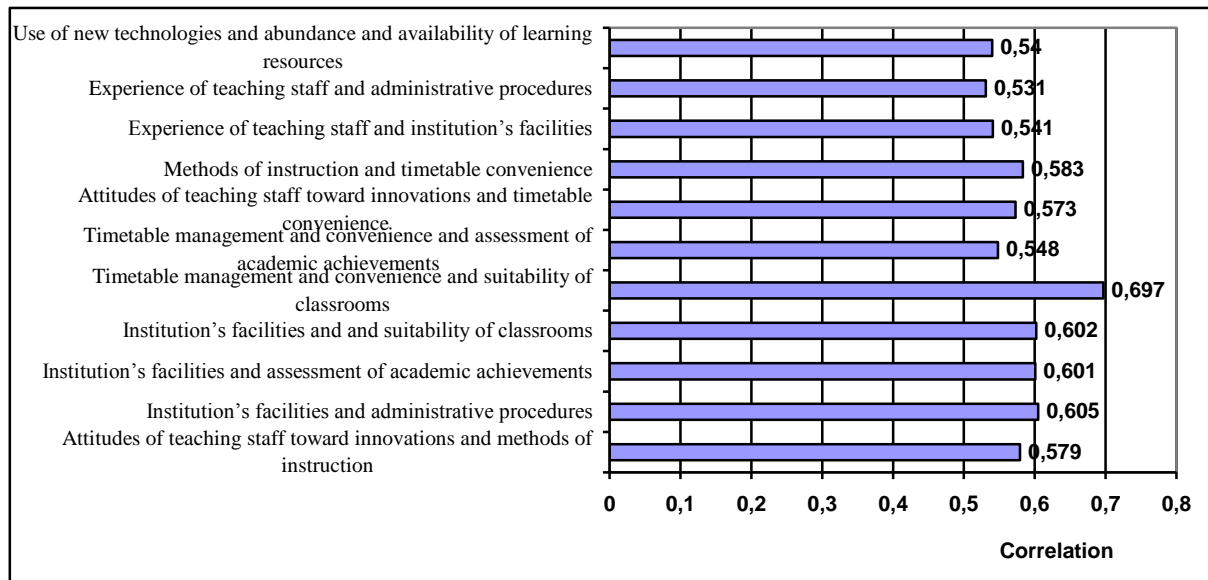


Figure 1. The strongest statistically meaningful correlation between the ranked quality assurance criteria (%)

Source: created by author

The following correlations can be observed in Figure 1: qualification of the teaching staff and methods of instruction; attitudes of teaching staff toward innovations and the use of new technologies; the number of practical sessions and attitudes of teaching staff toward innovations; the number of lectures and academic titles of teaching staff; academic titles of teaching staff and the variety of subjects; personal qualities of teaching staff and the use of new technologies; the use of new technologies and institution's facilities; the use of new technologies and convenience of timetable; library resources and institution's facilities; library resources and assessment of academic achievements; methods of instruction and suitability of classrooms; methods of instruction and availability of support; the student's personal motivation

and assessment of academic achievements; the student's personal motivation and abundance of learning resources; experience of teaching staff and assessment of academic achievements; institution's facilities and the variety of subjects; administrative procedures and assessment of academic achievements; the variety of subjects and assessment of academic achievements; the variety of subjects and suitability of classrooms; timetable management and convenience and institution's facilities; assessment of academic achievements and suitability of classrooms; assessment of academic achievements and access to learning resources; suitability of classrooms and abundance of learning resources; abundance and access to learning resources and availability of support.

These associations show, which pairs of factors are similarly significant to students. The results of correlation analysis suggest that individual factors of quality assurance are associated and possibly influence each other and thereby confirm the findings of Brookes (2003), Ramsden (2000) and other scholars.

Professional qualities of teaching staff were rated by their influence on quality assurance: dedication, didactical qualifications, ability to help students to study effectively, planning of the instruction process, innovations, team work. The most valued qualities of teaching staff by their influence on the quality of higher education were the following: knowledge of the subject, ability to evoke students' interest, communication with students, respect to faculty members and students, ability to help students to study effectively, encouragement and motivation of students, practical experience. Similar results from research of the importance of academic staff qualities to quality assurance are reported by other authors too; for instance, A. G. Raisiene (2004) emphasized the ability of teaching staff to work with students as an important factor influencing the quality of higher education. The importance of professional characteristics of teaching staff to quality assurance was also proved by Parini (2004), Ramsden (2000).

The respondents predominantly believe that the quality of higher education is much more influenced by those personal characteristics of teaching staff that ensure effective communication with other people, whereas the ways of demonstrating personality are less important. The following qualities of teaching staff (both professional and personal) were found to be the most important to the quality of higher education: knowledge of the subject; ability to evoke interest; ability to help students to study effectively, impartiality, encouragement and motivation of students, respect to faculty members and students, practical experience, conflict resolution skills, ability to plan and attain outcomes, communication with students, honesty.

The students found the following methods of instruction to be the most effective: excursions to places relevant to the course. Evaluation of tests and discussion of results, group projects, various demonstrations, classroom discussions received lower ratings.

The total evaluation of instructional process is above average, therefore we can conclude that frequency analysis confirm the opinion that methods of instruction in Tourism and Sport Management study programme are effective (Figure 2).

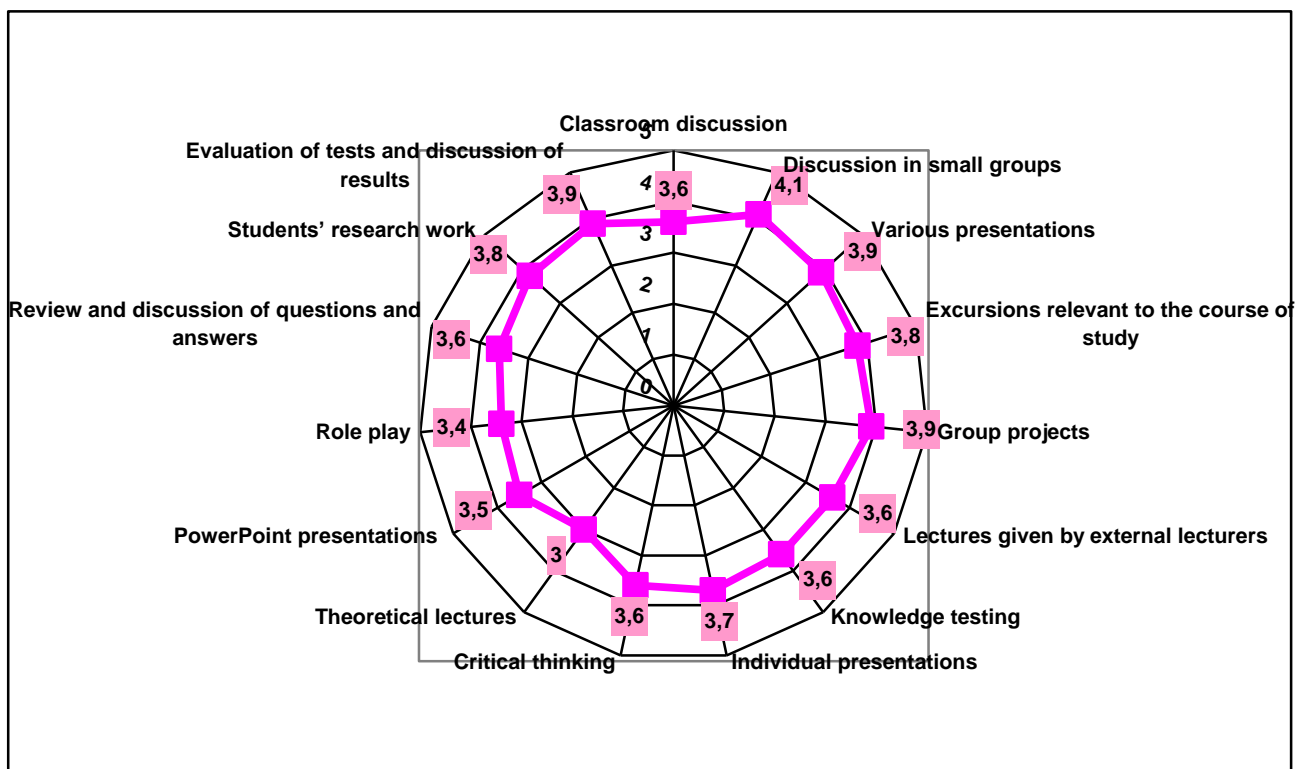


Figure 2. Mean values of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the methods of instruction

Source: created by author

The respondents indicated that various group work methods and individual research work of students were more effective teaching and learning methods. It can be argued that group work methods encourage creative use of knowledge and encourage students to be more active in lectures. The importance of methods that stimulate

thinking and practical use of knowledge is also emphasized by researchers (Ramsden, 2000; Gudzinskiene, 2007).

The following methods of instruction were considered to be less effective: theoretical lectures (3b.), role play (3,4b.). The respondents evaluated theoretical lectures as averagely important. Gudzinskiene (2007) also noted that theoretical presentation of learning material is

fairly effective and should be only used in combination with practical assignments and methods stimulating students' active thinking.

In summary of the above, the most effective methods by their influence to the quality of higher education are as follows: group work, assessment and discussion of test results, various demonstrations, group projects, classroom discussions, presentations, discussions in small groups, assessment of knowledge, research work.

The analysis of the evaluation of learning materials in Tourism and Sport Management study programme has revealed that the following properties were rated the highest: linking information to specialty, suitability, practical application of theoretical knowledge, rationality, accessibility, practicality, sufficiency, relevance. These properties of learning materials are also highlighted by researchers Unui, et al (2006).

Many criteria received similar ratings, for example: relevance (3,6b.), practicality (3,6b.), accessibility (3,6b.), suitability (3,6b.), informative capability (3,6b.), compatibility of subjects (3,6b.), novelty of information (3,6b.), practical application of theoretical knowledge (3,6). The linking of learning material to foreign practice was the lowest rated criterion (3,3b.). It can be stated that the respondents give above average evaluation to learning materials used in Tourism and Sport Management study programme. No substantive differences between evaluation criteria were observed.

The analysis has revealed that evaluations of learning material criteria correlate in many cases. The linking of learning material to foreign practice, practicality, rationality, sufficiency, accessibility, usefulness, informative capacity, compatibility of subjects, the linking of information to specialty, novelty of information, practical application of theoretical knowledge, clarity, and relevance had stronger or weaker association with all criteria.

No correlation, though, was observed between relevance and sufficiency. Similar trends in respondents' evaluation of the criteria applied to the learning materials used in Tourism and Sport Management study programme are observed. The respondents understand the learning material as the entirety of different criteria. The following properties of the learning materials were rated the highest by the respondents: linking of information with specialty, usefulness, practical application of theoretical knowledge,

rationality, accessibility, practicality, sufficiency, and relevance.

Conclusions

1. Assessment of the quality of higher education constitutes the basis for the improvement of study programmes. There are different approaches towards quality assessment in higher education: on the one hand the priority is given to approved and clear programme quality criteria and assessment of the present conditions, on the other hand emphasis is placed on self assessment that enhances confidence in a higher education institution and encouragement of improvement.

2. Based on different classifications the following groups of universal criteria used for quality assessment in higher education are distinguished: 1. Contents of study programmes; 2. Form of study programmes; 3. Work and abilities of teaching staff; 4. Infrastructure and the level of funding of higher education (resources); 5. Used technologies (IT systems); 6. Institution's internal and external factors (public information); 7. Students' attitudes.

3. The quality of higher education mostly depends on those qualities of teaching staff that are demonstrated in lectures, rather than on formal merits. Process organization factors the most important to the quality of higher education are: timetable management and convenience, the abundance and availability of learning resources. The key factors of the instructional process are student's personal motivation, academic achievement assessment system, and the number of practical sessions. The work of education staff and organization of instructional process are valued as more important factors than infrastructure.

4. The methods of instruction in Tourism and Sport Management programme are effective; all methods were rated above average. The analysis revealed that the methods of instruction are valued as very important factor in quality assurance. The learning materials used in Tourism and Sport Management programme received positive evaluation as all aspects of learning materials were rated above average. The following qualities of the course subjects were indicated as important factors to quality assurance: information linking to specialty, suitability, and practical application of theoretical knowledge, rationality, accessibility, practicality, sufficiency and relevance.

References

- Aivaz, K. A., & Vancea, D. P. C. (2009). A Study of the Black Sea Tourism Companies Efficiency Using Envelope Techniques. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 8(3), 217-230.
- Aleksandraviciene, D. (2005). Studiju kokybes uztikrinimo sistemos modelio kurimas. *Ekonomika ir vadyba: aktualijos ir perspektyvos*, Nr. 5, 14-22.
- Auruskeviciene, V., Pundziene, A., Skudiene, V., Gripsrud, G., Nes, E. B., & Olsson, U. H. (2010). Change of Attitudes and Country Image after Hosting Major Sport Events. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*, 21(1), 53-59.
- Barnet, R. (1992). *Improving higher education: total quality care*. SRHE and Open University Press.
- Brookes, M. (2003). Evaluating the 'Student Experience': An Approach to Managing and Enhancing Quality in Higher Education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 2(1), 17- 26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3794/johlste.21.27>
- Dale, C., & Robinson. R. (2001). The Theming of Tourism Education: a Three-Domain Approach. *International journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 13(1), 30-34. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09596110110365616>

- Ginevicius, R., & Gineviciene, V. (2009). The Compliance of Master's Degree Studies with the Economic Needs of the Country. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 15(1), 136-153. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/1392-8619.2009.15.136-153>
- Grundey, D. (2008). TQM in University Studies: Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in a Lithuanian University. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 7(2), 216-235.
- Gudzinskiene, V. (2007). *Aukstosios mokyklos destytoju pedagoginiu kompetenciju bei gebejimo taikyti siuolaikines studiju technologijas tobulinimas : mokomoji medziaga*. Vilnius: Petro ofsetas.
- Holland, K. (2006). Education Needs for Integrated care: a Literature Review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 56(2), 144-156. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03992.x>
- Hopeniene, R., Railiene, G., & Kazlauskiene, E. (2009). Potential of Virtual Organizing of Tourism Business System Actors. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*, (3), 75-85.
- Jacobsson, P. (1990). A Plea for More Consistent Definition of Quality in Education and Research. *Quality and Communication for Improvement: Proceedings 12th European AIR Forum*, Universitu Claude Bernard Ecole Normale Supérieure Lyon, France, September 9-12, Enschede: EAIR, a European Higher Education Society; Utrecht: Lemma. 59-84.
- Jasinskas, E. (2008). Formation of the European Agricultural Support Model: Reasons, Principles and Tendencies. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 7(2), 55-68.
- Jasinskas, E., & Simanaviciene, Z. (2008). Governments Support for Farmers Knowledge Dissemination and its Improvement. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(3), 67-72.
- Kazlauskaite, R., Buciuниene, I., Turauskas, L., & Salciuviene, L. (2009). A Comparative Study of Employee Empowerment in Danish and Lithuanian Hotels. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 8(2), 66-85.
- Kersiene, K., & Savaneviciene, A. (2009). The Formation and Management of Organizational Competence Based on Cross-Cultural Perspective. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(5), 56-65.
- Kilijoniene, A., Simanaviciene, Z., & Simanavicius, A. (2010). The Evaluation of Social and Economic Development of the Region. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*, 21(1), 68-79.
- Koneenik, M., & Ruzzier, M. (2008). The Customers Perspective on the Tourism Destination Brand: A Structural Equation Modeling Study. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 7(1), 169-184.
- Lea S. J., & Callaghan L. (2008). Lecturers on Teaching within the 'Supercomplexity' of Higher Education. *Higher Education*, 55(2), 171-187. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10734-006-9041-5>
- Liepe, Z., & Sakalas, A. (2008). The Three-Loop Learning Model Appliance in New Product Development. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(3), 73-80.
- Malakauskaite, A., & Navickas, V. (2010). Relation between the Level of Clusterization and Tourism Sector Competitiveness. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*, 21(1), 60-67.
- Martinkus, B., Stoskus, S., & Berzinskiene, D. (2009). Changes of Employment through the Segmentation of Labour Market in the Baltic States. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(3), 41-48.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1991). *Evaluation and education: at quarter century*/M. W. McLaughlin, & D. C. Phillips. Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Melnikas, B. (2008). Integration Processes in the Baltic Region: the New Form of Regional Transformations in the European Union. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(5), 54-64.
- Moore, M. G. (2007). The Theory of Transactional Distance. *The Handbook of Distance Education*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 89-108.
- Navickas, V., & Malakauskaite, A. (2009). The Possibilities for the Identification and Evaluation of Tourism Sector Competitiveness Factors. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(1), 37-44.
- Neverauskas, B., & Stankevicius, V. (2008). Project Management: Research and Studies at the Faculty of Economics and Management of Kaunas University of Technology. *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(4), 59-66.
- Parini, J. (2004). *The art of teaching*. The Oxford press.
- Pukelis, K., & Savickiene, K. (2004). Studiju kokybes vertinimo sistemos: institucinis ir programu lygmenys. *Pedagogika*, (73), 5-14.
- Pukelyte, R. (2009). Mokiniu identiteto busenos ir mokymosi motyvacijos sasajos. *Pedagogika*, (94), 23-27.
- Raisiene, A. G. (2004). Studentu ir destytoju poziurio į aukstuju mokyklu destytoju edukacine kompetencija raiska. *Pedagogika*, (701), 169-174.
- Ramanauskiene, J. (2008). Studiju kokybes valdymas aukstojoje mokykloje: patirtis, tendencijos ir perspektyvos. *Vadybos mokslas ir studijos – kaimo verslu ir ju infrastrukturos pletrai*, (4), 1-9.
- Ramsden, P. (2000). *Kaip mokyti aukstojoje mokykloje*. Vilnius: Aidai.

- Rossi, P. H. (2003). *Evaluation* / P. H. Rossi, M. W. Lipsey, & H. E. Freeman (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks–London–New Delhi: SAGE Publications. 2003.
- Ruzevicius, J. (2007). Studijų kokybes vadybos sistemų tyrimas. *Ekonomika*, (80), 51-69.
- Sailor, W. (2002). *Inclusive Education and School/Community Partnerships*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Savrina, B., Grundey, D., & Berzina, K. (2008). Cooperation - The form of Sustainable Tourism Industry in Latvia. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 14(2), 151-161. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/1392-8619.2008.14.151-161>
- Serafinas, D., & Ruzevicius, J. (2009). Aukštųjų mokyklų veiklos tobulinimo pokyčių kontekste išvalgos. *Ekonomika ir vadyba*, (14), 1091-1099.
- Sigala, M. (2002). The Evolution of Internet Pedagogy: Benefits for Tourism and Hospitality Education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 1(2), 29- 45.
- Sileika, A., Tamasauskiene, Z. (2005). Funding of Higher Education in Lithuania in the Context of Foreign Experience. *Ekonomika*, (70), 66-82.
- Snieska, V. (2008). Research into International Competitiveness in 2000-2008. *Inžinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(4), 29-41.
- Snieska, V., & Bruneckiene, J. (2009). Measurement of Lithuanian Regions by Regional Competitiveness Index. *Inžinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics*(1), 45-57.
- Solnet, D., Robinson, R., & Cooper Ch. (2007). An Industry Partnerships Approach to Tourism Education. *Journal of hospitality, leisure, sport & tourism education*, 6(1), 67-71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3794/johlste.61.140>
- Stukalina, Y. (2010). Using Quality Management Procedures in Education: Managing the Learner-Centered Educational Environment. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 16(1), 75-93. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/tede.2010.05>
- The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (2005). European Commission.
- Thune, C. (1998). The European System of Quality Assurance - Dimensions of Harmonisation and Differentiation. *Higher Education Management*, 10 (3), 9-26.
- Urban, W. (2009). Service Quality Gaps and Their Role in Service Enterprises Development. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 15(4), 631-645. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/1392-8619.2009.15.631-645>
- Wahlen, S. (1998). Is There a Scandinavian Model of Evaluation of Higher Education?. *Higher Education Management*, 10(3), 27- 42.
- Watkins, K., & Marsick V. J. (2003). Making Learning Count! Diagnosing the Learning Culture in Organizations. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 5(2), 132-151.
- Zafiroopoulos, C., & Vrana, V. (2008). Service Quality Assessment in a Greek Higher Education Institute. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 9(1), 33-45. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/1611-1699.2008.9.33-45>

Rimantas Mikalauskas, Edmundas Jasinskas, Biruta Švagždienė

Turizmo ir sporto vadybos studijų programą užtikrinantys kokybės kriterijai

Santrauka

Apie studijų kokybės svarbą verčia kalbėti aukštojo mokslo institucijos, socialiniai aspektai, visuomenė bei valdžia. Nors apie elementarios veiklos kokybę pastaruoju metu visame pasaulyje daug rašoma ir kalbama, kuriami kokybės reikalavimai ir standartai, sunku tiksliai apibrėžti, kas tai yra studijų kokybė? Tradiciškai kokybės sąvoka siejama su meistriškumo ar unikalios veiklos idėjomis (Barnet, 1992; Dinya, 1997; El-Khawas & Than, 1998; Geodegebuure, Maassen, Jacobsson, 1990; Vroeiensstijn, 1990; Wahlen, 1998; Wersterheijden, 1992; Thune, 1998; Goročovskaja, 1998; Novikov A., Novikov D., 2009).

Europos sąjungos mastu, aukštojo mokslo institucijų studijų kokybės tyrimo aktualumas akcentuojamas ir studijų kokybės tobulinimo kryptys nustatomos Bolonijos proceso dokumentuose (*The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*, 2005). Bolonijos procesas prasidėjo 1999 m. po Bolonijos deklaracijos „Europos aukštojo mokslo erdvė“ (EHEA) paskelbimo. Bolonijos proceso siekis yra sukurti Europos aukštojo mokslo erdvę, kurioje būtų nustatyti akademiniai laipsnių ir kokybės užtikrinimo standartai. Jie galėtų būti skaidriai palyginami tarp Europos valstybių, ypač tarp tų, kurios yra pasirašiusios Lisabonos konvenciją. Po šios deklaracijos paskelbimo, siekiant didinti susidomėjimą ir patrauklumą studijomis europiečiams ir kitų kontinentų studentams bei mokslininkams, buvo pradėta nemažai reformų. Bolonijos procese šiuo metu dalyvauja 47 šalys, iš kurių tik 27 valstybės yra ES narės. Po Bolonijos deklaracijos pasirašymo 1999 m., Švietimo ministrų susitikimais buvo organizuoti Prahoje (2001 m.), Berlyne (2003 m.), Bergene (2005 m.), Londone (2007 m.), Liuvene (2009 m.). Tarptautiniai susitarimai studijų kokybės srityje (kurių pradžia buvo studijų kokybės standartų vienodinimas europos erdvėje) pereina prie globalių tikslų, o studijų kokybės reikalavimai pritaikomi prie socialinių ir darbo rinkos poreikių.

Tyrime naudota anketa, 2008 metais buvo sudaryta *Mokslo ir studijų stebėsenos ir analizės* centro (MOSTA); anketa naudota 2008 m. atliekant aukštųjų mokyklų (universitetų ir kolegijų), pagrindinių studijų studentų požiūrį į esamą aukštojo mokslo sistemos būklę Lietuvoje (Kas lemia studijų kokybę, 2008). Sudarant anketą remtasi Ruževičiaus (2007), Pukelio, Savickienės (2004), Moore, Koul (2007), studijų kokybės veiksnių tyrimo kriterijais.

Gauti duomenys buvo apdoroti SPSS 13.0, Ms Excel programomis. Atsižvelgiant į tyrimo rezultatų paklaidą, galima teigti, jog darbe pateikiamas tyrimas yra žvalgomasis, o tyrimo išvados daromos tyrimo imties ribose, o ne visai generalinei tyrimo visumai.

Daugiausia įvertinimų sulaukė studijų programų naujumas, studijų rezultatų vertinimo sistemos, praktinių užsiėmimų skaičiaus veiksniai, taip pat gana daug mokomųjų dalykų įvairovės veiksnys, paskaitų skaičiaus veiksniai. Net 63% respondentų mano, jog paskaitų skaičius vidutiniškai lemia studijų kokybę.

Taigi svarbiausi aukštosios mokyklos studijų proceso organizavimo veiksniai, lemiantys studijų kokybę aukštojoje mokykloje – tai paties studento noras mokytis, taip pat studijų rezultatų vertinimo sistema, praktinių užsiėmimų skaičius. Kiti veiksniai, tokie kaip paskaitų skaičius, mokomųjų dalykų įvairovė – įvertinti kaip silpnesnę įtaką studijų kokybei turintys veiksniai.

Vidurkiai leidžia palyginti atskirų kriterijų įvertinimą tarpusavyje. Iš vidurkių vertinimo matyti, jog aukščiausius vertinimus, t.y. kaip reikšmingiausius veiksniai studijų kokybei buvo įvardinti šie veiksniai: dėstytojo kvalifikacija (4,3 balo iš 5); studento noras mokytis (4,3), dėstytojo metodai (4,1), novatoriškos dėstytojo pažiūros (4), dėstytojo asmeniniai būdo bruožai (3,9), galimybė studentams konsultuotis (3,9). Kaip mažiausiai turintis įtaką studijų kokybei buvo įvardinti šie veiksniai: aukštojo mokslo institucijos prestižas (2,7 balo); dėstytojo amžius (2,8 balo); paskaitų skaičius (3,1 balo), administracinė tvarka (3,1 balo), mokomųjų dalykų įvairovė (3,2 balo).

Taikant Spearman koreliacijos koeficientą, buvo vertinti koreliaciniai ryšiai tarp atskirų studijų kokybės veiksnių. Koreliaciniai ryšiai tarp šių veiksnių tirti norint išsiaiškinti ar veiksniai, tiesiogiai veikiantys studijų kokybę, yra susiję tarpusavyje ir vieni kitus stiprina arba silpnina. Taigi tirta tai, kiek atskiri medžiagos vertinimo veiksniai, jų vertinimas, koreliuoja tarpusavyje (kai $p < 0,05$).

Nustatyta, kad respondentai efektyvesniais paskaitų pateikimo metodais laiko įvairius grupinio darbo metodus, taip pat ir studentų tiriamuosius darbus (individualūs). Galima teigti, jog grupinio darbo metodai auditorijoje skatina taikyti žinias kūrybiškai, taip pat skatina studentų aktyvumą paskaitų metu. Būtent tokių, mąstymo ir praktinio pritaikymo veiklą skatinančių studijų pateikimo metodų svarbą akcentuoja ir kiti tyrėjai (Ramsden, 2000, Gudžinskienė, 2007).

Kaip mažiau efektyvūs buvo įvertinti šie paskaitų pateikimo metodai: teorinės paskaitos dėstymas (3 balai.), situacijų vaidinimai (3,4 balo). Taigi teorines paskaitas respondentai vertina kaip vidutiniškai efektyvias. Gudžinskienė (2007) taip pat nurodo, jog teorinis medžiagų pateikimas neturi dominuoti dėl savo gana menko efektyvumo, jeigu nėra papildomas praktika arba studentų mąstymo aktyvinimo priemonėmis.

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad efektyviausi mokymo metodai, vertinant jų įtaką studijų kokybei, yra daugiausia grupiniai metodai (kontrolinių darbų rezultatų įvertinimas, įvairios demonstracijos, grupiniai projektai, diskusijos auditorijoje, prezentacijos, diskusijos mažose grupėse), taip pat ir žinių įvertinimas, tiriamieji darbai.

Kadangi teorinėje literatūroje nebuvo rasta duomenų, kaip atskiri metodai efektyvumo prasme vienas kitą lemia, koreliacijos ryšiai tarp šių veiksnių nebuvo tirti.

Tiriant mokomosios medžiagos, pateikiamos turizmo ir sporto vadybos studijų programos mokomuosiuose dalykuose vertinimus, matyti, kad geriausiai vertinamos šios mokomosios medžiagos savybės: informacijos sąsajos su specialybe, tikslingumas, teorinių žinių praktinis pritaikomumas, racionalumas, prieinamumas, praktiškumas, pakankamumas, aktualumas. Šių mokomosios medžiagos savybių svarbą akceptuoja ir mokslininkai, atlikę tyrimus šioje srityje (Dale ir Robinson, 2001).

Daugelis kriterijų įvertinta labai panašiai, pavyzdžiui: aktualumas (3,6 balo.), praktiškumas (3,6 balo.), prieinamumas (3,6 balo.), tikslingumas (3,6 balo.), informatyvumas (3,6 balo.), dalykų tarpusavio suderinamumas (3,6 balo.), informacijos naujumas (3,6 balo.), teorinių žinių praktinis pritaikomumas (3,6 balo). Menkiausiai įvertintas kriterijus – sąsajos su užsienio praktika (3,3 balo.). Taigi galima teigti, jog respondentai medžiagą, pateikiamą turizmo ir sporto vadybos studijų programos mokomuosiuose dalykuose, vertina daugiausia kiek geriau nei vidutiniškai, esminių skirtumų tarp vertinimo kriterijų nerasta.

Analizė atskleidė, jog mokomosios medžiagos kriterijų vertinimas tarpusavyje koreliuoja daugeliu atvejų. Stipriau ar silpniau su visais kriterijais koreliuoja medžiagos sąsaja su užsienio praktika, praktiškumas, racionalumas, pakankamumas, prieinamumas, tikslingumas, informatyvumas, dalykų tarpusavyje suderinamumas, informacijos sąsaja su specialybe, informacijos naujumas, teorinių žinių praktinis pritaikomumas, nuoseklumas, aiškumas, aktualumas.

Nenustatytas koreliacinis ryšys tik tarp aktualumo ir pakankamumo. Taigi galima teigti, jog respondentai panašiai vertina visus atskirus turizmo ir sporto vadybos studijų programos mokomuosiuose dalykuose taikomas medžiagos kriterijus, medžiagą suvokia kaip visumą atskirų kriterijų. Taigi tarp respondentų geriausiai vertinamos šios mokomosios medžiagos savybės: informacijos sąsajos su specialybe, tikslingumas, teorinių žinių praktinis pritaikomumas, racionalumas, prieinamumas, praktiškumas, pakankamumas, aktualumas.

Studijų kokybės vertinimas – tai pagrindas tobulinti studijų programas. Esama skirtingų požiūrių į studijų vertinimą; iš vienos pusės orientuojamasi į iš anksto apibūtinamus aiškius studijų programų kokybės kriterijus ir būklės nustatymą, iš kitos pusės – į savianalizės vaidmens pasitikėjimo aukštąja mokykla didinimą bei tobulinimo skatinimą.

Įvairių klasifikacijų pagrindu išskiriamos tokios universalių studijų kokybės vertinimo kriterijų grupės: 1) studijų programų turinys; 2) studijų programų forma; 3) dėstytojo veikla ir gebėjimai; 4) studijų infrastruktūra ir finansavimo lygmuo (ištekliai); 5) naudojamos technologijos (informacinės sistemos); 6) aukštosios mokyklos vidaus ir išorės veiksniai (informavimas); 7) studentų nuostatos.

Didžiausia įtaką studijų kokybei turi dėstytojų savybės, kurios atsiskleidžia paskaitų metu, o ne formalūs nuopelnai. Tarp infrastruktūros veiksnių labiausiai studijų kokybę lemia tvarkaraščių organizavimas ir patogumas, mokomųjų šaltinių gausa ir prieinamumas. Svarbiausi studijų proceso organizavimo veiksniai – paties studento noras mokytis, studijų rezultatų vertinimo sistema, praktinių užsiėmimų skaičius. Tarp studijų kokybės kriterijų svarbūs yra dėstytojo darbo, studijų organizavimo veiksniai, vidutiniškai svarbūs aukštosios mokyklos infrastruktūros veiksniai – dėstytojo darbo, studijų organizavimo veiksniams suteikta didesnė svarba negu infrastruktūros veiksniams. Turizmo ir sporto vadybos studijų programoje taikomi paskaitų pateikimo metodai yra efektyvūs, visi metodai buvo vertinti aukščiau nei vidutiniškai. Tai atskleidė, kad paskaitų pateikimo būdai yra vertinami kaip itin svarbus, studijų kokybei įtaką turintis veiksnys. Medžiaga, pateikiama turizmo ir sporto vadybos studijų programos mokomuosiuose dalykuose, vertinama teigiamai, nes visi medžiagos aspektai įvertinti geriau negu vidutiniškai. Tai rodo, kad studijų kokybei svarbiais veiksniais laikomi tokie mokomųjų dalykų aspektai: informacijos sąsaja su specialybe, tikslingumas, teorinių žinių praktinis pritaikymas, racionalumas, prieinamumas, praktiškumas, pakankamumas, aktualumas.

Raktažodžiai: *studijos; studijų kokybė; kokybės kriterijai; diagnozė, įvertinimas.*

The article has been reviewed.

Received in February, 2012; accepted in June, 2012.