Секция 3. ЭЛЕКТРОННОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ В СИСТЕМЕ НЕПРЕРЫВНОГО ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: ОБМЕН ОПЫТОМ

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF STUDY COURSES BASED ON STUDENTS FEEDBACK

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Higher education has always been an inseparable part of the interests of the governments of many countries. Evolution of nations and states has closely related higher education with the state and national education institutions. This area is one of the most important conditions of successful development of a state; therefore modern universities have had great demands in the context of the quality of studies (the main documents of the Bologna Process, Dublin Descriptors and Tuning Methodology). In the assessment of the quality of studies, besides the objective criteria, which consist of the qualification of academic personnel, content of courses and material sources, students' subjective approach on various factors of the quality of studies and their significance is of great importance. Students' feedback on the quality of the studied courses of the following five Belarusian higher education institutions – School of Business of Belarusian State University (SB BSU), Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank (BSPU), Private Institute of Management and Business (PIMB), Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR) and Vitebsk State Technological University (VSTU) is presented in the article.

Keywords: study programme, quality of studies, conditions of studies, content of studies, teaching quality.

The gals, particularly related to the assurance of better quality, have been set up in the area of higher education in the strategic documents of European Union, Sorbonne declaration, Bologna Declaration, Prague Communicate, Berlin communicate [4]. In the main documents of Bologna Process (2008) the studies are declared to be qualitative, to meet students' expectations and the needs of labour market as well as to give an implication to the aims of study programmes

in the reality of education. Scientific discussions about learning and teaching in the university studies are based on modern conception of studies, holistic approach and students' experience [2]. Internal assurance of the quality of higher education studies is based on the assessment of the status of the quality of studies which is implemented at the institutional, study programmes' and thematic levels [3]. Striving for quality in every institution continual process of the improvement of studies is also very significant [1].

According to the Strategy of the Information Society in the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2015 every citizen should be ready to live in the conditions of digital society. However, Belarus is not fully using the potential offered by new technologies and digital content to improve the efficiency, accessibility and equity of education, training and learning. The existing demand in IT specialists is three times as high as their supply; however, graduates of different educational institutions aren't always in demand as the knowledge that they received in the educational institution often lags behind the requirements of the employer. Therefore, new approach on training is extremely important and it is urgent to implement new or updated study programmes in the area of computing in higher education sector improving the quality of studies in line with the Bologna requirements. Meeting the demand for specialists in labour market five institutions of higher education both in public and private sector have decided to update their study programmes of Information resources Management (P2), Mathematics and IT (P3), Management with IT specialisation (P4), Information Systems and Technologies (P5), Informatics (P6) and develop twenty five new innovative courses. That makes about 21–22 percent of each study programme. The updated content of the five study programmes including development, testing and adaptation of new innovative courses, learning materials and tools comply with the priorities of National higher education strategy of Belarus. Cooperation with the representatives of the Erasmus+ programme countries allows developing modern professional competences of Belarusian teachers and graduates taking into account the requirements of foreign specialists, which will allow them to be competitive not just in the Republic of Belarus, but also in the countries of European Union. The specific project objectives are to develop modern competencies of computing specialists bringing modern courses, implementing innovative teaching/learning methods and tools, purchasing eLearning equipment for higher education institutions of Belarus into line with Bologna requirements.

Taking into consideration the modern requirements it is very important to motivate young people and as well as the teachers of higher education

institutions of Belarus to search for a new, innovative training and learning methods and tools. Modernising and improving efficiency and accessibility of education, training and learning in ICT are the key priorities for the updated study programmes of 5 HEIs of Belarus. The main innovative products of the project are modern and innovative cources which contribute to strenthening of the study content of training IT specialists. One of the main tasks is focussing on new teaching methods and tools: adaptation to the actual working process, case study, creating teamwork skills. With the aim of developing additional IT communication competences within the new study courses introduced by the project participants, great attention was paid to formation of the following skills and abilities:

– Using digital technologies, communication tools and/or networks, in order to gain information in a rational and efficient way, analyse it in a critical and competent manner, and apply for problem solving.

– Using IT communication for managing student educational, cognitive and research activities.

– Selecting and introducing distant training techniques as well as new methods of network interaction to manage organization procedures efficiently.

It consolidates and supports training of basic ICT skills and ICT-based teaching methods for its improvement and convergence with the Bologna model.

The goal of this article – to reveal how students in the updated study programmes assess the quality of studies. The main tasks are as follows:

1. To assess the content of the courses of the updated study programmes.
2. To get students feedback on teachers preparation for lectures and teaching.
3. To analise students attitude on the conditions of studies.
4. To reveal the level of satisfacion of the studies coursesį.

The feedback of the students of five Belarusian institutions of higher education – School of Business of Belarusian State University (SB BSU, Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank (BSPU), Private Institute of Management and Business (PIMB), Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR) and Vitebsk State Technological University (VSTU) is analised in the article.

Research methods and sample characteristics. The method of data collection – questioning. Method of analysis – statistic analysis, quantitative data analysis. A questionnaire consisting of 14 questions with diagnostic blocks was used striving to determine how respondents assess the quality of studies.Range

rate where 4 = best rating, 1 = worst rating was used. The instrument was focused on on the opinion of the undegraduate students in the courses of the updated study programmes of Belarusian higher education institutions. The received statistical data can be used for self-assessment of study programmes, plans and strategies of quality improvement. Respondents were selected using nest sample method.

Research results

Total number of participating students – 980. School of Business of Belarusian State University (BS BSU) – 302 students (30,8 %), Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank (BSPU) – 124 students (12,7 %), Private Institute of Management and Business (PIMB) – 330 students (33,7 %), Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR) – 117 students (11,9 %), Vitebsk State Technological University (VSTU) – 107 students (10,9 %). Respondents – students of the first – fouth years of studies. Most of the participants – semester 4 (338 stud. 34,5 %) and semester 6 (288, 29,4 %), male (461, 47 %), female (519, 53,0 %). Respondents age: 17–20 years old – 659 (67,2 %), 21–25 years old – 171 (17,4 %), 26–30 years old– 142 (14,5 %).

25 study courses wew assesses: *Multimedia Creation and Processing Technologies, Law in the IT-sphere, English for Specific Purposes, Intellectual Property and protection of Information, Marketing management in IT sphere, Management of IT Projects, Business Planning based on Informatization Tools, Web Technologies, Management of e-business, Technology of Distance Learning, Systems of Computer Graphics, Computer Networks, Software development for mobile devices, Principles of algorithmization and programming, Information Resource Management.*

Content of Learning material. According to the results of the research students feedback on the course content and relevance was perfect: rate 4 – 61,8 % (606) respondents, 3 – 35,4 % (347), students, the rest of them did not assess the course as very good and they evaluated the course as a bad one (2 – 2,2 % (22), 1 – 0,6 % (5)).

The covered content in the course was relevant					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	,5	,5	,5
	2	22	2,2	2,2	2,8
	3	347	35,4	35,4	38,2
	4	606	61,8	61,8	100,0
	Total	980	100,0	100,0	

Table 1 – Students' feedback on the studied course content

The feedback of the questioned about organization of the courses was similar. The course was well organized – most of the questioned rated 4 – 63,9 % (626), 3 – 32,3 % (317), 2 – 3,3 % (32), 1 – 0,5 % (5). The lectures were interesting and appropriate to the goals of the course: 4 – 59,7 % (558), 3 – 36,0 % (353), 2 – 3,7 % (36), 1 – 0,6 % (6).

The goals of this course were clearly defined – most of the respondents rated: 4 – 60,9 % (597), 3 – 34,9 % (342), 2 – 3,4 % (33), 1 – 0,8 % (8).

The goals of this course were clearly defined					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	,8	,8	,8
	2	33	3,4	3,4	4,2
	3	342	34,9	34,9	39,1
	4	597	60,9	60,9	100,0
	Total	980	100,0	100,0	

Table 2 – Feedback on the course presentation clarity

Course material was assessed at several aspects: conformity of theoretic, practical material and material of examinations to the course content. The course material (i.e., books, readings, hand-outs, lab manuals, multimedia, video, software) was clear and informative: 4 – 58,7 % (575), 3 – 35,8 % (351) 2 – 4,6 % (45), 1– 0,9 % (9). But the students stated their opinion on some drawbacks of some courses: «Not enough specific examples», «More videos», «Volume could be refused», «Not enough material in lab work», «More detailed explanation of labs», «Provide explanation for practical part of labs», «To give and explain tasks at more level complicated», «Reduce the number of tasks in labs»,» I would like to see more examples with solved tasks depending on the complexity».

The course material (i.e., books, readings, hand-outs, lab manuals, multimedia, video, software) was clear and informative					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	,9	,9	,9
	2	45	4,6	4,6	5,5
	3	351	35,8	35,8	41,3
	4	575	58,7	58,7	100,0
	Total	980	100,0	100,0	

Table 3 – Feedback on the course material

The text and assigned readings were valuable for understanding of the course: 4 – 59,8 % (586), 3 – 35,5 % (348), 2 – 4,1 % (40), 1 – 0,6 % (6). The written assignments contributed to acquiring the course material: 4 –

59,3 % (581), 3 – 36,7 % (360), 2 – 2,9 % (28), 1 – 1,1 % (11). A brief reminder of the lecture course before laboratory practice were advisable and sufficient: 4 – 58,6 % (574), 3 – 36,5 % (358), 2 – 4,4 % (43), 1 – 0,5 % (5). Exams and assignments were reflective of the course content: 4 – 64,7 % (634), 3 – 32,9 % (322), 2 – 1,7 % (17), 1 – 0,7 % (7). This course stimulated my interest in the subject matter: 4 – 62,2 % (610), 3 – 32,2 % (316), 2 – 4,6 % (45), 1 – 1 % (9).

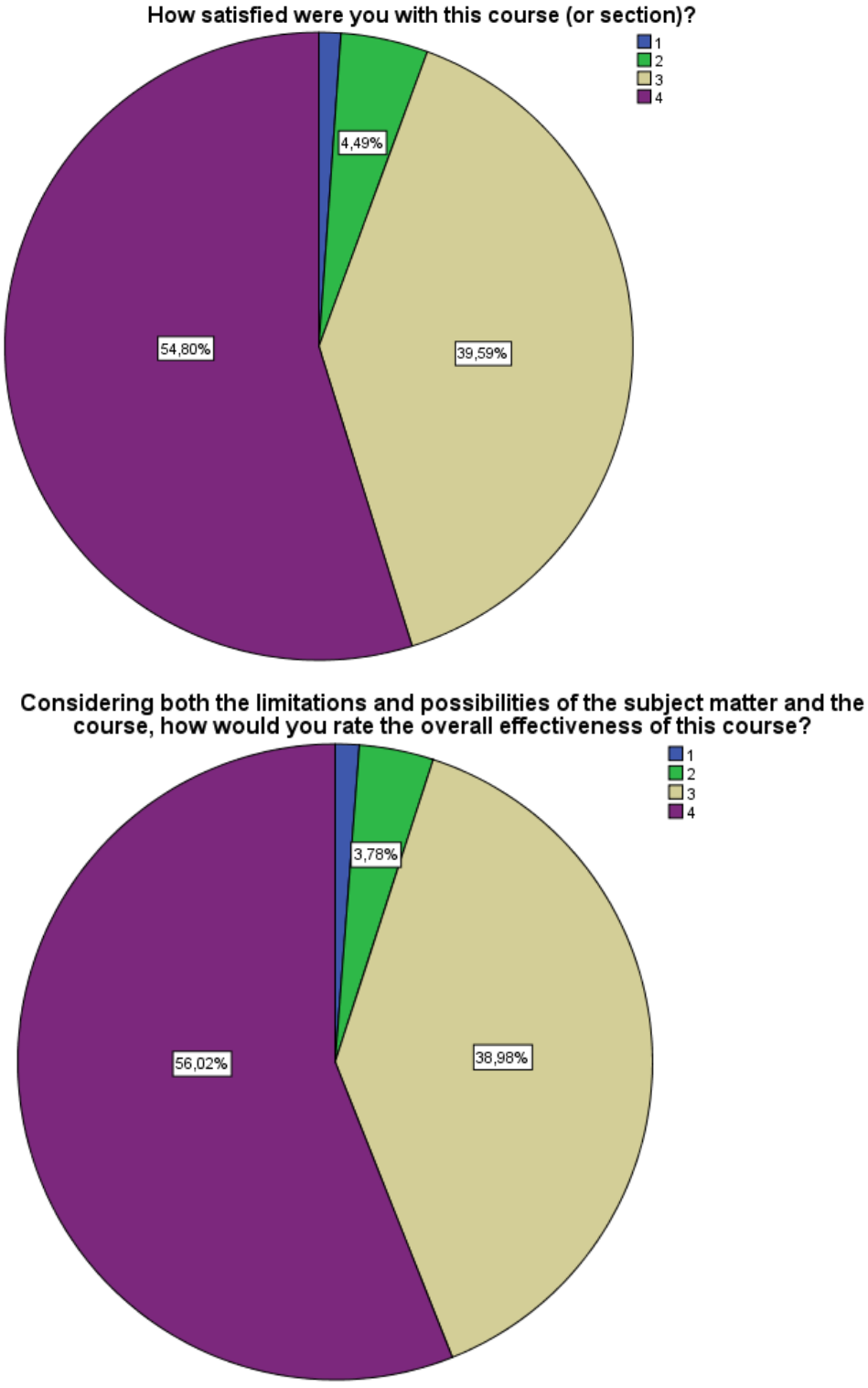
Teachers work. Qualification and its improvement of academic personnel are very important factors for the quality of studies. Students' feedback on the quality of studies depends on the competencies of the academic staff – didactics, improvement of study course content and research. The results of the research revealed that the teachers in the courses were well prepared for classes and used class time effectively: 4 – 66,5 % (652), 3 – 30,3 % (297), 2 – 2,3 % (23), 1 – 0,9 % (8), teaching methods were efficient and aided students learning: 4 – 62,9 % (616), 3 – 32,7 % (320), 2 – 3,8 % (37), 1 – 0,6 % (7), the teacher presented course material in a clear manner that facilitated understanding of the material: 4 – 63,0 % (617), 3 – 33,7 % (330), 2 – 2,7 % (26), 1 – 0,6 % (7), provided helpful feedback: 4 – 69,4 % (680), 3 – 27,1 % (266), 2 – 2,4 % (24), 1- 1 % (10).

Level of the course learning outcomes. The level of the learning results of the students was graded quite high. Mostly – 30,8 % (302) students were graded well (8), 28,2 % (302) – very well (9), 17,1 % (168) – average, 12,2 % (120) – perfect.

What level of the course learning outcomes have you reached?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	,3	,3	,3
	2	1	,1	,1	,4
	3	5	,5	,5	,9
	4	6	,6	,6	1,5
	5	36	3,7	3,7	5,2
	6	63	6,4	6,4	11,6
	7	168	17,1	17,1	28,8
	8	302	30,8	30,8	59,6
	9	276	28,2	28,2	87,8
	10	120	12,2	12,2	100,0
	Total	980	100,0	100,0	

Table 3 – Level of the course learning outcomes

Overall course assessment. Most students were satisfied with the study courses and they think that the acquired knowledge and skills will be useful in development of their future career: 4 – 54,8 % (537), 3 – 39,6 % (388), 2 – 4,5 % (44), 1 – 1,1 % (11). The major part of the students think that the studied course were especially efficient and useful: 4 – 56,0 % (549), 3 – 39,0 % (382), 2 – 3,8 % (37), 1 – 1,2 % (12).



Overall students' assessment of the course

Students feedback on their efforts while learning the chosen study courses was good and very good: 4 – 56,1 % (550), 3 – 39,3 % (385), 2 – 3,8 % (37), 1 – 8 % (0,8), the workload for the courses was appropriate: 4 – 63,5 % (622), 3 – 32,6 % (319), 2 – 3,3 % (32), 1- 0,6 % (7).

Conclusions

We hope achieved results of the research will have a positive impact on ensuring faster and more efficient integration of specialists into the international labour market.

International exchanges are also important and innovative as a way of cooperation between the HEIs of France, UK, Lithuania and Belarus which enable promotion of sharing experience in training ICT specialists. Furthermore sustained learning, online communities of practice for practitioners can be an additional option in developing contemporary ICT study programmes. This stimulates transnational cooperation, partnership and democracy between EU countries and Belarus.

The updated study programmes with new online courses are useful for the students of the participating counties and the academic environment globally, which offers broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom.

The developed new courses and their adaptation for delivering online in English and Russian support improvement of study quality, acquiring new knowledge and competences in computing area, foster transnational institutional cooperation and enrich educational environment of preparation of IT specialists, facilitate the introduction of transfer of credits and recognition of studies abroad using ECTS.

The data of the research revealed that the students positively assess the content of the study courses and organisation of studies of the study programmes. 94,5 % of the questioned students positively assess the content of the study courses rating it as good and very good, though they have also suggested some aspects to be improved, i.e. to provide more explanations for laboratory works, more videos, etc.

The results of the research on students' feedback revealed that the major part of the students is satisfied with the studied courses and they think that the study courses were efficient, useful and the acquired knowledge and skills will be useful in development of their future careers.

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