



STUDENT SATISFACTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING

Alina Ciobanu, Livia Ostafe

Abstract: Student satisfaction is widely recognized as an indicator of the quality of students' learning and teaching experience. This study aims to highlight how satisfied students (from the primary and preschool pedagogy specialization within the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, who are studying to become future kindergarten and primary teachers after graduation) are with their learning experience. In order to measure student satisfaction we used a four point Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire items were associated with four dimensions: courses/seminar activity, feedback and assessment, learning resources and skills development. The results show that the students from the primary and preschool pedagogy specialization are generally satisfied with their learning experience but at the same time they argue that there is room for improvement when it comes to practice hours and skills development for their future career.

Key words: student satisfaction, teaching process, learning experience

1. Introduction

Student satisfaction is a complex and subtle phenomenon that allows the students to evaluate subjectively the diversity of educational expectations and experiences, within the boundaries of the university campus (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1989 apud Elliott & Shin). Numerous researchers have investigated different aspects of student satisfaction (e.g. Astin, 1977; Bryant, 2009; DeShields, Kara, & Kaynak, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and the majority of them consider that a student with a higher level of satisfaction has a greater chance of successfully continuing with his/her studies culminating in graduation.

In spite of the great number of international studies concerning student satisfaction, for Rumanian universities the use of evaluation, in order to evaluate different aspects of student life, is a relatively new concept. (Osoian, Nistor, Zaharie, Flueraș, 2010).

In this study, student satisfaction makes reference to "the learning experience". One of the most important roles of an educational institution is to offer relevant learning experiences to the students. When these experiences are not included in the curriculum, the students frequently become detached and unsatisfied, because they do no longer understand the importance of their classes. (Roberts & Styron Jr. 2010).

According to Lo (2010), student satisfaction represents a subjective perspective on the way in which the educational environment supports academic success. A higher level of satisfaction reveals how adequately educational methods are succeeding in stimulating thinking and learning. On the other hand, a below satisfactory level often indicates a lack of balance between academic requirements and the abilities that empower the students to accomplish them. Therefore a perceptible interest in gaining a high level of student satisfaction, regarding the learning experience, leads to an improvement in the teaching-learning process and even to the improvement of the evaluation and self-evaluation process.

2. Purpose of the Study

With the help of satisfaction studies, we can identify the students' wishes. Their expectations can influence the way they respond to the academic environment and have an impact on their decision as to whether to graduate in a certain area of study or not. (Bosch, Hester, MacEntee, MacKenzie, Morey & Nichols, 2008; Kuh, Gonyea & Williams, 2005; Pike, 2006)

The aim of this study is to identify the level of satisfaction felt by students from The Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences from "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, who are enrolled in the Pedagogy of Preschool and Primary School bachelor program, and who want to become kindergarten and primary teachers.

3. Methods

Questionnaires are a well-known method of gathering feedback on the students' level of satisfaction (El-Ansari & Oskrochi, 2004). In order to find out how content the students of the Pedagogy of Preschool and Primary School bachelor program (Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences) are with their learning experience, a four point Likert scale questionnaire (1= extremely unsatisfied, 4= extremely satisfied) with 20 items was used. This is a useful method of gathering answers because the neutral option is not available. It is a bipolar scaling system that helps measure positive or negative answers. The items have been associated with four dimensions: activities during the classes (7 items), feedback and evaluation (5 items), learning resources (4 items) and skills development (4 items). 126 Bachelor students participated in this study (N=126). The Table no 1 explain the Alpha Cronbach value we've obtain for our instrument.

Table 1. Alpha Cronbach Value

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Mean
.868	20	58.7381

4. Findings

The results show that the students are satisfied with their learning experience, taken from the perspective of the activities during classes, learning resources, skills development, feedback and evaluation. However, the degree of student satisfaction lowers when it comes to *practice* (46% or an average of 2.57) and *the development of the necessary skills required by certain careers* (38% or an average of 2.65) (Table 2).

Table 2. The subjects' frequency answer distribution

Items	extremely unsatisfied		unsatisfied		Satisfied		extremely satisfied	
	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%	freq.	%
The classes are relevant for my bachelor program	0	0%	21	16.70%	80	63.50%	25	19.80%
The activities during the classes meet my expectations	2	1.60%	22	17.50%	88	69.80%	14	11.10%
The teaching methods are efficient	4	3.20%	28	22.20%	75	59.50%	19	15.10%
The academic tasks allow me to have enough leisure hours	10	7.90%	37	29.40%	49	38.90%	30	23.80%
The activities during the classes stimulate team work	5	4.00%	20	15.90%	62	49.20%	39	31%
I am encouraged to share my point of view during the classes	4	3.20%	19	15.10%	59	46.80%	44	34.90%
The teachers provide me with additional information if needed	4	3.20%	16	12.70%	61	48.40%	45	35.70%

The teachers succeed in arousing my interest for their subjects	4	3.20%	19	15.10%	81	64.30%	22	17.50%
The teachers' recommended bibliography can be found in the library	3	2.40%	33	26.20%	57	45.20%	33	26.20%
The teachers recommend the use of IT for their teaching activity	4	3.20%	27	21.40%	65	51.60%	30	23.80%
The teachers supply an available course format	2	1.60%	22	17.50%	67	53.20%	35	27.80%
Transversal competencies (communication, IT, team work) are being developed during the classes.	2	1.60%	20	15.90%	74	58.70%	30	23.80%
Class activities give me the confidence to deal with new problems	4	3.20%	30	23.80%	65	51.60%	27	21.40%
I receive prompt feedback on the way I handle my academic tasks	1	0.80%	32	25.40%	72	57.10%	21	16.70%
The given feedback helps me clarify obscure aspects	7	5.60%	26	20.60%	65	51.60%	28	22.60%
The evaluation methods for every subject are stipulated on the first day of the course	2	1.60%	32	17.50%	62	42.90%	24	38.10%
The evaluation methods are fair	8	6.30%	32	25.40%	62	49.20%	24	19.00%
The appeal/reevaluation/raise methods concerning the final grade are clear	9	7.10%	30	23.80%	58	46.00%	29	23.00%
The number of teaching practice hours are sufficient	22	17.50%	36	28.60%	41	32.50%	27	21.40%
I manage to develop the required skills for my future career during teaching practice	19	15.10%	29	23.00%	54	42.90%	24	19.00%

We applied the Anova-Oneway option analysis method in order to see if there are any important differences regarding the students' level of satisfaction, based on their year of study. The obtained results show that there are significant statistical distinctions in the case of the year of study variable, when it comes to students' level of satisfaction as generated by their academic curriculum (see Table 3). The post hoc Bonferroni test was used to verify the distinctions found between the three years of the bachelor program. The outcome underlines the existence of some important differences regarding the learning experience satisfaction level, between the first year, second year and third year BA students, showing that the 1st year students ($M = 62.3$ and $M = 59.8$; $p = 0.002 < 0.05$ and $p = 0.015 < 0.05$) are considerably more satisfied with their learning experience than the 3rd year students ($M = 55.3$). The averages, standard deviations and number of students for each group and as a whole are presented in Table 3:

Table 3. The averages and standard deviations for two variables: *academic curriculum satisfaction* and *year of study*

Study year	N	Student satisfaction with learning experience	
		M	SD
1st year	24	62.33	6.831
2nd year	57	59.87	8.695
3rd year	45	55.37	7.370
Total	126	58.73	8.289

Table 4. Anova One-Way method analysis in order to compare the averages for the variable *student satisfaction with learning experience*, while depending on the variable *year of study*

	SS	Df	M S	F	p
Between Groups	892.306	2	446.153	7.129	0.001
Within Groups	7698.051	123	62.586		
Total	8590.357	125			

Considering the size of the questionnaire (course/seminar activity, feedback and evaluation, learning resources and skill development), the Anova Oneway method revealed semnificative statistical differences in the case of the dependent variable year of study (see Table 6). The results of the post hoc Bonferroni test (see Table 5) showed that 1st year and 2nd year students ($M=22.17$ and $M=21.14$; $p=0.002<0.05$ and $p=0.024<0.05$) are, from a statistical point of view, significantly more satisfied with their course/seminar activity and their skills development ($M=12.39$ and $M=11.75$; $p=0.000<0.005$ and $p=0.000<0.05$) than third year students ($M=19.56$; $M=9.91$) (Table 5).

Regarding the other two dimensions (learning resources, feedback and evaluation), no important statistical distinctions have been found in the case of the dependent variable year of study.

Table 5. The averages and standard digressions for three variables: *course/seminar satisfaction*, *skill development* and *year of study*.

Study year	N	Student satisfaction with course/seminar activity	
		M	SD
1st year	23	62.33	2.367
2nd year	57	59.87	3.181
3rd year	46	55.37	2.903
Total	126	20.75	3.084
Study year	N	Student satisfaction with skills development	
		M	SD
1st year	23	12.65	2.168
2nd year	57	11.75	2.451
3rd year	46	9.91	2.199
Total	126	11.19	2.504

Table 6. Anova One-Way method analysis in order to compare the averages for the variables *course/seminar satisfaction* and *skills development*, while depending on the variable *year of study*

		SS	Df	M S	F	P
Course/seminar activity	Between Groups	119.887	2	59.944	6.894	0.001
	Within Groups	1069.486	123	8.695		
	Total	1189.373	125			
		SS	Df	M S	F	P
Skills development	Between Groups	126.348	2	63.174	11.815	0.000
	Within Groups	657.692	123	5.347		
	Total	784.040	125			

5. Conclusions

This study intended to highlight the level of student satisfaction, regarding the teaching-learning and evaluation processes. We noticed that the answers can vary depending on the year of study, but we are confident that 1st and 2nd year BA students have a higher level of satisfaction than the 3rd year students.

Another interesting aspect is that most of the interviewed students were frustrated and discontent when it came to the subject of practice (for their future profession). Therefore, it is essential to inform the teaching staff and the university management about the necessity and the importance of practice hours for their students' careers. In addition to this, we noticed a low satisfaction level among third

year BA students, regardless of the variable, and that makes us wonder what the main cause of this situation may be. What are the reasons that led to this diminution of satisfaction and learning motivation? The obtained results offer new directions for research and diagnosis regarding the learning environment of 3rd year (word deleted) *Pedagogy of Preschool and Primary School* bachelor program students.

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Authors

Ciobanu Alina, PhD student, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania. ac.alinaciobanu@gmail.com

Ostafe Livia, PhD student, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania. livia.ostafe@gmail.com