

QUALITY EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Nowadays, quality of management education is considered to be crucial in universities to grow and maintain competitiveness thanks to continuous improvement. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the quality evaluation of selected management subjects in private Czech university. The results are based on a quantitative survey by questionnaire data collection in two independent selected samples – students ($n_s=793$) and academic staff ($n_a=50$). The methods used were comparison, induction, deduction, and synthesis. Descriptive statistics and two dimensional statistical methods were used to test the results. The results show that students evaluate positively subjects (on the scale where 1 is the best and 5 is the worst; average value 1.75), lectures (average value 1.40) and also lecturers (average value 1.39) in the area of management. Modus and median values are 1, only perceived difficulty is 3; that means average compare to other subjects passed in the academic year. Additionally, the differences between attendant students were tested. Statistically significant differences were found between males and females in the area of work in studied program and plans for future job. The article addresses the main practices of management education, which methods are most commonly used and evaluated as the best.

Key words: management, education, evaluation, university, students

JEL Code: I21, I23

Introduction

This article aims to evaluate perceptions of education quality in selected private Czech university and to identify main approaches to academic staff. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the quality evaluation of selected management subjects in private Czech university. The paper is composed of four sections. The first is Introduction and theoretical background. Second comes a presentation of the methodological approach. Subsequently, an analysis and discussion section comes. Finally, authors conclude the paper and summarize the

contributions and limitations of the article, last but not least focus on a future research in this area.

Firstly, it is necessary to define the term “quality of education”. For example, Coombs, Chappells and Shove (1985, p. 105) define this word as: „*qualitative dimensions means more than the quality of education as customarily defined and judged by student learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards*“. However, to find a uniform definition of the term quality in higher education has been proven to be a really challenging task.

Numerous studies has been devoted to determine the key characteristics that should educational standards possess. Klierne et al. (2004, p. 20) stated following six attributes:

1. Subject specificity (clear terms of the basic principles of the area).
2. Focus (concentration on a core area / key aspects).
3. Comulativity (i.e. systematically integrated learning).
4. Binding for all (in general applicable requirements).
5. Comprehensibility (understandable terms).
6. Feasibility (a challenge that can be fulfilled).

It is possible to find some statements that there is a difference between quality of private and public universities. According to Oliveira (2006) this opinion contradicts the basic findings of many specialized studies. For example service quality (or more precisely quality of the education provided) is one of the key elements for achieving success and stable market position and it is better evaluated in private universities (Crawford and Shutler, 1999). Also Alves and Raposo (2010) contribute that favorable perceptions of service quality have an important influence to current and past student satisfaction. Consequently these satisfied students should use a word-of-mouth communications and thus attract more students. The students are the main customers of both private and public universities (Sakthivel, Rajendran and Raju, 2005). Concentration on students’ needs and demands and the current state of their satisfaction allows universities to adequately adapt and create a system that allows continuous monitoring of teaching’s effectiveness (Elliot and Shin, 2002). Chomsky (2011) even recommends that students should participate in decisions concerning the university, which should be set up as a democratic institution in which all stakeholders are truly actively involved.

Tsinidou, Gerogiannis and Fitsilis (2010) claim that the communication skills of the academicians involved and their friendly attitude are considered among the most important determinants of academic quality.

Research of Schüller, Rašticová and Konečný (2013) showed that the most important criterion for Czech students (that is evaluated in the context of student satisfaction) is availability of study materials, mainly in electronic form. Furthermore, there was ascertained the important role of the level of practical teaching, appropriateness of course difficulty level or approach and professionalism of the academic staff. An important role holds also a study plan, or rather the inclusion of a specific subject in the study plan, which should be designed to fulfill the requirements of future employers, while satisfying the expectations and demands of the students (Vondra and Vltavská, 2014).

1 Methods and Materials

This paper was prepared using a method of an analysis of secondary and primary resources, knowledge synthesis, induction, deduction and comparison. As part of secondary resources, scientific monographs and articles dealing with the theme were analyzed. At the same time, websites of companies that are actively dealing with the issue were analyzed. The primary data were obtained by conducting a quantitative research, through data collection using questionnaires.

The survey was carried out using students and academic staff. The student data set comprised in total 793 students. The evaluated subjects were Management, Crisis Management, Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, Leadership, Managerial Decision-making, Evaluation of Firm Performance, Business Skills, Project Management, Practical Project Management, Strategic Management and Managerial Skills. Total 50 teachers were leading those subjects for evaluated students. Only students who passed the whole education and evaluation process of mentioned selected subjects in the area of management were part of the survey.

The respondents were structured as follows: student category: 36.6% men, 63.4% women; student professional experience: 51.1% works in area of study, 48.9% does not work; student future intention to work in the area of study: 59.5% plan to works in area of studied subjects, 40.5% does not plan to work in area of studied subjects and the rest does not know.

The data collection instrument included questions to measure the activities of education in studied university. The questions were designed based on theories (see theoretical background) and similar researches. The questionnaire addressed three main areas (other than identification questions). Those were lessons and their content, the course/subject and its structure and usefulness and teachers quality.

Respondents' reactions to target statements and their attitudes to the given matter were restricted by offering a set of several statements. The extremes of the five-point scale represented bipolar concepts of the evaluation dimension. All the questions were measured in a Likert type scale with verbal anchors in 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) or, provided it was not possible to favor either of the sides, selected a median, neutral value (the median value was characterized by number 3). The scale permitted not only the specification of respondents' attitudes, but also their intensity.

The data were evaluated using the tools of descriptive statistics (average, modus, median and standard deviation including absolute and relative frequency) and two dimensional statistics was employed using correlation analysis to reveal relations between searched attributes. To evaluate the results, Microsoft Excel 2013 and IBM SPSS statistics were used.

2 Results and Discussion

The objective of this chapter is to evaluate the results obtained from the primary survey. The results of the quantitative research have been statistically evaluated and recommendations have been formulated upon this basis. As the paper focuses on quality evaluation of three areas (subjects, courses and teachers) in management education, the chapter presents results gained in these areas.

The results show that students evaluate positively subjects (on the scale where 1 is the best and 5 is the worst; average value 1.75), lectures (average value 1.40) and also lecturers (average value 1.39) in the area of management. Modus and median values are 1, only perceived difficulty is 3; that means average compare to other subjects passed in the academic year. Additionally, the differences between attendant students were tested. Statistically significant differences were found between males and females in the area of work in studied program and plans for future job.

Students' evaluation of subject is presented bellow more deeply. The results show students perception of different attributes of subjects. Most of the attributes are evaluated positively. The most difficult for students are economics and related subjects. On the other hand, management is usually evaluated as in the middle of difficultness. The average value of all attributes is 1.75. The perception of quality of lecture is on relatively high level. Additionally, standard deviation maximum value is 0.82.

The subjects studied in the area of management mostly filled the expectations (average value 1.58, modus and median 1), the subjects studied are beneficial (average 1.53, modus and median also 1) and connected with praxis (average 1.62, modus and median 1). As the data were deeply analyzed and the students questioned, they prefer subjects oriented on praxis. The connection of lessons with case studies and projects is evaluated as the best among the surveyed students. They also value experts from companies in workshops and seminars.

Evaluated attributes questioned students in the way of their readiness for passing the subject. Again, most of the respondents evaluated it positively, that they had good overall knowledge to be able to handle the learning goals and outcomes (average 1.46, modus and median 1). Students also stated that requirements for exams are adequate (average 1.76, modus 1 and median 2). Therefore it is possible to assume that the subjects are well placed in study plans and the content of the subjects is manageable for students who are able to prepare themselves for the exams.

It is possible to summarize that quality evaluation of subjects shows very good results. Students perceive subjects quality positively and they also prefer and highly evaluate connection with praxis during the lessons and appreciate high level of explanation and discussion.

To see, whether there are some relations between searched attributes, correlation analysis was employed to evaluate the results. The statistically significant results at the significance level 0.05 are shown in the Table 1.

Tab. 1: Hypotheses related to subjects

Hypothesis	Correlation coefficient
Subject filled expectations – is beneficial	0.633
Subject filled expectations – is oriented on praxis	0.437
Subject filled expectations – study materials are adequate	0.632
Subject filled expectations – is appropriately placed in the study plan	0.510
Subject filled expectations – exam requirements are adequate	0.476
Subject is beneficial – is oriented on praxis	0.520
Subject is beneficial – is appropriately placed in the study plan	0.541
Exam requirements for are adequate – study materials are adequate	0.419

Source: authors processing

The analysis of the area of subjects revealed eight statistically significant correlations. All the correlations are medium or strong. Students' expectations seem to be quite important

in perception of quality education by students. The correlation analysis finds five significant relations connect with expectations.

Students declare subjects as filling their expectations, when they are beneficial, oriented on praxis, practical, also when there are adequate and accessible study materials, the subject is appropriately placed in the study plan (structure of study program is logical and sub sequential) and exam requirements are adequate. These areas are very important for students and they highly perceive and evaluate them.

That means the continuity of study program and subjects is very important and evaluated by students. Only when subjects properly follow logical structure it is perceived as filling students expectations. Students also perceive subjects as beneficial and valuable when they are connect with practice. This result shows that students come to the university with usually clear picture about subjects they will and want to study and they want them to be connected with praxis to fill their expectations. It is necessary to mention that half of the surveyed students were part time students. Part time study is specific form of study; students already have work full-time for some time and they have clear expectations about their studies and how they should fit into their current or future job position. The correlation analysis confirmed this statement. But also regular full time students perceive it in the same way. They also want their subjects to be connected with praxis to fill their expectations.

Another correlation was found between adequacy of exam requirements and study materials. Students require to have access to study materials related to the studied subject. They want to be able to learn everything and to prepare themselves for exams. Therefore attention should be paid on study texts, presentations and study literature.

To summarize, students' perception of quality of lectures in the area of management is at relatively high level at the studied university. The students state that subjects studied in the area of management mostly satisfied their expectations, the subjects studied are valuable and oriented on practice.

These results have limitations, because the research was focused on selected area of education. However the assessment of quality of educational process at universities by colleagues and by students are very important nowadays. Mareš and Ježek (2013) state that this area of interest is not theoretically, methodologically nor empirically researched thus we can say that the topic is actual at the present time. Brunclíková (2012), Mareš and Ježek (2013) summarize that it is very important to develop a process of education quality assessment (in terms of internal assessment process) which will be usable in external assessment process performed by the state institutions.

In management subjects the most important is to use interactive methods like case studies, simulations, role playing, workshops etc. We can summarize that those methods are used in the selected university but every teacher has to justify it with needs of the students. Carriger (2016) says that at universities it is very important to look for the best way to develop next generation of managers and leaders nowadays. He summarizes that it is more important to address the effectiveness of problem-based learning with more traditional, lecture-based instructions, as well as a hybrid approach, on student learning in the management classroom in current educational process in all fields. But the area of management has a priority for practice.

Conclusion

The paper analyzed and assessed the education quality of subjects oriented on Management at selected private university. The analysis focused on perception of education quality by students.

Research outcomes identified that students positively assess the area of management subjects (1.75 average value). The outcomes from the research are the first approach to evaluation of quality in selected areas. The research further continues three times per academic year and new data can be later compared. It can be summarized that students declare subjects as beneficial, satisfying their expectations if they are focus on practice. Also accessibility of study materials and compliance with the study plan is very important for students. The important component of the educational process is using the video-learning and video-consultations in every subject. It is very helpful for achieving better study results.

The theoretical contribution of the paper lies in the emphasis on education quality process in current knowledge economy described by increasing of the number of public and private universities in the Czech Republic. The practical contribution lies in presenting the actual results from evaluating process at the private university. The results are important base for assessment process of academic staff and preparation of the innovative study programs. Besides this study there are several promising directions for further research. It would be useful to include the influence of the students' attendance on the seminars and lectures on successfulness in exams.

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