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Mihaela Aurelia Ştefan & Alexandrina Mihaela Popescu

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Abstract

The present study has focused on identifying the needs and the level of satisfaction of the students enrolled in the *Psycho-pedagogical training program in view of certifying the teaching competencies*, organized by the Teacher Training Department, University of Craiova.

The survey focused on the following criteria of satisfaction: the actuality and importance of the concepts taught, their explanation and understanding; the usefulness of the theory taught, its implementation; the teaching methods used; the existence of information resources; the attitude of the teachers; the quality of the activities carried out within the pedagogical practice; the assessment and grading, the extracurricular opportunities offered by the study program.

The methods used for data collection were the questionnaire-based survey and the focus-group interview, while the statistical-mathematical processing required the use of the synthetic result tables and the certainty of the correlation. The graphical representation of the results was specially made through histograms and areolar diagrams.

The data collected and analyzed led to the following observation: the attitude of the teachers towards the students is the dimension with the greatest impact on the adaptation of the student to the university environment and on the level of satisfaction regarding his/ her academic experience. On the other hand, the students' level of satisfaction with regard to the university studies represents an important psycho-pedagogical determinant of the involvement and the academic success.

Zusammenfasung

Als die Universitätenzielen die ständigeVerbesserungderenDienstleistungen, konzentriertenwirunserInteresse auf die Identifizierung der Studentenbedürfnisse, zurGestaltungeinerZufriedenheitserhöhung in der akademischen Welt und akademischenVorbereitung.

DieseArbeitzentriertsich auf die Identifizierung der Bedürfnisse und Zufriedenheitsgrad der in dem*PsychopädagogischenBildungsprogramzurZertifizierung der Kompetenzenfür Lehrer,* das von der *AbteilungfürBildung des Lehrpersonals*in der Universität von Craiova organisiertwurde.

Die BefragungzieltefolgendeZufriedenheitskriterien: Zeitgemäßheit und Bedeutung der geliefertenBegriffe, derenErläuterung und Verständniss; Nützlichkeit der geliefertenTheorie, seine Umsetzung; verwendeteLehrmethoden; das Bestehen der informationellenRessourcen; Verhalten der Lehrer; Qualität der in Rahmen der pädagogischenVorbereitungszeitdurchgeführtenTätigkeiten; Beurteilung und Bewertung; außerschulischeMöglichkeiten des Studienprogramms.

Die zurDatengewinnungangewendetenDatenberuhensich auf Befragungen und Focus-Grup Interview, wobei die statistische-matematischeVerarbeitung die Verwendung der syntetischenErgebnistabelle und Bestimmung der Zielabstimmungbedarf. Die graphischeDarstellung der ErgebnisseumfassteFlächen-Blockdiagramme.

Die gesammelten und geprüftenDatenführtenzurfolgendenBestimmung: das Verhalten der Lehrer gegenüber den Studenten hat die stärksteWirkung auf die Anpassung des Studentenzu der akademischen Umwelt und Zufriedenheitsgrad seiner akademischenErfahrung. Andererseits, das Zufriedenheitsgrad der Studenten in Bezug auf die akademischenStudienisteinenwichtigenFaktorderenEinwicklung und Erfolg.

1. Introduction

Although the major concern of the University is oriented towards the didactic dimension of the educational system, appreciated by having the students evaluate teachers through questionnaires, by having the teachers fill in self-assessment grids, by periodic characterizations made at the level of the faculties/ departments, we consider a scan of the opinion of the main partners in the training-educational process – the students - to be useful.

Certain research data (Eom, Wen & Ashill, 2006) reveal that student satisfaction is a significant predictor of the learning results.

The students' level of satisfaction is directly proportional to their needs. As such, knowing the needs of the students can be an important step in stimulating motivation, in increasing their cognitive interest and their academic achievement.

Ensuring satisfaction with the educational services is important because research shows that student satisfaction is the factor that has the greatest influence on their loyalty (Helgesen, Nesset, 2007), influencing the increasing involvement of the students in the educational process. Student engagement, which is the time and effort dedicated to academic activities, is another predictor of ensuring success (Kuh, 2009; Wolf-Wendel, Ward & Kinzie, 2009).

In addition, studies show that a low level of satisfaction leads to a reduction in the academic performance of the students and leads to abandoning studies (Aldridge, Rowley, 1998), respectively to expressing dissatisfaction online (Arif *et al.*, 2013).

Our concern is focused on identifying the needs and expectations of the students, especially the future teachers, in order to meet their needs and find the most suitable strategies for activating and stimulating their commitment, on involving students in their own training, education.

2. Theoretical foundation

The transition from high school to university is often difficult, demanding for the students, both personally and academically; the emphasis will be placed on the self-management of learning, on taking notes independently, on individual study, whereas high school students do not have sufficiently developed skills, capacities, abilities in this regard.

Getting used to the specific of academic education, to a different program, to a different rhythm of teaching - learning and managing the volume of information, to the educational offer, implies a series of difficulties, reason why they need support in order to adapt, successfully

manage the situation, prevent failure or even abandoning it.

As such, we consider it necessary to know the needs of the students in order to make an objective diagnosis and to find the most suitable training strategies that will allow them to adapt to the academic environment and to obtain high results in exams.

There are, in the specialized literature, concerns about the inventory of the

students' needs. We are going to select and present 14 needs of any student (adapted after Heick, 2018):

a) self-knowledge;
b) models to relate to and models who are capable to inspire them, to mobilize them to take action;
c) learning strategies;
d) feedback, not judgment (feedback helps – it acts as a guide, it is corrective and it can even be comforting; judgment is personal and emotional and it hurts);
e) contexts and tools to use creatively in self-expression and self-direction;
f) ideas - sometimes all they need is an idea to start with;
g) the need to be heard;
h) the need for someone to believe in them, especially when their self-esteem is low;
i) the possibility to exercise, to put into practice what they have learned;
j) each student deserves as many chances as possible;
k) each student must "play", experiment - in collaboration with various partners, using various digital applications, following a series of models/ examples, using their own thinking;
l) each student needs self-efficacy, he/ she needs to develop his/ her skills, capacities that allow him/ her to complete, through his own forces, the things already started;
m) correct writing and reading skills - literacy is the basis of formal learning/ training;
n) the need for approval - authentic affection and acceptance is the foundation of the highest performances.

The 14 needs listed above are summarized in the figure below:

14 Things		
Every Student Needs		
• self-knowledge	• ideas	• to play
• inspiring models - and	• an audience	• self-efficacy

modelling • learning strategies • feedback, not judgment • creative spaces and tools	• a champion • a chance to practice • as many chances as it takes	• to read and write • approval that isn't always contingent on „success"

Figure no. 1. 14 Things Every Student Needs (Heick, 2018)

In terms of satisfaction, in the specialized literature this is defined as a feeling of happiness that is obtained when a person has fulfilled his/ her needs and desires (Saif, 2014), it is a condition felt by a person who has experienced a performance or a result that met its expectations (Ilyas, Arif, 2013).

Elliot and Shin (2002) define student satisfaction as a disposition determined by the subjective evaluation of the educational results and experience. In other words, satisfaction can be defined as a function of the relative level of experiences and perceived performance of the educational service (Mukhtar, Anwar, Ahmed, Baloch, 2015) during studying, as a short-term attitude resulting from evaluating the experience, services and educational facilities.

Therefore, satisfaction can be defined as an experience of achieving the expected results (Hon, 2002). A person will be satisfied when he/ she reaches his/ her expectations (Rad, Yarmohammadian, 2006). Satisfaction refers to the feeling of pleasure or disappointment that results from comparing perceived performance against expectations (Kotler, Keller, 2012).

Due to the complexity and particularities of education, the investigation of the academic satisfaction of the students is difficult; the revision of literature indicates an increase in the number of papers oriented on this topic. Studies focused on this topic capture various aspects when referring to the measurement of student satisfaction.

Among them we can enumerate:

• Satisfaction with the information, with the content of the courses - actuality, the language used (Arnerić *et al*., 2010; Abdullah, 2005; Arif *et al*., 2013; DeShields *et al*., 2005; Gruber *et al*., 2010; Langrosen *et al*., 2004; Munteanu *et al*., 2010; O'Driscoll, 2012; Popa *et al*., 2011; Telford, Masson, 2005; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, 2013);

• Satisfaction with the attitude of the teachers - availability, involvement, objective, correct approach/

treatment, focus on the needs of the students (Abdullah, 2005; Ardi *et al*., 2012; Helgesen, Nesset, 2007; Gruber *et al*., 2010; Elliot and Healy, 2001; Langrosen *et al*., 2004; O'Driscoll, 2012; Navarro *et al*., 2005; Sayeda *et al*., 2010);

• Satisfaction with the administrative staff - attitude, communication, waiting time, the quality of the information received (Casidy, 2013; Gruber *et al*., 2010 etc);

• Satisfaction with the relationship of the university with the business environment, with the training courses in companies (Arnerić et al, 2010; Langrosen *et al*., 2004; Sayeda *et al*., 2010);

• Satisfaction with the collegiate atmosphere, leisure activities/ modalities offered (Wilkins and Balakrishnan, 2013; Sojkin *et al*., 2012) etc.

The present study focuses on identifying the important aspects that influence the satisfaction level of the students in order to improve the perception regarding the quality of the academic environment, of the teaching process in general and of the psycho-pedagogical training, in particular.

3. Research methodology

The purpose of the research was to find the answers to the following questions: What are the needs of the students enrolled in the psycho-pedagogical module? Which aspect influences the most the level of academic satisfaction? To what extent does the level of student satisfaction influence the exam results?

The *research objectives* were:

- The inventory of the students' needs which influences the level of academic satisfaction;

- To grasp the relation between the degree of satisfaction and the academic results.

In accordance with the objectives mentioned above, we checked the following *hypotheses:*

a) The availability of teachers for communication and emotional support of the students is one of the main academic needs that significantly influence the level of academic satisfaction;

b) The success of the students in the exam significantly depends on their level of satisfaction.

In order to reach the objectives set, the methods of collecting data were the sociological survey based on questionnaire and the focus-group interview.

The sample of the present research was represented by the students of the Faculties of Letters and Law, years III and IV, enrolled in the *Psycho-pedagogical training program in view of certifying the teaching competencies*, organized by the Teacher Training Department, University of Craiova.

Data collection was performed at the premises of the faculties mentioned above, obtaining a total of 76 valid questionnaires. Before applying the questionnaire, we used the focus-group interview to identify the academic needs of the students. In the two interviews a total of 30 subjects from the specified faculties participated (16 subjects from the Faculty of Law and 14 subjects from the Faculty of Letters). We mention that the needs of the students were collected (written down) from the first year of academic education, respectively of psycho-pedagogical training. At that time, these were summary

and superficial, as the students, for the most part, were still not very well aware of their needs and expectations from the academic environment. That is why we asked the subjects in the sample, within the two focus groups, to reflect on the experience of the two years and to complete and restructure the list of needs. We mention that in addition to the cognitive maturity, the constructivist training methodology used, focused on the development of the reflexive-metacognitive capacities (Mogonea, Ştefan, 2014), on the development of self-management skills in academic learning (Ştefan, 2014; Frăsineanu 2012), on solving cognitive conflicts (Popescu, 2014), it allowed the students a clear awareness of the course, an understanding of their cognitive and actional evolution, the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of their own training).

The data obtained were useful in constructing the academic satisfaction questionnaire. Most items have closed answers, only one requires an open answer.

4. Results and discussions

In order to verify the first hypothesis of the research - *The availability of teachers to communicate with and emotionally support students is one of the main academic needs that significantly influence the level of academic satisfaction* - we started to identify the students' needs.

We are now going to present the main needs of the students, according to the importance given to them (table no. 1, figure no. 2):

Table no. 1. The main needs of the students

Student needs	Frequency	Percentage
The availability of the teachers to communicate, to advise, to clarify certain professional problems, to offer emotional support	59	77,63%
Adapting the teaching style to the rhythm and to the own learning possibilities of the students	50	65.78%
The use of methods that arouse interest, that are able to make them actively involve and cooperate with other colleagues	49	64,47%
The use of new technologies (e-mail, electronic course support, video projector)	46	60.52%
The usefulness of the taught concepts, the practical application of theory	37	48.68%
The quality of pedagogical practice activities: good organization; constructive feedback; encouragement, emotional support from mentors	34	44.73%
Evaluation and marking objectivity and correctness	33	43.42%
The actuality of the concepts taught, the explanation of	31	40.78%

|		
the new concepts		
The feedback offered by the teacher in evaluation	30	39.47%
The existence of the information resources (coursebooks, workbooks, etc.)	30	39.47%
The possibility of involving students in sessions of scientific communications, debates, theater-forums, research projects, summer schools and so on.	28	36.84%
The possibility of contesting the evaluation and marking results	19	24.35%
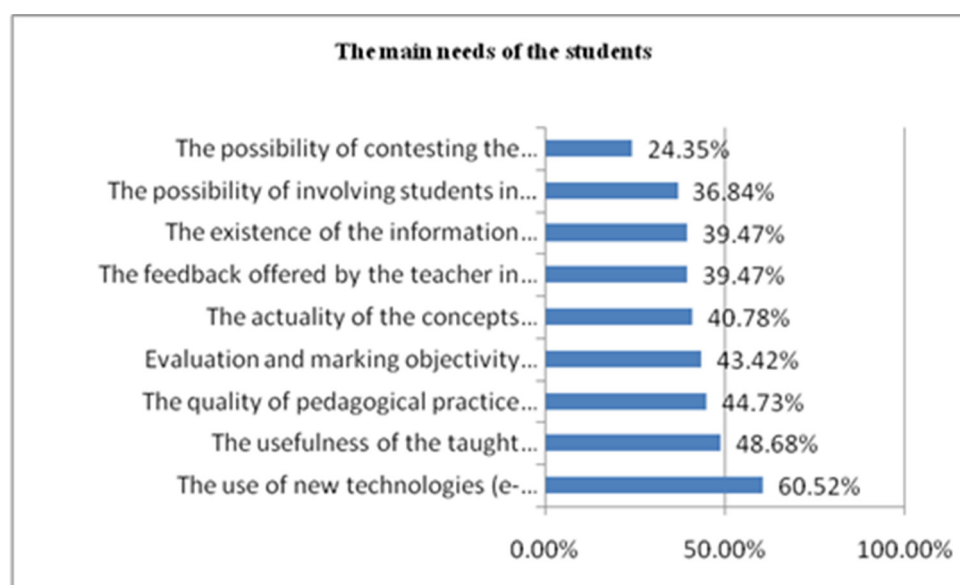
Figure no. 2. The main needs of the students

There can be observed that *the attitude of the teachers towards the students* is the need with the highest frequency, as indicated by the sample of subjects (77.63%).

The classification/ ordering of the needs outlined by the subjects in the interviews allowed us to formulate items about the degree of satisfaction of the subjects with regard to the factors considered to be relevant in relation to their own academic training. Starting from the answers of the subjects we identified 3 dimensions to which the outlined needs can be reported: a) the attitude of the teachers (it is observed that the students place this factor first); b) the didactic process; c) the pedagogical practice; d) the extracurricular opportunities offered in the study program.

As such, the measurement model built and applied in the process of data collection and processing is captured in table no. 2. The structure of each dimension (corresponding criteria) can also be observed in this table.

Table no. 2. The measurement model used in data collection and processing

| Dimension	Criterion
	The content: the actuality and importance of the concepts taught, their explanation and understanding
The didactic process	The existence of information resources (coursebooks, workbooks, etc.)
	The usefulness of the theory taught, its implementation
	The active and interactive teaching methods used
	The objective assessment and marking; the feedback provided; the possibility of contesting the

	results
The attitude of the university teachers	Availability for communication
	Clarification of some professional problems
	Emotional support
	Advice
Teaching practice	Good organization
	Support in designing and developing the teaching activity
	Constructive feedback
	The mentors availability, encouragement, emotional support
Extracurricular opportunities	Sessions of scientific communications, debates, theater-forums, research projects, summer schools

The answers to the questions were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, 5 points being awarded to the "very satisfied"/ "total agreement" rating, and 1 point to the "not satisfied"/ "total disagreement" rating. no. 3 and the related graphs (figures no. 3, 4, 5, 6) highlight the results of processing the applied questionnaire.

Table no. 3. The results of processing the questionnaire by dimensions and criteria

Dimension	Criteria	Very satisfied 5	Satisfied 4	Relatively satisfied	A little satisfied	Not satisfied 1
The didactic process	Theoretical knowledge: the actuality and importance of the notions taught, their explanation and understanding;	24	23	15	11	3
		31.57%	30.26%	19.73%	14.47%	3.94%
	The existence of information resources (coursebook, workbook, etc.);	22	22	17	13	2
		28.94%	28.94%	22.36%	17.10%	2.63%
	The usefulness of the concepts taught, the practical application of the theory	11	11	19	23	12
		14.47%	14.47%	25%	30.26%	15.78%
	The (Inter) active teaching methods used	26	19	15	12	4
		34.21%	25%	19.73%	15.78%	5.26%
	The objective assessment and marking	12	12	26	13	13
		15.78%	15.78%	34.21%	17.10%	17.10%
The attitude of the university teachers	Availability for communication	18	17	21	14	6
		23.68%	22.36%	27.63%	18.42%	7.89%
	Clarification of some professional	23	22	17	11	3

	problems					
		30.26%	28.94%	22.36%	14.47%	3.94%
	Emotional support	15	12	28	13	8
		19.73%	15.78%	36.84%	17.10%	10.53%
	Advice	18	16	21	15	6
		23.68%	21.05%	27.63%	19.73%	7.89%
Teaching practice	Good organisation	21	20	17	13	5
		27.63%	26.31%	22.36%	17.10%	6.57%
	Support in designing and developing the teaching activity	16	16	25	12	7
		21.05%	21.05%	32.89%	15.78%	9.21%
	Constructive feedback	14	18	19	16	9
		18.42%	23.68%	25%	21.05%	11.84%
	The availability of the mentors, encouragement, emotional support	13	10	27	13	13
		17.10%	13.15%	35.52%	17.10%	17.10%
Extracurricular Oportunities	Sessions of scientific communications, debates, theater-forums, research projects, summer schools	21	24	14	11	6
		27.63%	31.57%	18.42%	14.47%	7.89%
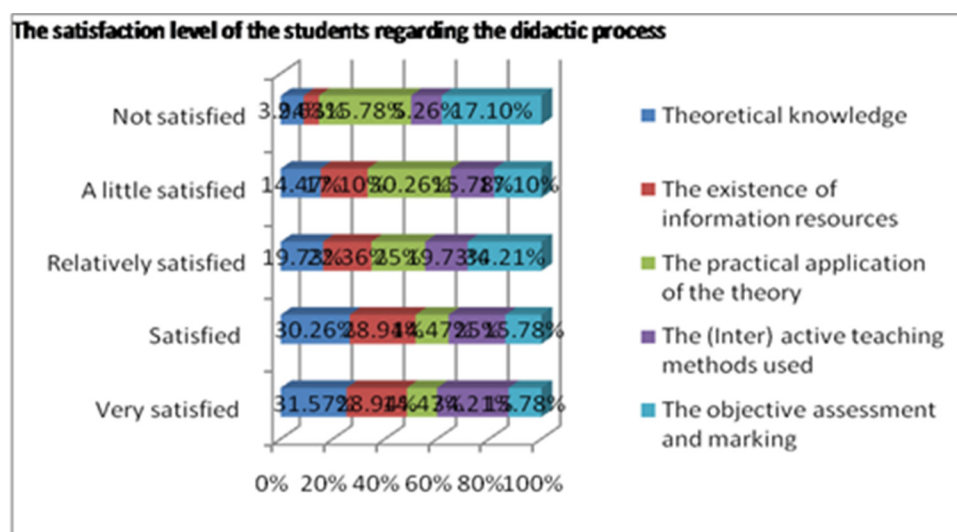
Figure no. 3. The satisfaction level of the students regarding the didactic process
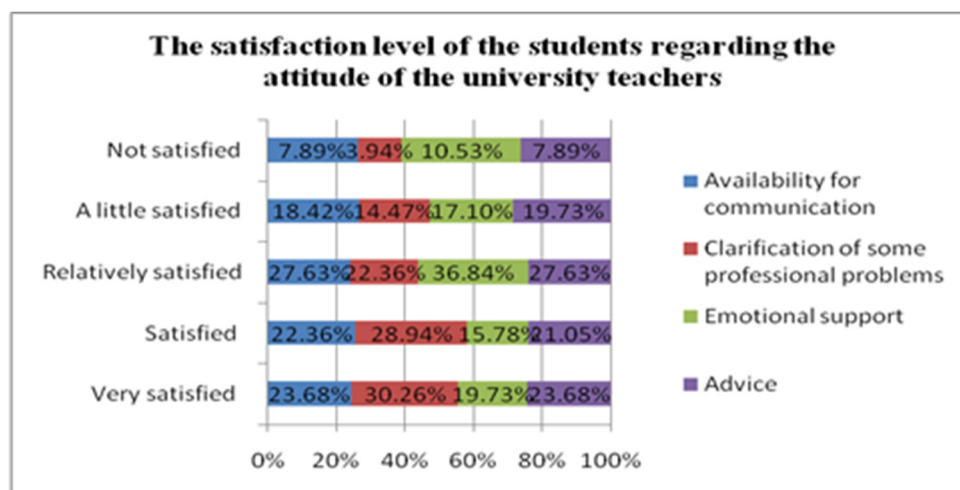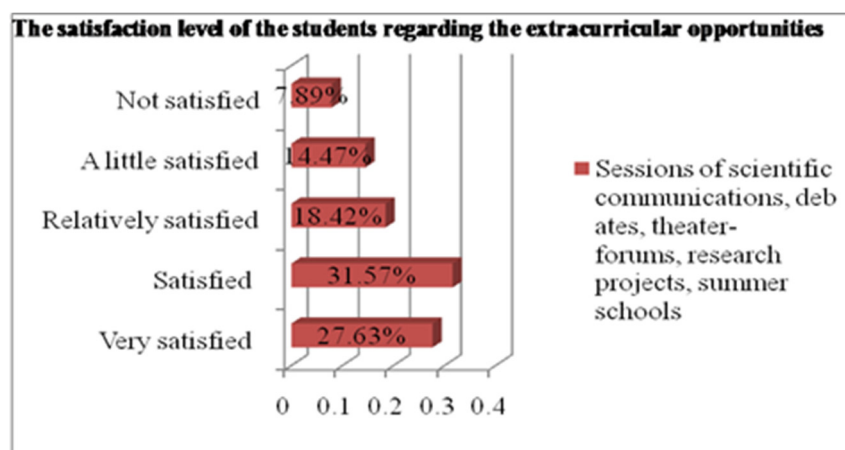
Figure no. 4. The satisfaction level of the students regarding the attitude of the university teachers
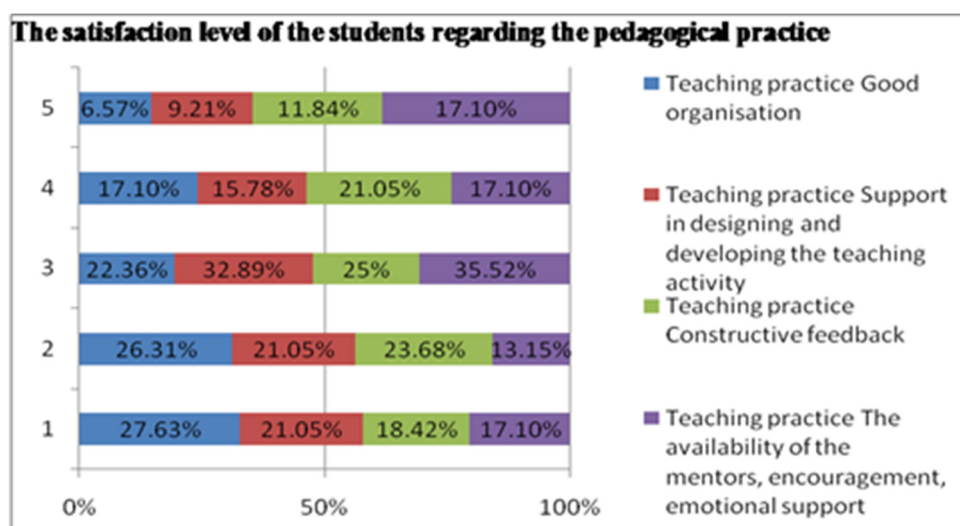
Figure no. 5. The satisfaction level of the students regarding the pedagogical practice

Analysing the answers to the questions it appears that, regarding the degree of student satisfaction, they declare themselves, for the most part, *satisfied and very satisfied* with:

- the theoretical knowledge acquired (61.83%);
- the existence of information resources (57.88%);

- the methods used by the teachers (59.21%);
- the university teachers' availability to communicate and clarify some professional problems (46.04%);
- the extracurricular opportunities offered (59.20%)

Figure no. 6. The satisfaction level of the students regarding the extracurricular opportunities

The aspects which the students are, for the most part, relatively satisfied with:

- objective assessment and rating (34.21%);
- emotional support offered by university teachers (36.84%).

Students generally appreciate the quality of the didactic and practical activities, the attitude of the teachers, the learning resources offered by the Psycho-pedagogical Training Program.

From the analysis of the answers to the questions it results that the students are *too little satisfied or not at all satisfied* and would like to improve the following aspects:

- the attitude of the teacher training mentors, which is a better communication, but also emotional support, encouragement and confidence invested in the student; students need supportive, encouraging, stimulating feedback, meant to determine them to mobilize their energy resources for learning, they need teachers to offer advice (34.20%); constructive feedback also needs to improve. Students, in proportion of 32.89% are not satisfied with this aspect;

- a greater practical applicability of the pedagogical theory in the didactic activities (46.04%); the students want their pedagogical practice to take place from the first year, in parallel with the theory taught in the other psycho-pedagogical disciplines, in order to have the possibility "to apply the assimilated notions to class and thus to fix them"; until the third year, when the pedagogical practice is carried out, the students argue that the theoretical notions of the first two years are already forgotten.

To the question "What is the dimension that most influences your degree of satisfaction with the academic experience? the recorded answers were the following (table 4 and figure 7):

Table no. 4. The dimension that most influences the degree of academic satisfaction

Dimension	Frequency	Procentage
The attitude of the university teachers	28	36.84%
The unfolded course and seminar activities	21	27.63%
The activities carried out during the internship of pedagogical practice	15	19.73%
Extracurricular opportunities offered by the study program	7	9.21%
The attitude of the administrative or auxiliary staff (secretaries): communication, waiting time, the quality of the information received	3	3.94%
The bureaucratic procedures related to the study papers	2	2.63%
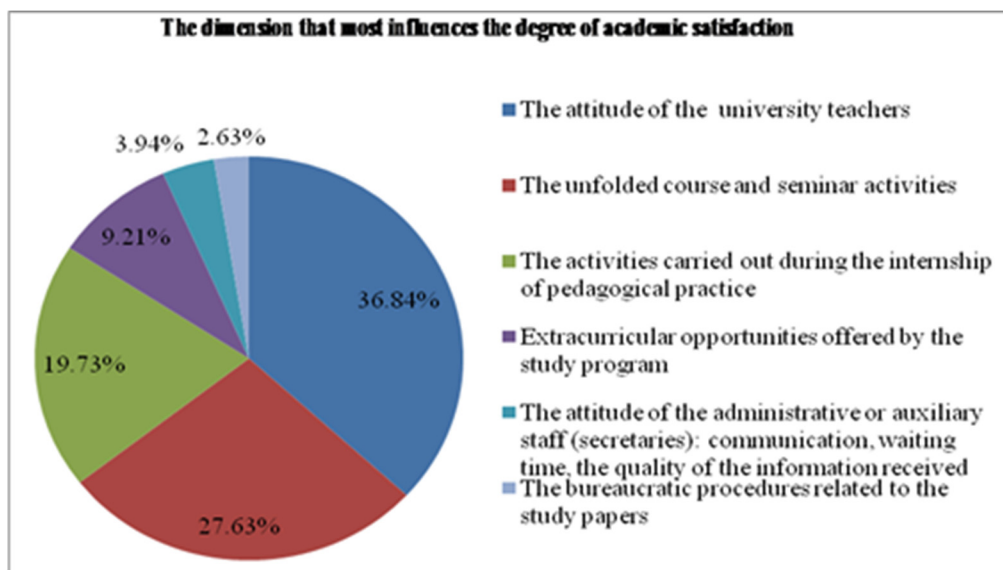
Figure no. 7. The dimension that most influences the degree of academic satisfaction

It is clear from the obtained answers that the dimension that most influences the degree of student satisfaction with the academic experience is *the attitude of the teachers towards the students* (36.84%), more than *the course and seminar activities* (27.63%), more than *the activities carried out during the internship of pedagogical practice* (19.73%).

Not only did the students place first, as an academic need, *the availability of the teachers for communication, advice, emotional support*, but they were aware of and affirmed that *the attitude of the teachers* greatly influences their image about the academic experience. Given this result, we can say that the first hypothesis of our research has been confirmed.

Regarding hypothesis no. 2 - *The success of the students in the examination significantly depends on their level of satisfaction*, the values obtained allow us to outline the following conclusion: The higher the degree of student satisfaction, the higher the grades are.

Thus, the second hypothesis is confirmed - the existence of a significant relation between the average marks obtained in the academic year 2018-2019 and the level of academic satisfaction of the students (χ 2 = 87,997, df. = 12, n = 2384, p <01).

5. Conclusions

The information obtained from the processing and interpretation of the data show that there are aspects the subjects in the sample are satisfied with, but there are also aspects that they are not satisfied with. The students had the opportunity, during the survey, to express their opinions, personal and professional needs.

Among the aspects that generally please the students, we can mention:

- the actuality and importance of the notions taught, their explanation and understanding; more than half of the subjects (61.83%) consider receiving relevant and complete information for the field they are preparing in, within the university courses they attend;
- the modern teaching methods used;
- the existence of informational resources (coursebooks, workbooks, etc.);
- the university teachers' availability for communication and clarification of some professional problems;
- the extracurricular opportunities offered by the study program.

The aspects that the students declare, for the most part, relatively satisfied with are: objective evaluation and marking; emotional support offered by the university teachers.

A number of issues that the students think they could be improved include:

- the application of theory - the subjects want a greater emphasis on putting into practice the application of the notions, of the theory taught;
- a better correlation of the theoretical notions (from the first two years) with the pedagogical practice (organized and carried out in the third year of psycho-pedagogical training) - the students affirm that this time gap facilitates the forgetting of the pedagogical theory;
- the attitude of some pedagogical practice mentoring teachers: the students want a closer relationship, based on emotional support.

The recorded data represent a guiding mark in the process of evaluating student satisfaction, in order to ensure the quality of higher education, to meet the academic expectations of the students. Based on these results, we can outline the following *recommendations*:

- focusing of the management of universities and teachers on identifying and understanding all the students' needs and expectations;
- analysing the relevant information regarding student satisfaction, drawing up preventive and corrective actions and strategies;
- the teachers' focus on the student, especially from the perspective of emotional-affective support; improving relations with the students from the perspective of the following aspects: availability for communication, providing constructive feedback, encouragement, guidance.
- changes in the curriculum of the Teacher Training Department, in the sense of distributing the number of hours allocated to pedagogical practice, so that it starts earlier than the third year, in order to develop in parallel with the psycho-pedagogical disciplines *The theory and methodology of training*; *Didactics Specialization*.
- the continuous improvement of the quality of the didactic and research activity carried out by the students in the university, with emphasis on the valorisation of metacognition; in addition to the metacognitive dimension, the non-cognitive dimension of personality is equally important, which influences the adaptation to the academic environment and the success in exams.

Authors note:

The authors have equal contributions to this article.

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