

## **Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala**

Romanian Journal for Multidimensional Education

ISSN: 2066 – 7329 (print), ISSN: 2067 – 9270 (electronic)

Coverd in: Index Copernicus, Ideas RePeC, EconPapers, Socionet, Ulrich  
Pro Quest, Cabel, SSRN, Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Journalseek, Scipio,  
EBSCO, CEEOL

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### **Student's Satisfaction - An Indicator of Quality in Physical Education**

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Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala, 2013, Volume 6, Issue 1,  
June, pp: 83-92

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://revistaromaneasca.ro>

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Published by:

Lumen Publishing House

On behalf of:

Lumen Research Center in Social and Humanistic Sciences

## Student's Satisfaction - An Indicator of Quality in Physical Education

Cristiana POP<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*A quality social service is one which fulfils a set of demands and rules according to a standard and especially according to the internal and external client's expectations. Reaching these goals implies a new relationship between the service provider and the beneficiary as well. As a consequence, in educational system is expected also a change regarding the improvement of the educational offer, the educational context, the quality of the human resources and the relationship between teacher and students. The difference between the positive and negative answers is consistent and statistically proved by the "t" test results ( $t=19,05$ ;  $p<0.001$ )*

*Methods and subjects: Willing to collect information about the student's opinion related with physical education and sport department activity, I did work out a 10 items questionnaire. It was applied to 142 students in 10 faculties of our university, randomly selected. The questions are related with a large range of teaching aspects: planning, teaching relationship and environment, effects, results, or student's preferences.*

*Conclusions and recommendations: Considering the high scores, (75-97% positive answers) and the statistical confidence, we conclude that our activity aims to fulfill the students needs, requires and expectations. Because quality enhance is a continuous process, in the recommendation section I include some aspects can be improved for a better teaching approach with better results for students.*

### Keywords:

*Quality, management, physical education, sport, higher education*

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### **Introduction**

The competition in higher education is more “interesting” in this economical crisis when all universities, public and private institutions, are struggling for resources. The competitive environment sanctions a quality low level through decreasing the student’s number, clients, sponsors and the resources which they bring.

A quality service is one which fulfils a set of demands and rules according to a standard. Reaching these standards implies also a new relationship between the service provider and the beneficiary. As a consequence, in educational system is expected also a change regarding the improvement of the educational offer, the educational context, the quality of the human resources and the relationship between teacher and student. The educational, medical or social service quality can be appreciated only of the beneficiary of this service, not of the provider. Quoting Prof. Dr. N. Drăgulănescu (2005) in Romania the obstacles against quality in education are coming from the cultural area: mentalities, prejudices, attitudes and counterproductive behaviors. All this can generate a massive reluctance to change.

The manager is formally responsible about quality, but at the same time it is the responsibility of all those involved in the educational process. The attention for recruiting educated and valuable teachers is a condition for evolving and creating also a valuable working force for society. The fact is just a few valuable elements are really motivated to teach in the Romanian educational system and the criteria of selection in universities are doubtfully applied and based mainly on good connections instead of education and research outcomes.

The continuously improvement must be a permanent task in quality domain. The organizational experience helps people to prevent the mistakes instead to found solutions after the problems appear.

### **Content**

How do we know if the service we provide is a corresponding one? Through measurements, statistic and objective data; these allow comparisons and classifications among the educational institutions. This kind of data can be shown in graphics and offers a clear image of the performances evolution. The progress must be the main criteria for all the decisions, actions and process.

The team is the most important quality manager. This idea replaces concepts like professional autonomy and collegiality with team work and working in a common purpose: the quality of educational offer. Considering the tradition and the organizational culture solidity of our schools, this concept will be, in my opinion, difficult to root soon.

Applying the Quality Management System (QMS) has the purpose to win the public's confidence in the university's capacity to supply exclusively quality services. These services include vocational education, instruction, training, research, project design, consulting, and so on. Winning the trust in these immaterial products, which include knowledge and competences, has targeted two categories of customers:

- I – internal customers of the university represented by students, who provide, together with the teaching staff, technical-administrative staff and managers, the internal quality;
- II – external customers (business entrepreneurs - the future employers of the graduates) and other partners interested in the university activity (the state, the community and the local administration, the national and international academic authorities, stock holders, the media, and so on) who provide the external quality.

The universities partner's interests must be known and satisfied on long term, as much as possible. As a part of a society which is quickly developing, the university has to adjust to the changes of the labor market and so that its services can satisfy the needs, the demands and expectations of the customers and partners in the rhythm that those evolve. The QMS is oriented towards the performances and the maximization of the performances of an organization, which involves a ceaseless improvement of this system. One of the characteristics of the QMS is that it can't be maintained long time at the same level, it either improves either losses from its efficiency and effectiveness.

Beside the continuous improvement, the growth of the institution's credibility on the market can be obtained through:

- I – comparative testing of the supplied services and publishing the results or the classification issued in this way. Publishing the list with the first 500 universities in the world, by the performance criterion, in which none of the Romanian superior study institutions could be included (shanghairanking.com, 2014),

is a real and disappointing example at the same time. The classification of the international sport forums are a credible source of data regarding the rank in which a sportsman, a national or club team is in a certain moment. The classification in the top of these hierarchies give credibility and prestige to the national schools, the coaches, sportsmen and so on, but rarely represent the measurement of the institution's quality in which these performances are produced. The Romanian sport, as a general effect, is more of a "court of miracles", than an example of orientation towards the quality of the processes involved. The insufficiency of the material and sometimes informational resources is replaced by the quality of the human resources (sportsmen and coaches) whose intensive usage has irreversible repercussions.

- II – the certification of the services or quality management systems by a certified authority (a third party). Obtaining the quality certification is for the partners of an organization a guarantee that the services provided fulfill the demands stipulated in the standards. For the sports ground and the health centers, an additional certification of the functional environment management system (ISO 14001: 2005) brings more safety for the health of the sportsmen, pupils, students, patients. I'm referring to the quality of the air, water, illumination, safety in the use of the installations and materials and in general in all the aspects that can assure the comfort and prevention in the wounding of the users.

The system of reference for the quality management and assurance is included in the international standards of quality in the series SR EN ISO 9004: 2010. The audit has the purpose to evaluate the degree of conformability of the developed activity in the university on the line of quality with the requests of this system of reference, but also with the laws for higher education.

The first principle that the QMS states, is the focalization on the needs of the client. The public and mostly the private educational institutions, but also the clubs, are conditioned by the clients number (students and sportsmen) which they succeed to attract and keep. The ways that can be followed for this purpose are:

- Understanding the clients present needs and anticipating the direction in which these can evolve in the future;
- The accomplishment of these requests and
- Trough the service improvement, exceeding the client's expectations (Pop, 2014).

The measurement of the quality in the educational process is given by the level of the products supplied. At the student level, academic quality means on a short term:

- Positive results in evaluations;
  - Progress in the knowledge, skills and abilities volume;
  - Continuity (opposed to abandonment) of studies;
- And on a long term:
- Access on the labor market according to the obtained level of preparation;
  - Continuity of the education through master studies and the contributions to the development of the studied domain and connected science domains;
  - Success in the domain of competence (Jansen & Bruisima, 2005).

#### **Methods and subjects**

Willing to collect information related to the student's satisfaction, I did work out a 10 items questionnaire. It was applied to 142 students in all 10 faculties of our university, randomly selected. The questions are related with a wide range of physical education teaching aspects: planning, teaching relationship and environment, effects, results, or student's preferences.

The subjects of our research had the possibility to choose the most correspondent answer with their opinion from 4 possibilities: 2 of them with positive and 2 with negative sense. Then we calculated the balance in percentage between the appreciative and the non appreciative answers and highlighted this balance in a graphic form. The difference between the positive and negative answers and its significance was tested with "t Test" for 2 dependent variables.

First item is about material environment (space, equipments, devices, materials) which is considered being appropriate by 98% of our students. This significant positive percentage means that our department educational offer and our efforts gained our students appreciation.

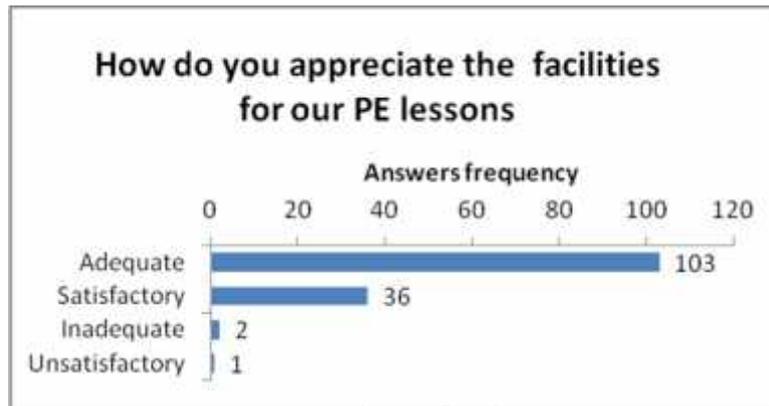


Fig.1 – first item

The items related to planing, how the practical lessons take place and implicitly, related to teaching, received answers as follow:

- The PE lesson planing is appreciated in a precentage of 98% as being very well and well organised.
- Regarding the time management, 89% of the students have the opinion that the lessons are dense or very dense.

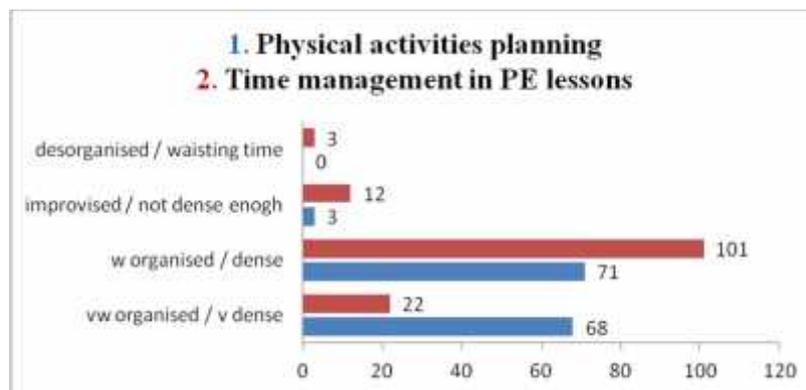


Fig. 2 – item 2 & 3

The effort level during our lessons is appreciated like reasonable or challenging by 95% of students. The rest of 5% considers the effort being at a low level. First two answers are also the most favorable, indicating an optimal effort volume, intensity and density for the majority of the students.

The next questions set are in connection with the student's perception of their own results after investing efforts during the PE lessons.

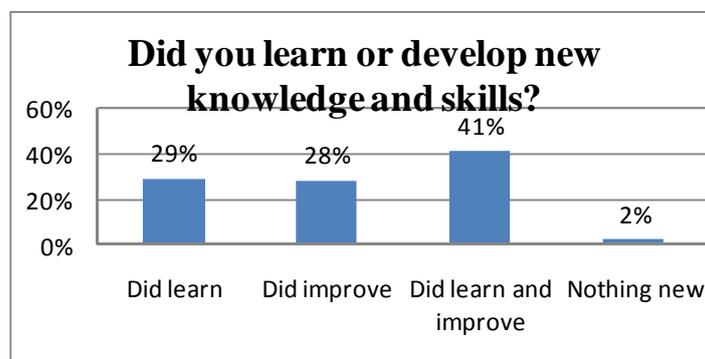


Fig. 3 – item 5

To the item: „Did you learn or develop new knowledge and skills in PE lessons?” from 140 answers, just 3 meaning 2% said they didn't learn nothing new. 41% reply that they achieve new knowledge and skills, 28% improve their skills and 29% learn and improve as well. We consider these results as a confirmation for our special attention to adapt the educational offer to our student's possibilities, needs and preferences.

- Physical exercise is considered by the majority (89,2%) of our students to be a pleasant and useful activity. Just a small percentage (10,8) feels that PE lessons like a compulsory activity and no one like an useless one. The understanding of physical exercise benefits in the beginning of adult life, and student's appreciation is an objective parameter of their satisfaction measurements.
- The significant percentage of those who are convinced and positive to continue physical exercise independently indicates a good effect of our work in PE classes. The data shows that less than a percent (actually just in one case from 142) the possibility of a future physical activity is completely excluded, 15,7% consider it possible, 40,7% are sure and 42,8% answer positive.

- To practice a sport is considered being helpful for the future profession by 76% of the students, 24% considered that it helps a little or not at all.

The question: „How your opinion have been received of your teachers?” shows us different opinions: half of students -50% were listened, 25,7% were encouraged to express them, 19,5% consider that there opinion were ignored, and 4,7% answer that nobody request their opinion about PE activities.

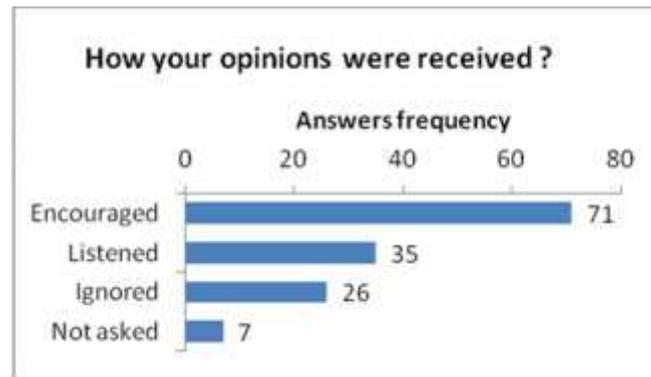


Fig. 4 – item 9

The positive answers represent 75,7%, but to the rest of the students (24,3%) we might give more attention aiming to improve communication between teachers and students during our common activities.

The last request in this questionnaire is to order the sport preferences. Aerobics, fitness and swimming are in top, followed by team sports: volleyball and basketball. This order is strongly marked of the gender majority in our university, which is feminine.

### Conclusion

Through the questionnaire we received a positive feed-back to all points we search. The percentage of positive answers is between 75% and 97%. The difference between the positive and negative answers is consistent and statistically proved by the t test results ( $t=19,05$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Considering this high scores, we conclude that our Physical

Education and Sports Department activity aim to fulfill the student's needs and to respect their preferences and particularities.

In the same time this data prove that the Quality System Management requests related to the client satisfaction are accomplished.

Nevertheless some recommendations can be made in order to improve the pedagogical communication. A new strategy based on active and a more inclusive approach regarding student's initiatives and opinions is required.

Female students prefer mainly individual activities, in personal benefit, without physical contact and limited cooperation with other teammates. Despite this choice and some cultural issues, physical activities are an excellent mean of enhancing team work capacity, and an opportunity for assuming responsibilities and sharing experiences, knowledge and emotions.

The Romanian Agency for the Assurance of Quality in Higher Education is the forum which is aiming to increase the relevance, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the study programs and universities. The evaluation criteria, methodology and procedures imposed by this forum imply not only a reasonable level of the infrastructure, but also the performance's increase of the teaching staff and the graduates. The graduate's success on the labor market, demonstrated by employment according to the university diploma and their professional pursuit, is only one of the quality request that stand in front of Romanian universities.

### Refereces

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### **Biodata**



Cristiana Pop currently works as an associated professor at the Economic Studies Academy of Bucharest, Physical Education and Sports Department. She has a BA and a PhD in physical education from the National University of Physical Education and Sports of Bucharest and a MA in management from the ESA Bucharest. Her main research interests are in educational management, communication and didactics in physical education, quality in education and social issues related with health and physical activity. She authored *Educational Management. Physical Education Teacher's Managerial Roles* (2007); *Athletics for Students* (2013); *Communication in Physical Education and Sport* (2014).