

## STUDENT'S OPINION OF MANAGEMENT WORK QUALITY AND QUALITY OF NON-TEACHING SERVICES IN THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION QUALITY IN APPLIED STUDIES

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the quality of management work and non-teaching support, according to the opinions of students from the regular survey procedure in the higher school of applied studies was researched. The approvals of respondents from the first, second, and third year of study at one study program (first degree) were examined, for the period: winter semester of the academic year 2022/23 and the summer semester of the academic year 2023/24. In the scope of the examination, the influence of the change in the accreditation cycle of the study program on the opinion of the examinees was also monitored. It was assumed that the quality of work of non-teaching support and management will meet the requirements of the internal Quality Assurance System. The evaluation results showed that the entire population of surveyed students, regardless of the change in the accreditation cycle of the study program, is very satisfied with the quality of work of the non-teaching support and management of the higher school of applied studies. Based on the results, it is necessary to prescribe only general preventive measures to ensure and improve the quality of non-teaching and management services. Based on the research results in the defined scope, it can be considered that the institution has successfully responded to the challenges in the observed quality of work. Appreciation of the opinions of students, which were collected through surveys, can contribute to the improvement of the quality of the institution's work and serve the purpose of improving the quality of higher education.

**Key Words:** students' opinion, non-teaching staff, management, quality assurance, applied studies

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important principles on which the activity of higher education is based is the participation of students in management and decision-making, especially about issues that are important for the quality of teaching [1]. Through the process of self-evaluation and assessment of the quality of study programs and higher education institutions, higher schools of applied studies collect the opinions of students on the quality of the teaching process, teachers, non-teaching staff, management, etc.

It can be considered that the process of surveying students is always in the function of improving the quality of higher education [2]. Self-evaluation as a model of self-evaluation of the work quality of the work of observed higher school of applied studies is carried out in the manner and according to the procedure prescribed by the set of documents from the internal Quality Assurance System [3].

In the process of self-evaluation and evaluation of the quality of the higher education institution and study programs (of all types and degrees of study), the evaluation of the students is considered, and the opinion of the students must be taken into account because they are very important subjects of quality assurance and bearers of the development of the culture of quality [4,5]. Students are considered very important subjects of quality assurance, and bearers of the development of a culture of quality according to the Rulebook on standards and procedures for ensuring and improving the quality of work, self-evaluation of the Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin, and self-evaluation of study programs [3].

In the Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin, in addition to students in the self-evaluation process, the following quality assurance entities also play an important role: the director and assistant directors, non-teaching support (secretary, technical secretary, student service, library), whose job description is based on the Statute [6].

The grade given by students in the process of self-evaluation of study programs and institutions is obtained in the process of regular surveying of the entire student population, which, according to the internal Quality Assurance System [3] is carried out after the end of the winter and after the end of the summer semester of each academic year. The method and procedure of regular surveying of the student population, quality assurance entities, bodies that make decisions on quality evaluation and prescribe preventive and/or corrective measures (mandatory for implementation within the specified period) are defined in the Rulebook on standards and procedures for ensuring and improving the quality of work, self-evaluation of the Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin and self-evaluation of study programs [3].

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In this paper, it is assumed that the results of the evaluation of the quality of work, non-teaching support, and quality of management work will be within satisfactory limits, according to the Rulebook on standards and procedures for ensuring and improving the quality of work, self-evaluation of the Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin, and self-evaluation of study programs [3].

## 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the research sample consisted of the population of students (examinees) enrolled on all grounds in the summer semester of the academic year 2022/23 and in the winter semester of the academic year 2023/24. (Table 1.) to the accredited study program of the first degree of study. A study program with a larger number of students was selected for research to ensure the sample representativeness [7,8]. In the subject research, the data on the number of enrolled students are classified by year of study to facilitate presentation, monitoring of changes, and making valid and well-founded conclusions.

Table 1 – Overview of the number of enrolled students by year of study in the selected study program and selected coverage

| Academic year, Semester     | Year of Study | Number of Enrolled Students as sample size |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 2022/23.<br>Summer Semester | First         | 33                                         |
|                             | Second        | 20                                         |
|                             | Third         | 31                                         |
| 2023/24.<br>Winter Semester | First         | 29                                         |
|                             | Second        | 20                                         |
|                             | Third         | 30                                         |

By the method and procedure defined by the internal Quality Assurance System, students' opinions on the quality of work of non-teaching staff and quality of management work are collected in the regular procedure of surveying [3,7,8]. The survey was conducted on the standardized model form [3].

The standardized model form for the subject survey of students contained a set of open questions, through which respondents evaluated:

- Quality of work non-teaching staff,
- Quality of work non-teaching support.

In the survey process, students expressed their opinion using the following numerical rating system [3,7]: 5 - Extremely Satisfied, 4 - Satisfied, 3 - I Am Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, 2 - Dissatisfied, 1 - Extremely Dissatisfied.

The procedure of regular surveying of students was based on the following general principles [3,7]:

1. Anonymity of Respondents,
2. Protection of Personal Data by Relevant Laws
3. Respect for the Academic Integrity of the Examinees with Freedom of Expression of Opinions,
4. Objectivity of Examinees.

The data processing methodology included the calculation of the average grade for the entire sample. In the conducted research, the obtained average grade was used as an indicator of students' satisfaction with the quality of the examined services. The survey of students' opinions presented in this paper was carried out for the production of the Report on self-evaluation of study programs in the Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin [7].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the examination of students' opinions (on the sample size given in Table 1.) about the quality of work of non-teaching staff and the quality of work of management (for the examination conducted on the selected study program of the first degree of applied studies) are given in Table 2.

Table 2 – Student's opinions about the quality of work of non-teaching staff and the quality of work of management

| No. | Survey Question                                                                     | First Year of Study            |                                | Second Year of Study           |                                | Third Year of Study            |                                |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|     |                                                                                     | Winter Semester, Average Grade | Summer Semester, Average Grade | Winter Semester, Average Grade | Summer Semester, Average Grade | Winter Semester, Average Grade | Summer Semester, Average Grade |
| 1.  | Library Equipment with Literature                                                   | 4,72                           | 4,75                           | 4,75                           | 4,80                           | 4,80                           | 4,70                           |
| 2.  | Student Service                                                                     | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,90                           |
| 3.  | Legal-Administrative Services – the Secretariat (Secretary, Technical co-secretary) | 4,90                           | 4,90                           | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,90                           | 4,95                           |
| 4.  | The Management (Director and Assistants)                                            | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,95                           | 4,90                           | 4,95                           |

Based on the results obtained (Table 2), that is, according to examinees from the selected set of questions, it can be considered that they are very satisfied with the quality of non-teaching staff (Library, Student Services, Secretariat) and the quality of the Management (Director and Assistants).

- The obtained results (Table 2.) can be explained by the following facts:
- Continuous enrichment of the library fund with foreign and domestic literature relevant to the study program, but by financial possibilities.
- Measures to adapt to the new working conditions with students in the Student Service are undertaken continuously.
- Adequate organization of work in the field of office business and legal affairs (from the student's point of view).
- The Management, primarily the Director, is available to students for very different and numerous questions sent by students, but also for help in solving certain problems/or referring to the procedures for solving them.

In the comparison of the evaluations of the quality of work of the Management and the Secretariat, no significant differences were observed, even though, for example, the director's actions on individual requests and requests are such that the student (as a service user) receives an answer that he is not satisfied with. It can be considered that the students understand the legal basis of management in the higher school of applied studies, whose accredited study programs they attend. The above can also be attributed by the fact that the student always receives a response from the Management office to the submitted application/request with an explanation, i.e., a reference to a potential way to solve the problems they have during their education.

In the winter semester of the 2023-2024 school year, the implementation of reaccredited study programs will begin. The structure of the reaccredited study program of basic applied studies In Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin is very similar to the structure of the same program from the previous accreditation cycle, especially in the first year, which excludes the influence of the change in the structure of the study program (and related subjects) on the opinion of students about the quality of the work of the examined quality assurance subjects.

Students in the first year of studies on the reaccredited program have an increased scope of administrative duties in professional services as well as in administrative services. Even though they are accessing the administrative procedures related to higher education for the first time (which are significantly different from the previous level of education), the respondents are still satisfied with the service provided.

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#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the obtained results, it can be considered that the examined population of students is very satisfied with the quality of non-teaching services (Library, Student Service, Secretariat) as well as the quality of the Management (Director and Assistants) in the higher school of applied studies independently from the year of study they are attending and changes in the accreditation cycle of the observed study program. The change in the accreditation/reaccreditation cycle of study programs within the scope of this research did not affect the change in the respondents' opinion about the quality of work of the surveyed services that are in the function of students in the Technical College of Applied Sciences in Zrenjanin.

Based on the obtained results of the performed examination, it can be concluded that it is necessary to prescribe and implement general preventive measures to ensure and improve the quality of work of non-teaching services (Library, Student Service, Secretariat) as well as the quality of the Management (Director and Assistants) by the internal Quality Assurance System. It is not necessary to prescribe corrective measures for quality assurance because according to the opinion of the examinees in the covered period of the investigation, the higher school of applied studies was ready to respond to various and complex challenges in ensuring the quality of support for students within the scope of higher education. It can be considered that surveying students is very important for obtaining information that can be used to improve the quality of the institution's work in the field of higher applied education.

Further work could include examining the quality of IT support and the availability of information on the same population of examinees.

## 5. REFERENCES

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