

ASPECTS OF SATISFACTION WITH LSP TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *This article discusses a questionnaire research carried out in order to collect information regarding the issue of student satisfaction within the context of Language for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. The data were collected through an online, self-completed, voluntary, anonymous EvaSys questionnaire. The students requested to complete the questionnaires covered a wide range of economic/business disciplines. The target population of students studying in economic/business disciplines was the following: economics-management, finance and accounting, banking and finance, tourism and catering, international relations, commerce. The aim of the research was to look into the satisfaction of students with teaching language with business purposes. The quantitative results of student satisfaction with LSP teaching revealed that the students of business and economics at Hungarian universities are satisfied with the executive, technical and learning environment. The descriptive statistical analyses have shown that the field of economics has become more feminised. Female students find it more challenging to complete courses than male students and students living in cities find it easier to complete language courses than students living in villages. Students think their skills are improving more than average during the courses. Male students rated their skills development as a small percentage better than female students. Both female and male students considered the number of contact hours sufficient. No large percentage differences were found in the satisfaction of students with their teachers' work, depending on the educational level of the parents.*

Keywords: student satisfaction; higher education; social variables; descriptive statistics; questionnaire survey.

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of teaching foreign languages, including LSP, is influenced by a number of factors. The present study attempts to extract an important and determining factor from these complex components, namely satisfaction, and to analyse it by means of a questionnaire survey of students in a business language education programme in a higher education setting.

In the 1980s, researchers emphasized the value of feedback regarding what students actually thought about their programs and their more comprehensive experience of life in higher education (Marsh, 1982; Ramsden&Entwhistle, 1981; Winter-Hebron, 1984).

Today, higher education institutions increasingly perceive themselves to be part of the service industry;consequently, the increasing competition between institutions is forcing them to focus on student satisfaction. In an increasingly competitive market, the needs and opinions of students in higher education institutions are becoming more and more critical, and students' feedback and evaluations of the educational activities of higher education institutions cannot be left out of these. Thus, student satisfaction surveys have an essential role.

In the aspects of student satisfaction section we address the theoretical view of student satisfaction with special emphasis on the importance of satisfaction with LSP teaching at higher education institutions. In the following sections the paper outlines the research methodology, the characteristics of the sample and finally the results. In the conclusionsection we summarize the findings and outline the future research directions.

2. Aspects of Student Satisfaction

According to Oliver (1997), satisfaction, in general, is a state of pleasure that one may perceive from achieving a desirable aim. Saif (2014) defines satisfaction as a feeling of happiness that can be obtained when your needs and desires are fulfilled.

Students' satisfaction, in particular, is a complex phenomenon and it is affected by several aspects. According to Walker-Marshall & Hudson (1999), it is the Grate Point Average which can be considered to be the principal element on student satisfaction.

Marzo-Navarro et al. (2005), Appleton-Knapp &Krentler (2006) distinguished personal and institutional factors that can greatly influence student satisfaction. Personal factors include the age, gender employment and learning style of students while institutional factors cover quality of instructions, proper feedback, teaching style, etc.

Also, Wilkins & Balakrishnan (2013) found the standard of teaching, physical facilities and the constructive application of technology as pivotal factors of student satisfaction. In the literature, some other determinants are also considered to be important, e.g. classroom quality, course content, equipment, library facilities, learning materials, curriculum, campus life, institutional effectiveness and social conditions.

Student satisfaction is inevitable when we wish to measure the teaching environment whose most important players are students and which encourages

their willingness to learn, so their opinion of the teachers and learning environment cannot be overlooked because they have a great impact on students' performance. DeShields Jr, O. W., Ali, K. & Erdener, K., (2005) found that, nowadays, universities are increasingly recognizing and emphasizing the expectations and needs of their customers, that is, the students. We have also found it important to keep the previous statement in mind, to imagine and understand student satisfaction in a competitive environment. This competitive environment is the result of the globalisation processes in every field of life to which higher education institutions are increasingly subjected. Shortly, universities try to attract as many students as possible but it is impossible without satisfying the needs and expectations of students. Therefore, measuring student satisfaction and revealing our research findings proves important for this purpose.

Student satisfaction with language teaching plays a pivotal role in the motivation for student performance (Wu, Marek, & Yen, 2012; Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014). According to Wu, Tennyson, and Hsia (2010) and Asakereh and Dehghanzad (2015), student satisfaction with language teaching is greatly influenced by the learning environment.

Students' evaluations of the quality of education provide a kind of feedback about the teaching and learning environment in which they are part, and it is obvious that the development of the educational background, in this case, the environment of LSP teaching, is not possible without consulting the students. Therefore, it is vital to have a sustainable interaction between students and the learning environment.

In our case, the most direct way to get an idea of the level of satisfaction with language teaching is through student course evaluations. These clarify whether the courses have reached their objectives, and thus, we become part of a continuous improvement process. Despite its importance, there are few surveys on the evaluation and satisfaction of LSP courses, so the available literature is sparse. In our century, LSP teaching has evolved into a multi-layered and specific language learning process, where curricula and teaching materials have to be adapted to the different professional and labour market needs of language learners. LSP courses prepare students for their future careers, which require specific language teaching methods. If the students' needs in terms of LSP learning meet their expectations, they are satisfied with the course material and sufficiently motivated, and they will also be satisfied with the quality of the LSP courses.

Students are also satisfied with the LSP teaching if the LSP teacher is well prepared and has a thorough knowledge of the language. They are also satisfied if they are provided with a technical and learning environment that is conducive to their learning in an institutional setting. Today's students, both in public and higher education, are highly motivated by the various technical tools used in the classroom (Kubinger-Pillmann, 2011). Modern language teaching requires the use of modern technical and audiovisual tools in the classroom, and it is essential for language teachers to be able to manage and use these tools properly. If we look back and see what technical equipment was used by LSP teachers in the classroom decades ago, we find little else in the classroom apart from a tape

recorder and an overhead projector. Nowadays, the range of these tools has expanded, and there are more and more language laboratories and classrooms well equipped with technical audiovisual equipment. The use of audiovisual equipment (playback devices, radios, televisions, tape recorders, sound recorders, headphones) and various (visual) technology tools (projectors, visual boards, etc.) can make lessons more interesting and varied and help LSP teachers to "bring the profession into the classroom". It is also important to mention the Internet, which was a separate question in our questionnaire. Internet accessibility and the Internet signal quality are crucial when assessing the effectiveness of an LSP course.

Today, students have easy access to resources and terminology on all professional subjects on the web. In the world of smartphones, no information is inaccessible; searching for information sources is not possible without access to the Internet, which is why we were curious about the satisfaction of students with the Internet in higher education institutions, and here we were mainly interested in Wi-Fi access. Satisfaction with the curriculum could not be left out of our surveys on the satisfaction with LSP teaching. Students in the 21st century expect to be asked (needs analysis) what they want to learn about in LSP courses and what they think about them at the end of the course. This view is supported by Hyland's (2002) assertion that the design of a LSP curriculum starts with a student needs analysis. There is no doubt that matching the LSP curriculum to the appropriate language groups and levels is extremely important when designing language courses, and the primary indicator of satisfaction with the language courses is the curriculum itself. Curricula design is closely related to another learning environment factor we have studied, the difficulty of completing the curriculum. We were also curious about this because if the set curriculum is too challenging or too easy to complete, it is a sign that the quality of LSP teaching is not good enough. For us, LSP teaching is appropriate if it meets the needs of both lower- and higher-ability students. Setting course requirements that are too high (sometimes unachievable) discourages students from learning a LSP and has a demotivating effect. The other satisfaction indicator we examined, which is related to the learning environment of language learning, is the students' satisfaction with the number of classes of LSP teaching. The effectiveness of language learning can be related to the number of LSP classes, which is why it was important to ask students studying business language in higher education institutions about this. Too few language lessons (1-2 per week) do not lead to much success and are insufficient for a deep and thorough acquisition of LSP competencies. We consider 3×2 language lessons per week to be acceptable, which means that the student meets the LSP teacher several times a week and that the contact between the student and the language teacher can be continuously monitored and maintained. It can be seen that satisfaction with language teaching requires the examination of a number of factors in order to get a more comprehensive picture of the satisfaction of students studying business LSP in higher education institutions. Student satisfaction undoubtedly leads to increased student motivation.

In the long and often difficult process of learning a foreign language, many conditions must be met for a student to be truly successful and learn a foreign language.

3. Research methodology, units of analysis, measurement tools and time dimension

In language classes, LSP teachers in Hungary asked students studying language for business purposes to fill in a 10-page anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire took 20-25 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of five blocks of questions on foreign language use, motivation to learn a LSP, satisfaction with language teaching and some social characteristics.

The wording of the questions in the questionnaires was assisted by a study of the LSP terminology used in the literature on the subject and in many other language learning questionnaires. The data were collected through an online, self-completed, voluntary questionnaire between March 2018 and November 2019 among BSc/MSc students of some higher education institutions. (The names of the higher education institutions surveyed cannot be disclosed due to the ISA Code of Ethics.)

The online questionnaire was available to students of the respective higher education institutions through the EvaSys Online Survey Design and Evaluation System. We tried to select institutions to represent the group of students we studied relatively well. From the questionnaires received, a total of 449 respondents' questionnaires were included in the statistical analyses after the database was filtered. The validity of the survey was ensured by the fact that only those students who were taking economic/business LSP courses during the period mentioned above were eligible to fill in the questionnaire (given contact details by the LSP teachers). The groups of students to fill in the questionnaires were selected randomly, ensuring the above-mentioned basic condition for completing them. The students requested to complete the questionnaires covered a wide range of economic/business disciplines. The target population of students studying in economic/business disciplines was the following: economics-management, finance and accounting, banking and finance, tourism and catering, international relations, commerce.

4. Main characteristics of the study sample

Our sample had an uneven gender distribution, with 302 female students. It was almost double the number of male students (147). This is probably because the field of economics has become more feminised, and women's participation in the economy is increasing in the countries studied (Figure 1).

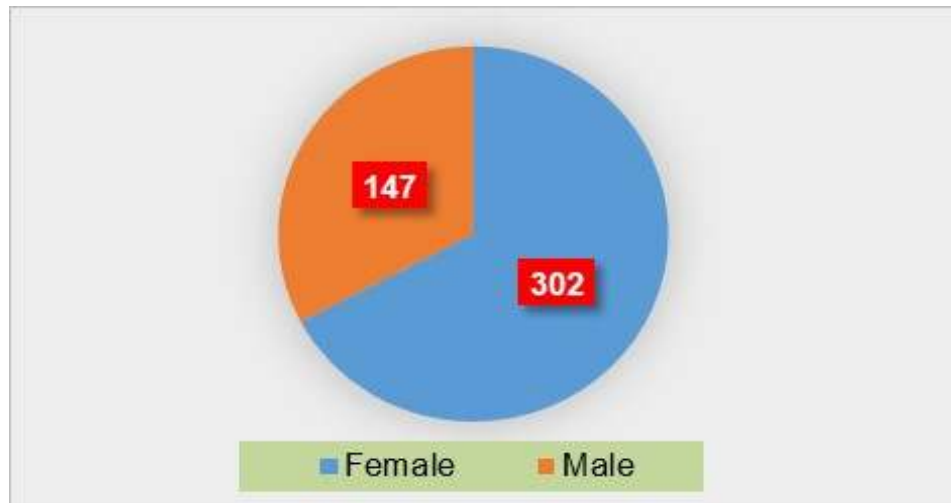


Figure 1: Distribution of survey respondents by gender (person/%; $N=449$)
Source: Authors' development, 2020

Figure 2 shows the distribution of students who completed the questionnaire by residence. Most of the students (202) live in the county capital or the capital, followed by those living in small towns (150) and villages (97).



Figure 2: Distribution of survey respondents by type of residence (person/%; $N=449$)
Source: Authors' development, 2020

In the graphs showing parents' educational attainment (Figures 3, 4), we can see some differences between the highest educational attainment of mothers and fathers.

The highest educational level of the mothers of the students surveyed was tertiary education (204), followed by mothers with a school leaving certificate (184) and mothers without a school leaving certificate (61). There are some differences in the educational attainment of fathers. The number of fathers with a school leaving certificate (174) exceeds the number of fathers without a school leaving certificate (108) and with tertiary education (167).

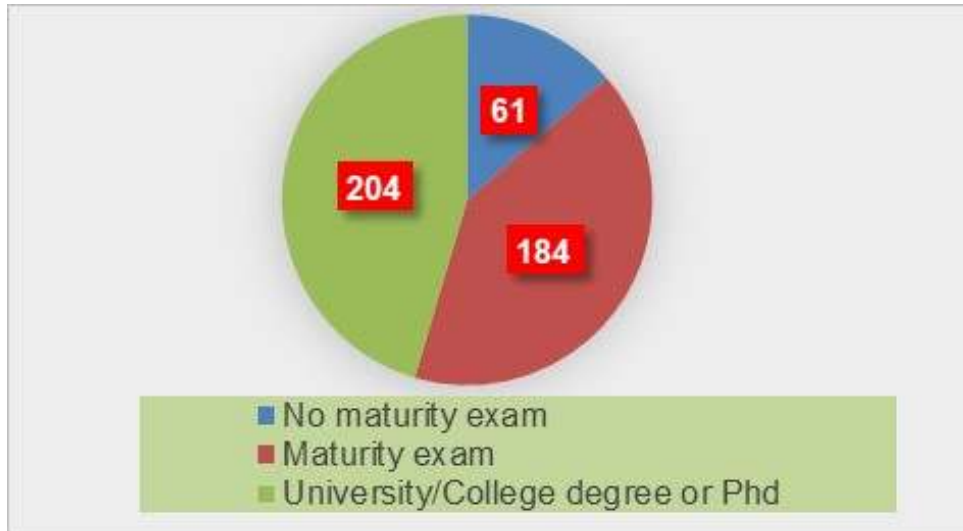


Figure 3: Educational attainment of mothers (person/%; N=449)

Source: Authors' development, 2020

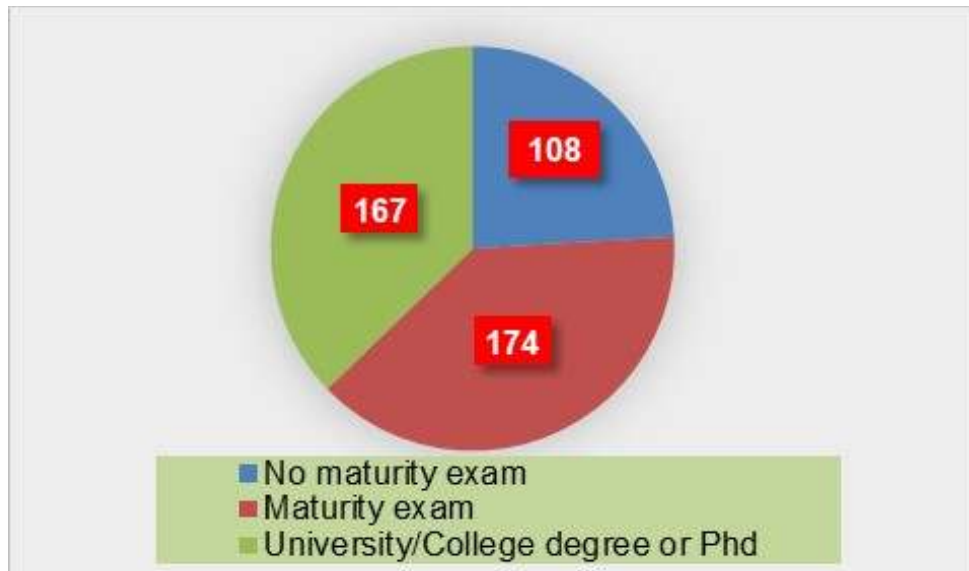


Figure 4: Educational attainment of fathers (person/%; N=449)

Source: Authors' development, 2020

Our questionnaire also asked whether the parents of the students who completed the questionnaire spoke a foreign language other than their mother tongue. Our findings have revealed that the number of mothers and fathers who speak a foreign language does not exceed the number of those who do not (mothers, yes: 218, no: 231; fathers yes: 192, no: 257). (Figure 5, 6.)



Figure 5: Does your mother/foster mother speak a foreign language other than her mother tongue? (person/%; N=449)
Source: Authors' development, 2020

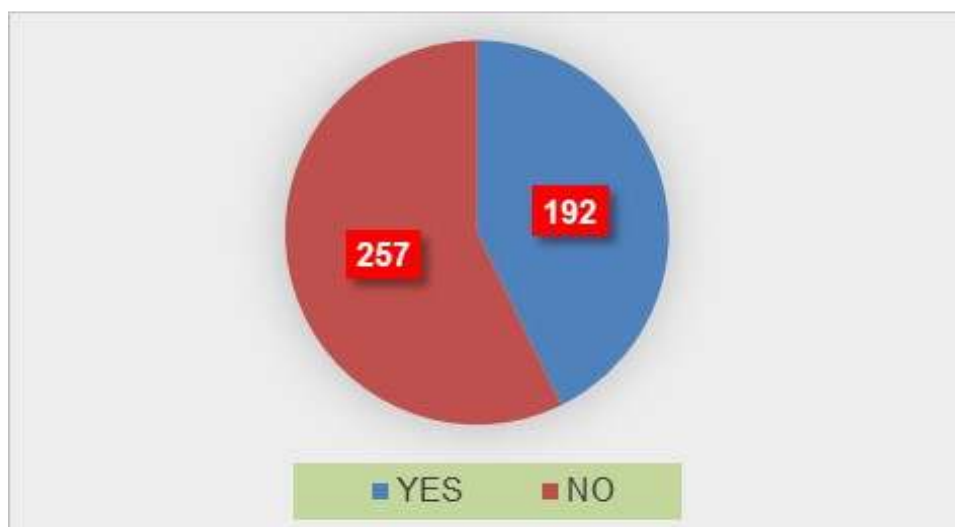


Figure 6: Does your father/foster father speak a foreign language other than his mother tongue? (person/%; N=449)
Source: Authors' development, 2020

5. Results of research on satisfaction

We measured the satisfaction with the LSP teaching of Hungarian students of economics and business using an online questionnaire. We examined how satisfied students were with the number of LSP classes, the material conditions of professional language education, including classrooms, technical equipment and the Internet. Besides these, we also examined student satisfaction with the preparation and professional work of the LSP teachers, the material conditions of the training and the curriculum. We also asked students how they perceived the development of their language skills during language courses and the difficulty of completing language courses in higher education institutions.

Our questionnaire survey asked eight questions about students' satisfaction with LSP teaching.

The answers to the student satisfaction questions in the questionnaire were measured on a 5-point Likert scale for seven questions, with five being fully satisfied and one being not at all satisfied. The eighth question in the model, on satisfaction with the number of contact classes, gave students three options to choose from: 1. the number of hours is low, 2. the number of hours is adequate, 3. the number of hours is high. A cross-tabulation analysis was carried out to investigate this question because of the ordinal variable. It should be noted that the Likert scale is also an ordinal measurement-level variable (the ordering between categories can be established, but the distance between categories is not [quantifiably] the same), although it is not common to consider it as a continuous variable (and thus to compare its averages).

Table 1 shows the survey data on technical equipment, Internet, teachers' work and satisfaction with their courses. It has been found that students are more satisfied with the technical facilities, with the highest percentage (31.2) at four on the Likert scale. For satisfaction with the Internet, we measured the highest percentage (35.4%) at the highest Likert scale score of five, reflecting full satisfaction. For satisfaction with the work of LSP teachers, we examined satisfaction by gender and found that male students (51%) were significantly more satisfied with the work of teachers than female students (40.1%). The above finding can be supported by examining the adjusted residuals (-2.2; 2.2), where values above two demonstrate a robust and significant relationship. Together, the two genders scored 43.7% out of 5 on the Likert scale. The survey results on satisfaction with LSP courses have also reflected a reasonably high level of satisfaction. 45.2% of students marked four on the Likert scale, and we could not measure a significant difference between the two genders (Table 1).

Table 1: Satisfaction with the technical equipment, the Internet, the work of the LSP teachers and the teaching material (%)

		Satisfaction with technical equipment	Satisfaction with Internet	Satisfaction with teachers' work		Total	Satisfaction with course material		Total
		Total	Total	Female	Male		Female	Male	
Satisfaction figures	1	2.4	4.2	1.7	.7	1.3	1.3	2.0	1.6
	2	8.2	8.2	4.0	3.4	3.8	6.0	7.5	6.5
	3	28.7	23.8	17.5	12.2	15.8	26.8	21,8	25.2
	4	31.2	28.3	36.8	32.7	35.4	44.4	46.9	45.2
	5	29.4	35.4	40.1	51.0	43.7	21.5	21.8	21.6
			adj.res. -2.2	adj.res 2.2					

Note: Likert scale: where 5: very much ... 1: very little ($N=449$)

Source: Authors' development, 2020

The following graph (Figure 7) shows the extent to which students have developed their language skills during their language courses.



Note: Likert scale: where 5: very much... 1: very little

Figure 7: The improvement of language skills during the course * Gender

Source: Authors' development, 2020

From the percentages given for the Likert scale scores, it is clear that there is not a significant percentage difference between male and female students. Both male and female students scored in the middle of the Likert scale (female: 36.4%; male: 36.1%) and 4 (female: 33.8%; male: 40.1%) marked the highest percentage, meaning that students think their skills are improving more than average during the courses. Male students rated their skills development as a small percentage better than female students.

The following figure (Figure 8) shows satisfaction with the number of contact hours by gender.

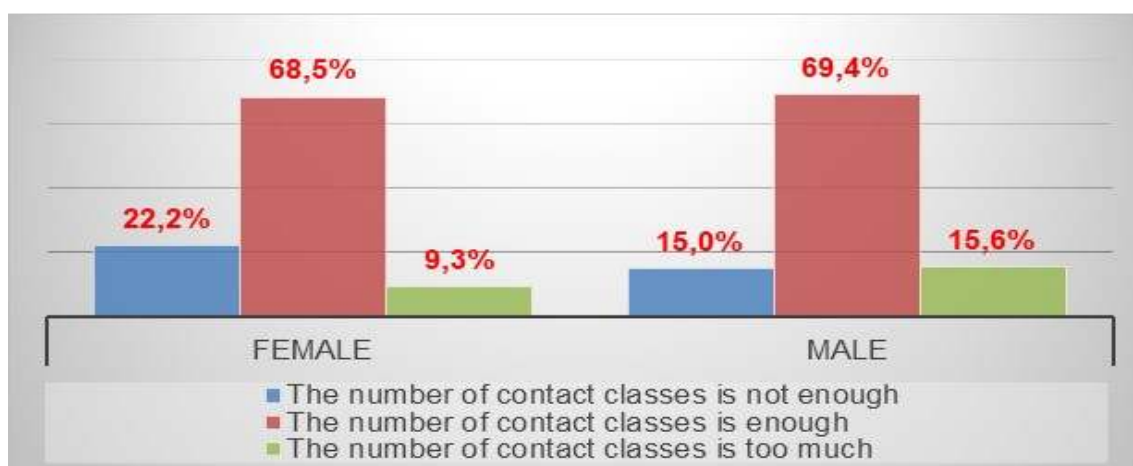


Figure 8: Satisfaction with the number of contact classes * Gender

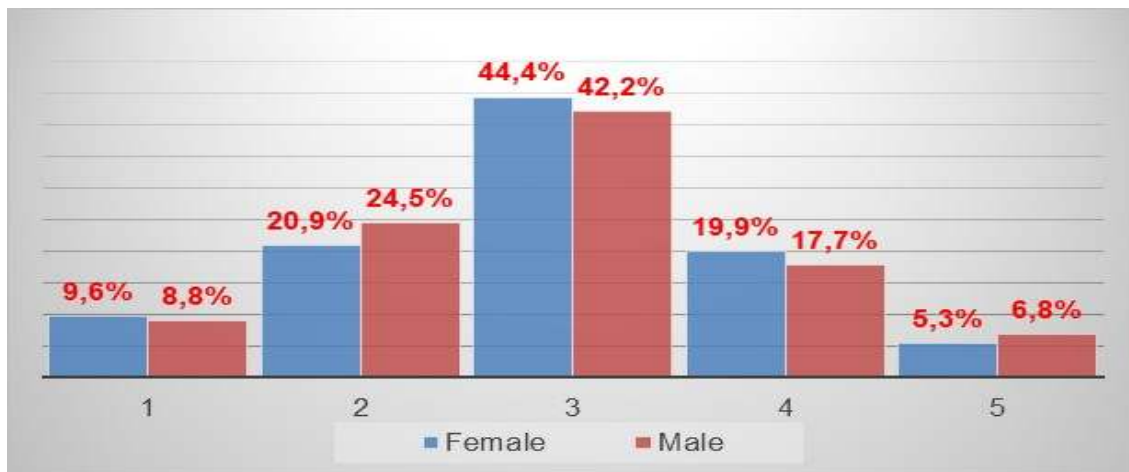
Source: Authors' development, 2020

It can be concluded that both female and male students considered the number of contact hours sufficient. There is only a slight difference between male students (69.4%) and female students (68.5%). As an example, the number of LSP classes

at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Debrecen is between 4 and 6 per week, which seems to be sufficient according to the students' perception.

Our research also attempted to reveal how difficult it was to complete LSP courses (Figure 9).

In terms of percentages, the highest ones were obtained for the middle of the Likert scale for both sexes (female: 44.4%; male 42.2%). Female students find it more challenging to complete courses than male students by almost two per cent difference. In terms of Likert Scale scores, the majority of students indicated a score of three or four.

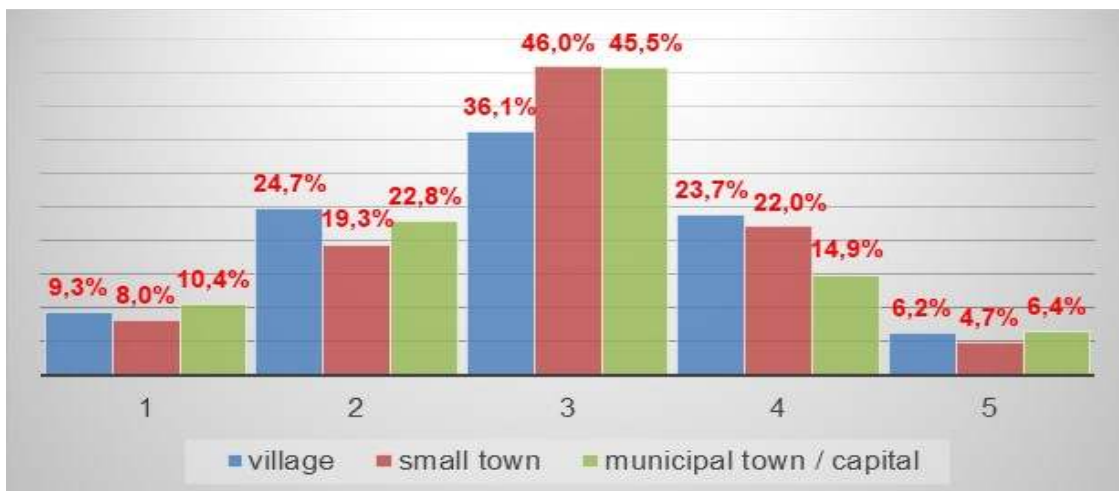


Note: Likert scale: 5: hard to complete ... 1: easy to complete

Figure 9: The difficulty of completing the courses * Gender

Source: Authors' development, 2020

We also examined the percentages of course completion by settlement type (Figure 10).



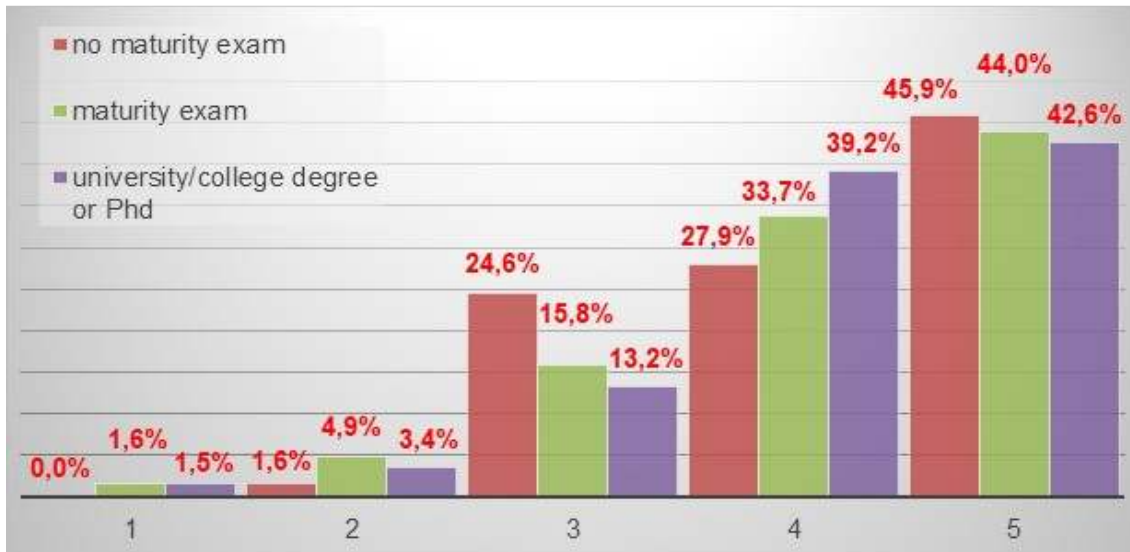
Note: Likert scale: 5: hard to complete ... 1: easy to complete

Figure 10: The difficulty of completing the courses * Gender

Source: Authors' development, 2020

The percentage of students living in cities (46% in small towns, 45.5% in the towns with county status and in the capital) exceeds the rate of students living in villages (36.1%), so our results show that students living in cities find it easier to complete language courses than students living in villages.

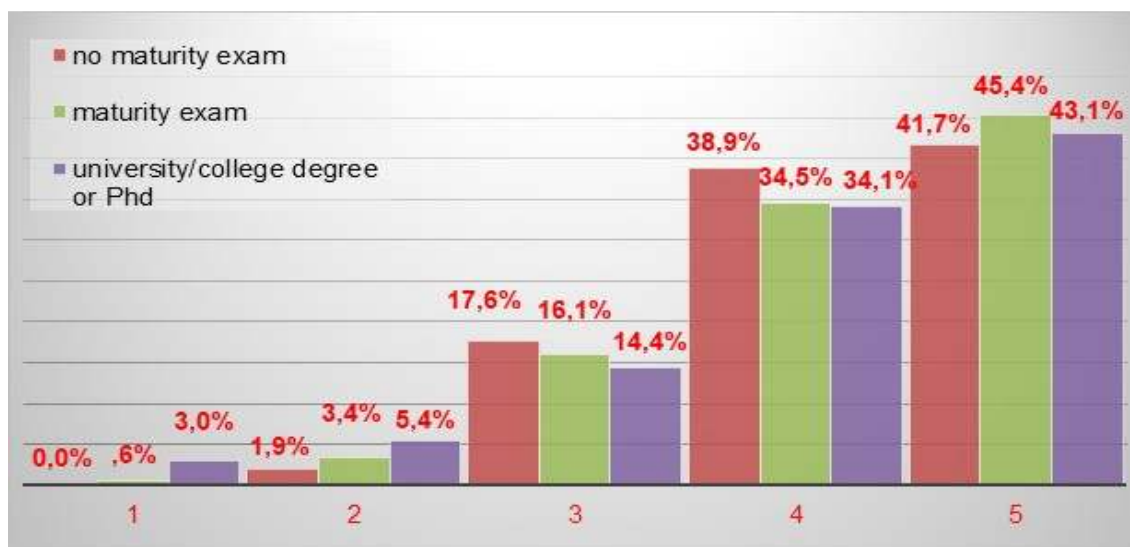
In our research, we also investigated the percentage of parents of students who have completed their education that reflects their satisfaction with the work of LSP teachers (Figure 11, 12).



Note: Likert scale: 5: very much ... 1: not satisfied

Figure 11: Satisfaction with the teachers' work * Qualification (mothers)

Source: Authors' development, 2020



Note: Likert scale: 5: very much ... 1: not satisfied

Figure 12: Satisfaction with the teachers' work * Qualification (fathers)

Source: Authors' development, 2020

It can clearly be seen that for both mothers and fathers, the highest percentages of students who participated in the survey indicated scores above the middle of the Likert scale, four and five, respectively. If we look at these two values (4 and 5), we do not find large percentage differences in the satisfaction of students with their teachers' work, depending on the educational level of the parents.

6. Conclusion

This research illustrates the need and usefulness of analysing students' opinions within the teaching environment, since it provides higher education institutions with an insight into students' needs and expectations, which is highly reflected in the teaching process.

Our research exactly justifies the results of Wu, Tennyson, and Hsia (2010) and Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015) according to whom student satisfaction is greatly influenced by the learning environment and since our statistical results of the learning environment factors are higher than the average of the Likert scale, it indicates high satisfaction with LSP teaching of Hungary.

The findings indicate that the students find the number of LSP classes enough and they are highly satisfied with the material conditions of LSP teaching, including classrooms, technical equipment and the internet.

As for the results of student satisfaction with the preparation and professional work of the LSP teachers, we conclude that students are highly satisfied and this satisfaction does not depend on the parents' qualifications, hence students whose parents have a university degree or students whose parents have no maturity exam are all very satisfied with the LSP teachers' work.

Concerning the development of the language skills of students during LSP courses, we have found that both genders perceive that their language skills develop during the LSP course and there is not much difference in the opinion of males and females. However, students who come from villages have found the completion of the LSP course more difficult than those who live in towns.

Pertaining to the difficulty of completing LSP courses, the results indicate that students held the view that completing the LSP courses is neither easy, nor difficult.

We can conclude that our results depict a positive picture of student satisfaction with LSP teaching at Hungarian universities and that this may positively affect their achievements.

To sum up, the present research suggests that measuring students' opinions on satisfaction in connection with the learning environment is important and efficient for ensuring that the best quality of LSP teaching is provided for students, as the present findings on satisfaction levels reflect that LSP teaching in Hungarian universities is on the right track.

In the future we plan to continue our research in the direction of cross border comparative research by questioning students studying at East European higher education institutions, the aim of which is to reveal similarities and differences in LSP teaching.

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