

Study on the Students’ Opinion on the Educational Offer of a Bachelor’s Degree Program in Business Administration

Liliana Gherghina

“Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca,
Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Romania
liliana.gherghina@econ.ubbcluj.ro

Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to identify students’ opinion on the educational offer provided by a bachelor's degree program in business administration, in order to improve the quality of the services provided. The study underlines the importance of university personnel in preparing students for the bachelor's degree in business administration, the importance of theoretical notions on the educational offer, method, hypotheses, research results and study conclusions. The study is based on direct research, respectively occasional survey-type enquiry, using as a tool the questionnaire, applied to students in the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services undergraduate program (from Resita). The results of the study show the students’ degree of satisfaction with the educational offer of the business administration undergraduate program.

Key words: opinion, offer, satisfaction, administration, business

J.E.L. classification: M31, M39

1. Introduction

In this paper we aim to present the students’ opinion regarding the educational offer of a bachelor's degree program in business administration. For this reason, the degree of satisfaction was first identified, with reference to the conditions necessary for the development of educational activities, respectively the specific technical-material base, resources and services provided.

It is known from practice that “the quality of the educational service offered in the university environment is largely conditioned by the quality of human resources, by the professional quality of didactic staff” (Bălan C., 2014, p. 16).

In order to improve the university educational offer, in addition to the management structures of universities and faculties, both didactic staff and students must contribute through active participation in the development of educational activities.

2. Theoretical consideration

During the last years, at national and international levels, universities aimed at an education focused on active participation of students. Students must be appreciated by didactic staff as partners who participate in the implementation of instructional-educational and assessment activities, and their absence leads to the impossibility of carrying out the activity.

In student-centred education, “teaching combines education with training and learning and assessment in accordance with the established goals” (Bălan, 2014, p. 15), emphasizing the building of students’ competencies on a certain segment of the university course, competencies which are convergent with the set of acquisitions that are proposed for the graduation of a certain specialty” (Singer et al, 2006, p. 9).”Weinert considered competency to be: the performance behaviour such as knowledge, feelings and skills required to undertake and complete a job. Competencies can be categorised into general and professional” (Yeh et al, 2010, Chen and Kuo, 2010, p. 432).

In business, “supply is the quantity of a product or service that the company is willing to sell, depending on the calculated prices, so as to cover expenses and make a profit” (Gherghian, 2018, p. 7). “Entrepreneurship is undeniably an important source of income, an important strategy for creating new jobs and hastening the economic recovery and growth of the nation” (Laguador, 2013, p. 61).

Specialty studies refer to the fact that the offer of services is a “package of basic services, complementary services and additional services” (Gherghian, 2009, p. 55).

When referring to educational services, one can state that the offer of educational services consists of the *specific technical-material base* (land, buildings, equipment: learning spaces - course, seminar, laboratory, gyms, library and reading rooms; accommodation spaces for students, employees and guests; recreation spaces, etc.), *the employed workforce* (human resources) which by number, structure and level of training determines the value of service production; *national and international agreements* (ensure mobility for students, master students, doctoral students and secondments of employees) with an important role in the development of services; *services provided* (basic services - educational process; complementary services - internet, online platforms; *additional services* - granting bonuses to performing students; *auxiliary services* (support) - secretariat, website, computer system, all of which must exist and function both at the main university headquarters and at the level of university extensions.

3. Research methodology

In order to find out the students’ opinion regarding the educational offer of a study program in business administration, we chose the undergraduate study program the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services (from Resita) - ECTS (from Resita) within the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, the “Babeş-Bolyai” University Centre of Cluj-Napoca –with an extension established in Resita. An opinion survey was applied to students, using as a tool an online questionnaire, uploaded on Google forms, which was completed by students during the period 31.05.2021-03.06.2021.

For the students’ opinion, the Opinion scale was used, which “measures preferences, motivations, attitudes, degree of satisfaction, the impact of some stimuli (price advertising, group membership) on potential consumers” (Gherghina, 2014, p. 33).

The main objective of the study is to identify the degree of satisfaction, appreciation and content of students regarding the educational offer of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita). A direct research method was used, an occasional survey based on a questionnaire, to obtain the information needed and the measurement was performed using the ordinal scale –the Likert scale and the interval scale - the semantic differential, as well as the percentage method. The questionnaire designed contains 10 questions, of which: 3 were identification questions and 7 were closed questions, with binary and multiple variables. The total number of students from the ECTS study program (from Resita) was 63, and the distribution of students by years of studies and respondents who completed the questionnaire is presented in the table below:

Table no.1 Number of students and respondents by years of study at the ECTS program (from Resita)

Program and year of study	No. of students	Percentage students	No. of respondents	Percentage respondents
ECTS I	25	39.68%	12	41.38%
ECTS II	22	34.92%	14	48.28%
ECTS III	16	25.40%	3	10.34%
Total	63	100%	29	100%

Source: realized by the author

Out of the total of 63 students, only 29 (46.03%) filed in the questionnaire, the survey rate being higher than 1/7 (14.29%). Thus one can say that the survey is exhaustive and takes into account the sample size. When designing the questionnaire the following were used: nominal scale with bifurcated and multiple alternatives for questions Q01, Q02, Q03; the ordinal scale, the scaling

method being Likert’s scale for questions Q04, Q5, Q7, Q8; the interval scale, the scaling method being the semantic differential for questions Q06, Q9, Q10.

Research hypotheses aimed at the students’ degree of satisfaction regarding the educational offer of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), respectively:

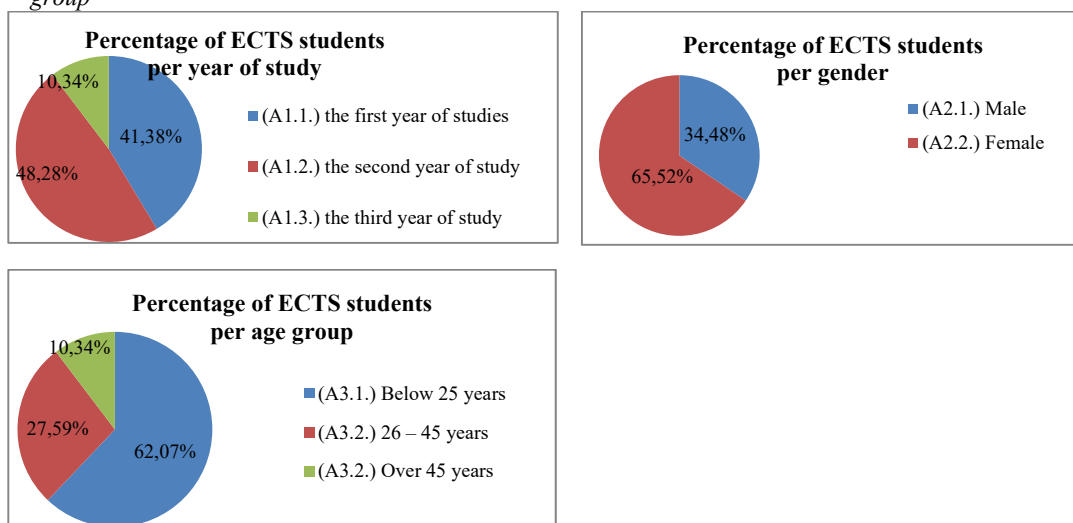
- the need for specialists in the field of business administration on the labour market;
- the provision of theoretical knowledge, the development of practical skills and competencies acquired by students during the study program;
- the extent to which the subjects of the study program ensure practical utility, in correlation with the graduates’ training and labour market requirements;
- the degree of satisfaction regarding the didactic process carried out as well as the learning spaces, schedule, resources and services provided for the study program.

4. Results

The following information includes *the results of the students’ survey regarding the degree of satisfaction with the educational offer of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services (from Resita).*

➤ *Identification of student respondents registered with the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita)*

Figure no. 1, no. 2, no.3. Identification of student respondents – per year of study, per gender, per age group



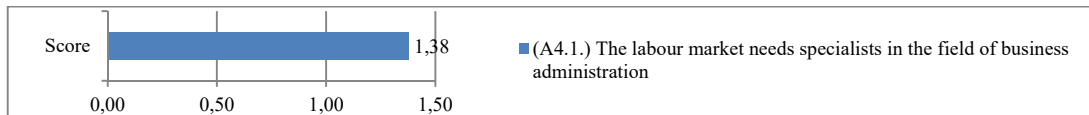
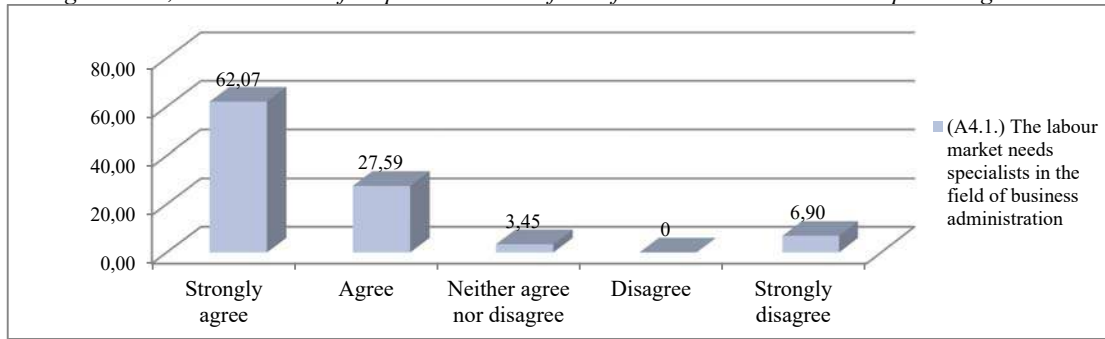
Source: realized by the author

According to the graphs, the majority of respondents are students from (A1.2.) the second year of study - 48.28% (14 respondents) and (A1.1.) from the first year of studies - 41.38% (12 respondents) (A2.2.) and 65.52% (19 respondents) are female, 62.07% (18 respondents) are part of the age group (A3.1.) below 25 years and (A3.2.) 27.59% (8 respondents) from the age category 26-45 years.

➤ *The need for specialists in the field of business administration on the labour market*

Most student respondents consider that the labour market *needs specialists in the field of business administration*, 62.07% (18 respondents) totally agreeing with the statement and 27.59% (8 respondents) agreeing, the score being of 1.38. The trend is towards *full agreement*.

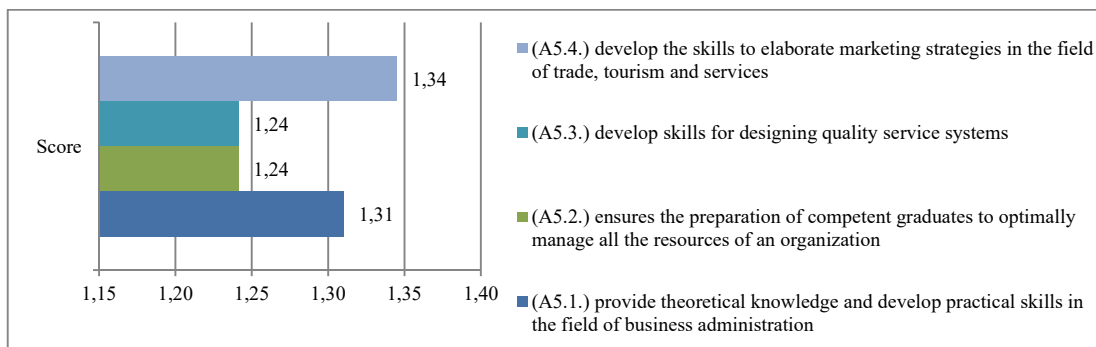
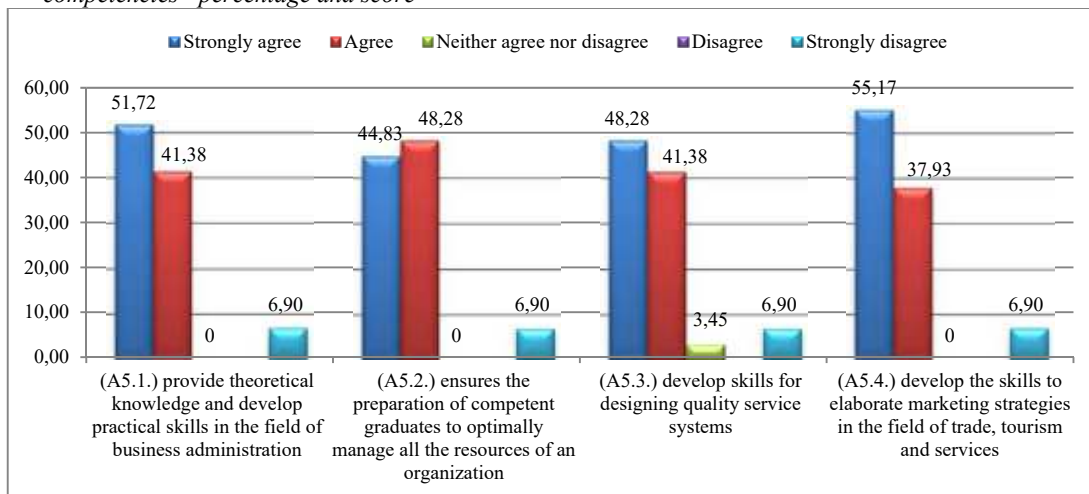
Figure no. 4, no.5. The need for specialists in the field of business administration – percentage and score



Source: realized by the author

➤ The provision of theoretical knowledge, the development of practical skills and competencies acquired by students during the ECTS study program (from Resita)

Figure no. 6, no. 7. The provision of theoretical knowledge, the development of practical skills and competencies - percentage and score



Source: realized by the author

The respondent students *agree* with the tendency towards strong agreement *on the provision of theoretical knowledge, the development of practical skills and competencies* provided by the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services program (from Resita), as evidenced by the total score of 1.28.

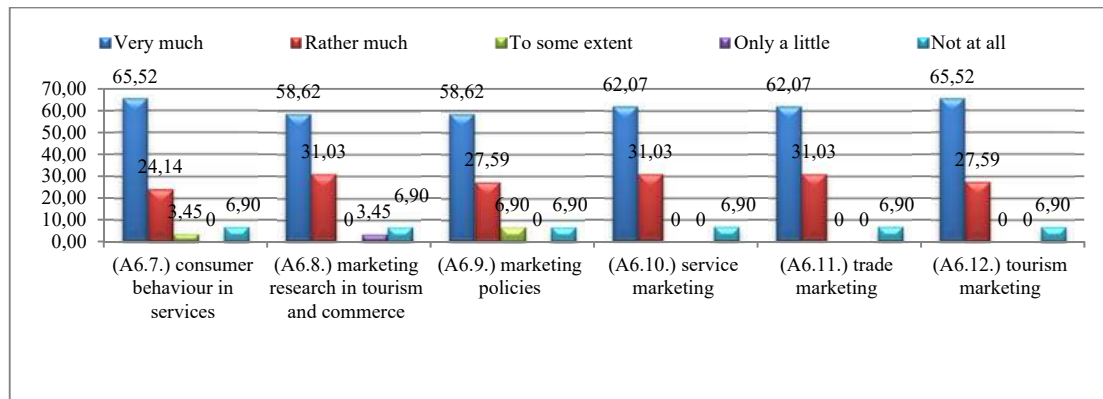
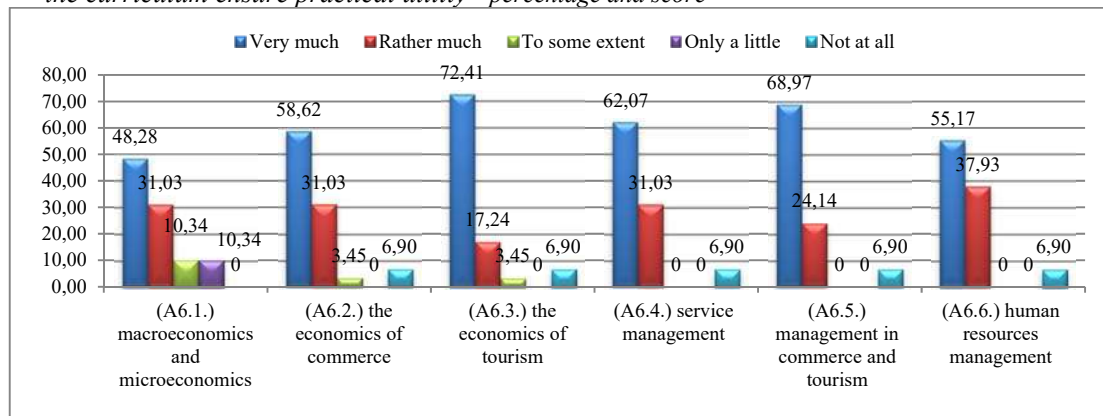
Respondents *strongly agree* that the ECTS program (from Resita):

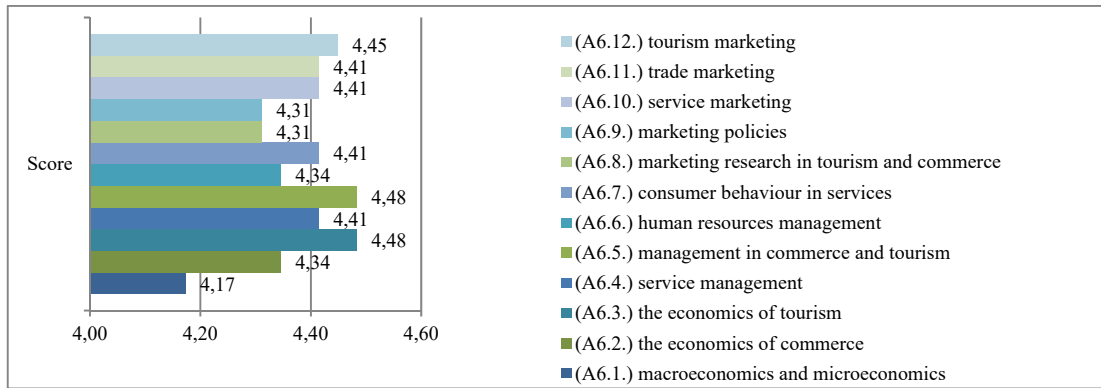
- (A5.4.) develop the skills to elaborate marketing strategies in the field of trade, tourism and services - 55.17% (16 respondents), score of 1.34;
- (A5.1.) provide theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills in the field of business administration - 51.72% (15 respondents), score of 1.31;
- (A5.3.) develop skills for designing quality service systems - 48.8% (14 respondents), score of 1.24.

The respondent students agree that the ECTS study program (from Resita) (A5.2.) ensures the preparation of competent graduates to optimally manage all the resources of an organization - 48.28% (14 respondents), score of 1.24.

➤ *The extent to which some of the existing or new subjects introduced in the curriculum of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita) ensure practical utility, in correlation with the training requirements of graduates needed on the labour market.*

Figure no. 8, no. 9, no. 10. *The extent to which some of the existing or new subjects introduced in the curriculum ensure practical utility - percentage and score*





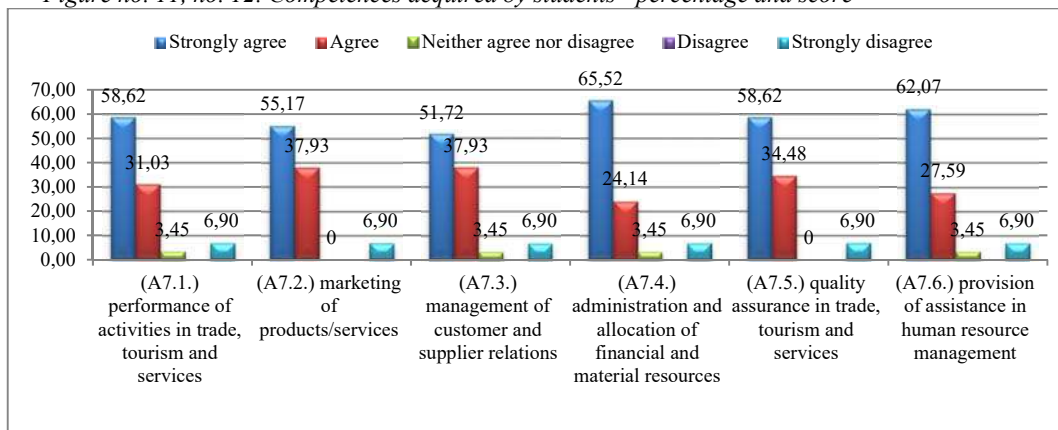
Source: realized by the author

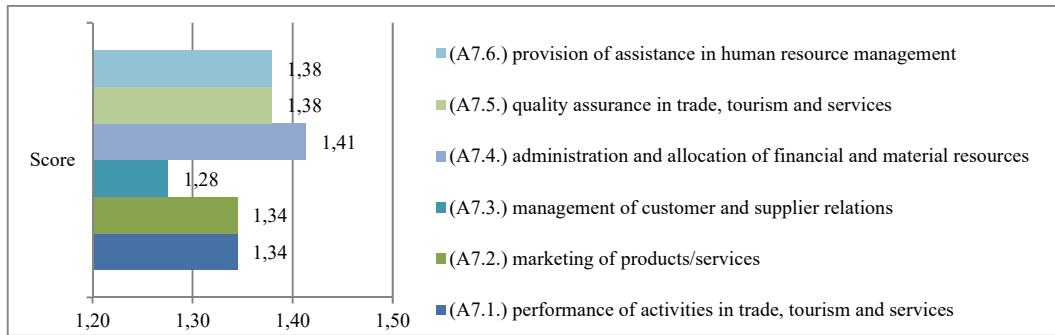
Most of the respondents appreciate that *the subjects* of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program(from Resita) *provide practical utility*, in correlation with the training requirements of graduates needed on the labour market, *largely choosing a very large extent*, as evidenced by the total score of 4.38.

The respondents appreciate that the disciplines of the ECTS program (from Resita) ensure practical utility *to a very large extent*, the order of the percentages obtained being: (A6.3.) the economics of tourism (score of 4.48) - 72.41% (21 respondents), (A6.5.) management in commerce and tourism (score of 4.48) - 68.97% (20 respondents), (A6.6.) human resources management (score of 4.48) - 55.17% (16 respondents), (A6.7.) consumer behaviour in services (score of 4.41) and (A6.12.) tourism marketing (score of 4.45) - 65.52% (19 respondents / discipline), (A6.4.) service management (score of 4.41), (A6.10.) service marketing (score of 4.41) and (A6.11.) trade marketing (score of 4.41) - 62.07% (18 respondents / discipline), (A6.2.) the economics of commerce (score of 4.34), (A6.8.) marketing research in tourism and commerce (score of 4.31), (A6.9.) marketing policies (score of 4.31) - 58.62% (17 respondents / discipline), (A6.1.) macroeconomics and microeconomics (score of 4.17) - 48.28% (14 respondents / discipline).

➤ *Competences acquired by students through the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program(from Resita)*

Figure no. 11, no. 12. Competences acquired by students - percentage and score





Source: realized by the author

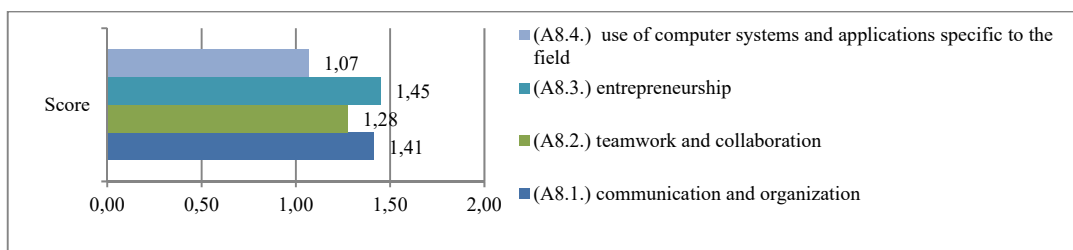
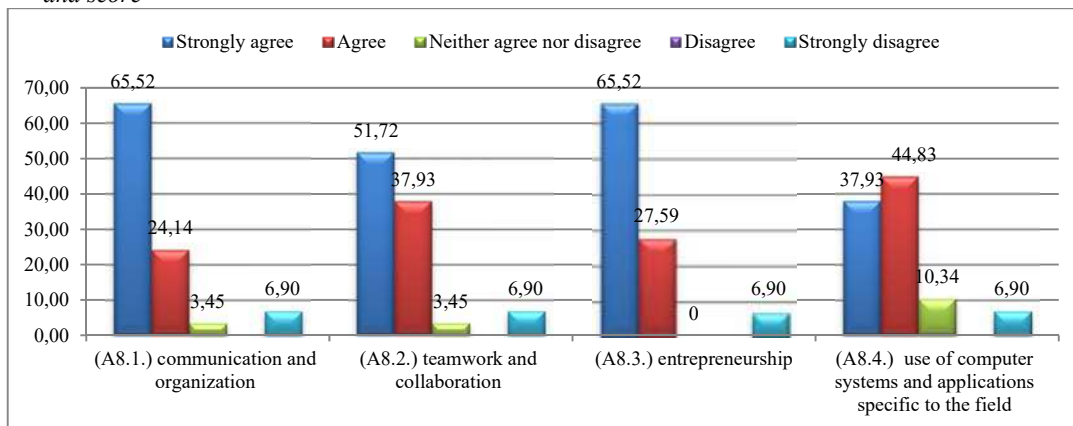
Most respondents *agree* with a tendency towards *strong agreement* that, through the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita) they *will acquire skills specific to the field*, as evidenced by the score of 1.36.

Respondents *strongly agree* that through the ECTS program (from Resita) they will acquire skills for:

- (A7.4.) administration and allocation of financial and material resources - 62.52% (19 respondents), score of 1.41;
- (A7.6.) provision of assistance in human resource management - 62.07% (18 respondents), score of 1.38;
- (A7.1.) performance of activities in trade, tourism and services (score of 1.34), as well as (A7.5.) quality assurance in trade, tourism and services - 58.62% (17 respondents / statement), score of 1.38;
- (A7.2.) marketing of products/services - 55.17% (16 respondents), score of 1.34;
- (A7.3.) management of customer and supplier relations - 51.72% (15 respondents), score of 1.28.

➤ *Critical and innovative thinking*, as well as *various skills, provided to students* from Economy of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), respectively:

Figure no. 13, no. 14. Critical and innovative thinking and various skills, provided to students - percentage and score



Source: realized by the author

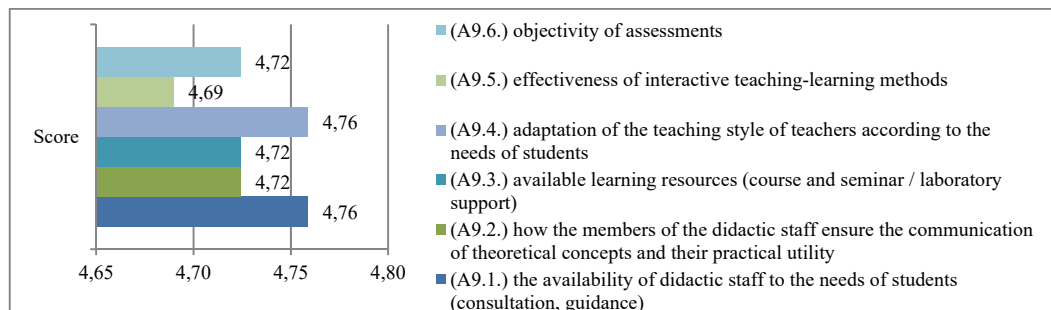
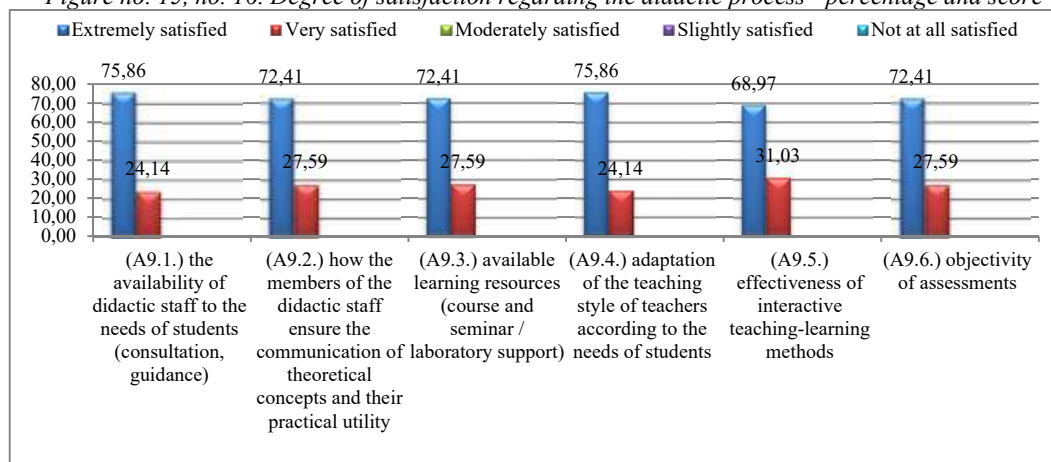
From the graphs presented, one can observe that most respondents *agree* with a tendency towards *strong agreement* on *critical and innovative thinking, as well as various skills*, provided to students of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), as evidenced by the total score of 1.30.

Respondents *strongly agree* that the ECTS program (from Resita) provides critical and innovative thinking, as well as various skills to:

- (A8.3.) entrepreneurship (score of 1.45) and (A8.1.) communication and organization (score of 1.41) - 65.52% (19 respondents / statement);
- (A8.2.) teamwork and collaboration (score of 1.28) - 51.72% (19 respondents);
- (A8.4.) use of computer systems and applications specific to the field (score of 1.07) - 37.93% (11 respondents).

➤ *Degree of satisfaction regarding the didactic process* carried out at the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita)

Figure no. 15, no. 16. Degree of satisfaction regarding the didactic process - percentage and score



Source: realized by the author

Most respondents appreciate that they are *very satisfied with the didactic process* carried out in the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), as evidenced by the total score of 4.73.

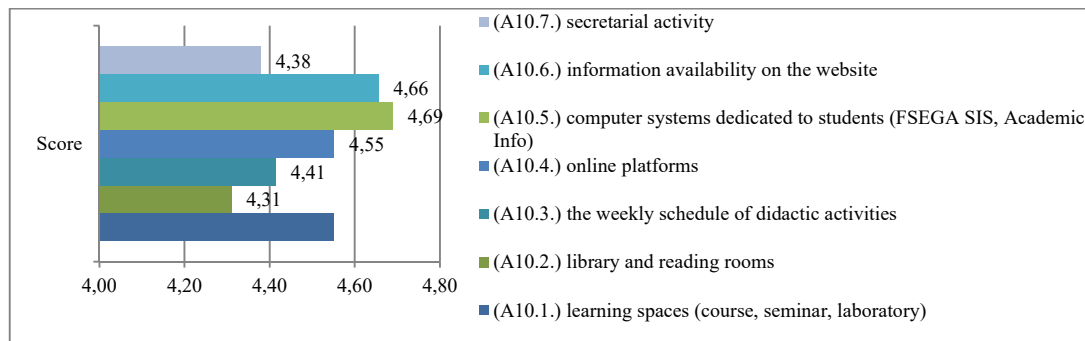
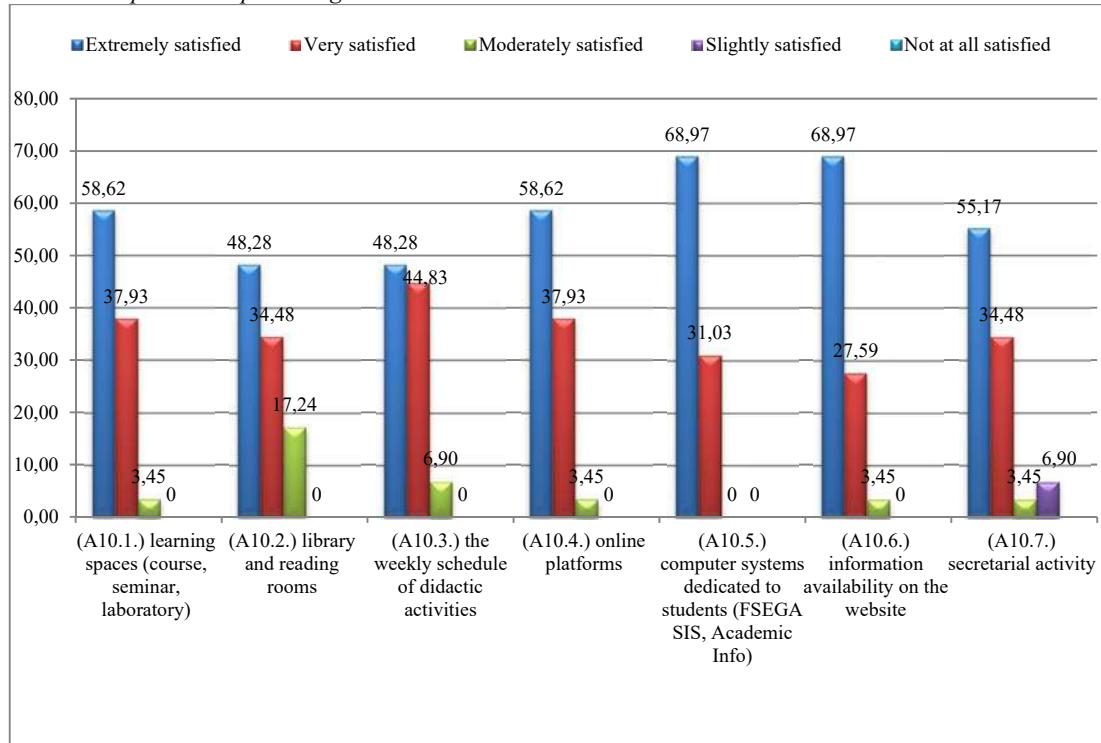
Student respondents are *very satisfied* with:

- (A9.1.) the availability of didactic staff to the needs of students (consultation, guidance) and (A9.4.) adaptation of the teaching style of teachers according to the needs of students (score / statement of 4.76) - 75.86% (22 respondents / statement);
- (A9.2.) how the members of the didactic staff ensure the communication of theoretical concepts and their practical utility, the (A9.3.) available learning resources (course and seminar / laboratory support) and the (A9.6.) objectivity of assessments (score / statement of 4.72) - 72.41% (21 respondents / statement);

- (A9.5.) effectiveness of interactive teaching-learning methods (score of 4.69) - 68.97% (20 respondents).

➤ *Degree of satisfaction regarding the learning spaces, schedule, resources and services provided for the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services program (from Resita)*

Figure no. 17, no. 18. Degree of satisfaction regarding the learning spaces, schedule, resources and services provided - percentage and score



Source: realized by the author

Most respondents appreciate that they are *very satisfied* with *the learning spaces, schedule, resources and services* provided for the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), as evidenced by the total score of 4.51.

Respondent students are *very satisfied* with:

- (A10.5.) computer systems dedicated to students (FSEGA SIS, Academic Info) (score of 4.69) and (A10.6.) information availability on the website (score of 4.66) - 68.97% (20 respondents / statement);

- (A10.1.) learning spaces (course, seminar, laboratory) and (A10.4.) online platforms (score / statement of 4.55) - 58.62% (17 respondents);

- (A10.2.) library and reading rooms (score of 4.31) and (A10.3.) the weekly schedule of didactic activities (score of 4.41) - 48.28% (14 respondents);
- (A10.7.) secretarial activity (score of 3.25) - 55.17% (16 respondents).

6. Conclusions

To summarise the results of this study, we found that there is a high degree of satisfaction underlined by the answers of student respondents to the educational offer of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), most of them agreeing to complete this study program, being motivated by the need for specialists in the field of business administration on the labour market.

The respondents agree with a tendency towards strong agreement that through the educational offer of the Economics of Commerce, Tourism and Services study program (from Resita), during the studies:

- Students are provided with theoretical knowledge, they develop practical skills to: develop marketing strategies in the field of commerce, tourism and services and they are able optimally manage all the resources of an organization and design quality service systems;
- Students will acquire skills in administration and allocation of financial and material resources, provision of assistance in human resource management, performance of activities in trade, tourism and services, quality assurance in trade, tourism and services, marketing of products/services and management of customer and supplier relations.
- Students will acquire skills in entrepreneurship, communication and organization, teamwork and collaboration, in the use of computer systems and applications specific to the field.

The respondent students appreciate that both the new disciplines introduced in the curriculum and the existing ones, provide practical utility to a great extent. In order of preference being: the economics of tourism, management in commerce and tourism, human resources management, consumer behaviour in services, tourism marketing, service management, service marketing, trade marketing, the economics of commerce, marketing research in tourism and commerce, marketing policies, macroeconomics and microeconomics.

When analysing the degree of satisfaction regarding the didactic process, learning spaces, schedule, resources and services provided, the respondents are satisfied with a tendency to be very satisfied with:

- The didactic staff availability to students' needs (consultation, guidance), the adaptation of the teaching style to students' needs, how teachers ensure communication of theoretical concepts and their practical utility, the available learning resources, the objectivity of assessment, the effectiveness of teaching methods and interactive teaching-learning;
- The computer system dedicated to students, the availability of information on the website, learning spaces, online platforms, library and reading rooms, the weekly schedule of teaching activities and the secretarial activity.

Due to the evolution of COVID-19 pandemics in recent years, in universities didactic activities have taken place on online platforms and not face to face with students, which led to increased dropout. In this regard, universities must make additional efforts to improve or maintain the quality of their educational offer, through students' access to various educational resources, training didactic personnel and students for the optimal use of online platforms and information systems, providing educational spaces for the development in optimal conditions of additional didactic activities face to face with students within the universities, the schedule of the didactic activities to be to the advantage of the students, the provision of course and seminar / laboratory support from the teachers. A number of improvements can be proposed to the provision of educational services.

This research is the starting point for in-depth research or comparisons with other research in the field that I intend to conduct in the coming years.

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