

**Business Administration and Business Economics****The Link between Students Satisfaction and the Quality of Higher Education in Republic of Macedonia****Mitko Sekulov<sup>1</sup>, Idriz Kovaci<sup>2</sup>, Alberta Tahiri<sup>3</sup>**

**Abstract:** Education has a key role in the development of a country, in the improvement of its economic welfare as well as the living standard of its citizens. The Republic of Macedonia is a developing country which constantly invests in its educational institutions as well as increasing their number in order to improve the quality of life of its citizens. In recent years the Republic of Macedonia has seen an increase in the number of institutions that offer higher education as well as an increase in the number of freshman year students enrolling in these institutions. The number of students has increased due to the fact that a large number of the companies in the technological and business sectors are requiring that their staff at least have a University degree. This paper researched the importance of separate factors of studying for the students in the Republic of Macedonia and the degree of their satisfaction from the administrative, academic and physical capacities and resources, as well as the level of satisfaction from the interpersonal communication and the general surrounding of the Universities. The research showed that there are statistical differences in the level of satisfaction of students from public and private universities from academic activities and services at universities, physical facilities and resources at universities, and interpersonal relationships at universities, with students from private universities demonstrating higher levels of satisfaction in these areas. The concept of student satisfaction will be studied through a prism of consumer satisfaction. The analysis will contain implications of the results and recommendations for further research.

**Keywords:** higher education; students; satisfaction; quality

**JEL Classification:** I23

**Challenges in Higher Education**

In September of 2010, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) published the following study: "Young people facing a dead end? More and better jobs in

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Europe". The study shows that even though higher education attracts an ever increasing number of students, a University degree is no longer a guarantee in gaining employment (Robberecht, 2010). According to EUROSTAT the number of new students in primary and secondary levels of education is decreasing. Compared to 2009 and 2010 there is a decrease of 10% in the primary level of education, furthermore there is a 3% decrease in lower secondary education and an 11% drop in higher secondary education. An increase of 22% was noted only in the tertiary levels of education. The decreasing number of new students in the primary and secondary levels of education will influence the tertiary levels as the Universities will be forced to compete for an ever decreasing number of students in the long term.

The above mentioned statistics show that the higher education system is facing serious challenges. The market situation and social surrounding pressure the Universities to offer increased satisfaction and relevant services for students. In this context, a competitive advantage can be gained by analyzing the relation between consumer behaviors and understanding the factors that influence the satisfaction levels in students. Education based marketing can provide knowledge and models in order to be able to conduct this kind of analysis.

According to the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, in 2012/2013 there were a total of 56906 students enrolled in higher education. The number of female students was 31005 or 54. 5% of the total number of students. Highest numbers of students (86. 8%) were enrolled in State owned Universities, 12. 7% were enrolled in private Universities while 0. 5% were enrolled in religious Universities. There were a total of 17213 students enrolled in the first year of higher education in 2012/2013 or 30. 3% of the total number of students. <sup>1</sup>

### **Relation between Consumer Behavior and Student Satisfaction**

Consumer behavior and satisfaction are the basis of marketing. Customer satisfaction is one of the main goals of every successful company. However social marketing with its branches translates this concept into organizations, including universities (Kotler & Fox, 1995, p. 31). One of the initial discussions on consumer behavior in higher education is to understand the actual consumers and the partners involved in delivering this service. The traditional approach looked at the student as a product of the university, while educational marketing identifies the student as a consumer at the universities. With the increased importance of the students the universities look for different ways to satisfy them. An analysis of the factors that influence students' satisfaction can provide relevant information about the way students think and what are the most important areas to be considered in order to achieve their satisfaction.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2013/2.1.13.25.pdf>.

Also, the drivers of behavior and student performance are taken into account. (Pelau, 2010, pp. 72-75)

Other studies in which the relationship between student satisfaction and students leaving the universities has been researched, believe that good student segmentation is the best way to achieve student satisfaction. The goal of many papers for student satisfaction is to create a student behavior model. If the model does not use mathematical models it will be considered a conceptual model. These types of models are often used in consumer behavior research. (Lilien, 1992, p. 19)

Consumer behavior can be divided into five phases: need, search for information, evaluation (perception and preference), purchase and post-purchase behavior. For each of these phases, specific models can be developed that analyze students' satisfaction.

The first phase can be modeled using stochastic models for the purchasing frequency or discrete binary electoral models. The phase of searching for information can be modeled with individual models for familiarization or information integrative models. The perceptual part of the evaluation phase can use perceptual mapping. The preferential part of the same phase can take advantage of the models for attitudes, non-compensatory or compensatory models.

For the purchasing phase models such as multi-purpose direct selection and Markov model are developed. The post-acquisition phase can be modeled using different search models, satisfaction models or communication and network models. (Lilien, 1992, p. 19)

### **Consumer and Student Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction and loyalty are key concepts in the planning of the marketing strategy. Knowledge of consumer satisfaction has long been perceived in the industry. Successful and innovative companies are increasing their efforts to observe and enhance satisfaction, as they recognize the contribution of these activities in increasing their image, understanding their markets and increasing their profits. Consumer satisfaction is of strategic importance to companies in the era of competition. Consumer satisfaction can affect their trust and their future intentions and behavior (Omar, 2009, pp. 299-314). Furthermore, the increase in consumer satisfaction will contribute to improving the economic performance, i. e. profitability, market share and return on capital. In education, student satisfaction can have a huge impact on their future behavior. Students are the main concern of universities hence the level of their satisfaction affects the success or failure of the universities. A number of surveys have been conducted to measure student satisfaction in the last 20 years. Betz, one of the first researchers in the field, used a

Likert scale to measure the six dimensions of student satisfaction: policies and procedures, working conditions, compensation, and quality of education, social life and rewards (Betz, Klingsmith, & Menne, 1970, pp. 110-118). We have already mentioned that university teaching staff has three primary goals: research, education and service. Although the presence and nature of these three components will not be analyzed in this paper, it is important to emphasize that professors have different roles. How well the staff balances these three factors makes a big difference in the eyes of the students they serve. For example, many students are concerned about the educational characteristics and responsibilities of the professors, and they ignore the other two components that are equally important or even more important for the university administration and the university itself. It is obvious that this perception of students with a focus on only one characteristic of the professors is limited. This should be kept in mind, given that the students' opinion is of great importance because they are a major factor in the university experience and have a major impact on the future workings of the university. It must be pointed out that, although student perceptions are limited, their satisfaction will be the subject of this research through the context of consumer satisfaction. The idea of treating students as consumers at universities is easy to discuss, especially in the university environment. Students often choose a university or a specific academic department based on its reputation and hence universities, or even departments of the same university, often compete in attracting the best students. Like any other business, universities persist in a highly competitive environment. Unfortunately, many find that what satisfies students is often not the most useful for their understanding of the concepts of different courses. Students are often characterized as prone to laziness with a desire to complete university tasks in the simplest possible way without realizing that education often requires a lot of hard work and self-discipline. Although this stereotype is not always accurate, however, on the basis of such considerations, many protest against the idea of putting so much emphasis on student valuation of university staff as students often give lower grades to a professor only because that professor teaches a difficult course or subject. Those who consider that student evaluation is not a useful measure of assessing the quality of faculty staff, underpin their opinion on the assessment of the quality of faculty staff by claiming that employers are often dissatisfied with the knowledge of students who are not adequately prepared for university work, so they believe that students' expectations should be even more challenging than what the students want. Establishing a balance between student satisfaction and the opinions of these external parties is a challenge for administrators and professors, but it must be found (Winer, 1999, p. 11). Despite the stated difficulties in creating an assessment based solely on students' perceptions, many feel that their satisfaction is vital to the success of universities. These authors point to increased competition among universities and to the fact that students become more discriminatory when choosing where they will continue higher education and have greater demands from the selected institutions, it is fundamental for the institutions to understand what are

the new students desires from them (Ford, Joseph, & Joseph, 1999, pp. 171-186). Students are the curriculum recipients and, accordingly, their assessments of the courses represent a kind of consumer satisfaction index. This author also emphasizes the importance of student evaluation of professors, as this is a great way to assess the effectiveness of lectures. Additionally, students' attitudes are very important for the formal assessment in many ways. For administrative reasons, student grades may affect the salary and hierarchical rank of an employee at the university. Faculty members often use these assessments to improve their teaching style. An additional reason is that these evaluations can offer knowledge that will contribute to research in the field of education. Finally, these researches are used by academic advisors to guide students in gaining knowledge, during their course selection and as to which professor's best suit their educational needs. The concept of customer satisfaction is challenging due to the many components that affect it. Even the definitions of consumer satisfaction differ significantly. Hunt says consumer satisfaction with the product refers to the desirability of certain results and experiences associated with its purchase or use, and which are subjectively evaluated by the consumer himself (Hunt, 1977, p. 93). Obviously, the concept is very broad and requires clarifications, but both definitions are useful for understanding the complexity of this idea. There are many difficulties in managing consumer satisfaction, especially in the education sector. Because education is a service, it is often a problem to simultaneously increase consumer satisfaction and productivity. Namely, customer satisfaction depends to a large extent on the adjustment of services in accordance with the needs of each individual consumer, while increased productivity often involves standardization. In the educational sphere, this can best be described by the fact that students generally prefer smaller classes in which they can more easily participate in discussion of subjects and gain more attention from professors, but this is significantly more expensive and less effective than educating students in large rooms (lecture rooms, classrooms, amphitheatres, etc.). Another element that contributes to quality, which is determined to have a direct relationship with the level of satisfaction, is the following; customer satisfaction with the services rendered is an essential method for evaluating their quality. Although it is not usually the case that students' satisfaction with the offered education is the only method for assessing the quality of a university, this measure can significantly affect the external statistical perceptions of a university, such as, for example, the retention of students (Athiyaman, 1997, pp. 528-540). Other important stakeholders involved in the quality assessment process are the financiers of the student, the employees, current professionals in the field of study and the society as a whole. Although the attitudes and opinions of these stakeholders will not be covered by this research, it is important to mention them because of the potential impact they may have on students' satisfaction with university education. Since it has already been emphasized that quality plays an important role in determining the student level of satisfaction, it is relevant to mention the most significant of the many dimensions of quality. Some of

the most widely used criteria include responsibility, competency, availability, communication, credibility, security, kindness and consumer understanding (Lagrosen, 2004). The research conducted on students in this doctoral dissertation addresses many of these dimensions. Quality can be measured in a variety of ways. Excellence in quality describes quality that exceeds high expectations. Procedure quality will be described as perfection or consistency, because for these organizations it is of great value to eliminate the number of errors in their operations. Quality, however, which meets consumer expectations, is described as a quality that achieves the goal or as a quality suitable for the purpose. This definition is the most appropriate measure of quality in higher education, as it describes why students enroll in a particular faculty i. e. department. If quality is associated with costs, the prevailing definitions are that quality is value for money. Lastly, quality as a transformation describes processes that bring a quality change, which in the university environment can be the improvement of skills or knowledge or increased self-confidence of students. Hill and others found that the two most important factors contributing to the student perception of quality in higher education are the quality of the lecturers and the quality of student support systems (Hill, 1995, pp. 10-21). The last group consists of family, the services of the university, peers and any environment where students can be surrounded by a positive atmosphere that values learning. As the quality of the lecturers is the most important element in the student's perception of quality, part of the research will be devoted to assessing the various elements that create the student perception of the quality of the lecturers in their chosen field.

### **Factors that Influence the Satisfaction of Consumers and Students**

Factors that influence student satisfaction have been the subject of research in a number of studies. One of the most influential factors is the level of performance, the ease of getting information, the organizational constraint of choice and the role of the mediator in the selection. Also, the previous experience with the products or services and the time of searching before choosing the relevant service has been proven to have a significant impact on satisfaction. Students can be considered as consumers. Factors that influence students' satisfaction can be divided into institutional and personal factors. Institutional factors include the quality of lectures, the quality and speed of feedback from the lecturer, as well as the clarity of his / her expectations, the teacher's teaching style, the university's commitment to research plus the size of the groups. Personal factors that envision students' satisfaction are age, gender, working status, temperament and preferred learning style, (Borden, 1995, pp. 73-88) in addition to the average grade of students. Also, valid variables are the length of attendance as well as the number of possible universities for selection. Student expectations have also been proven to affect their satisfaction.

## **Expectations**

Expectations are a good harbinger of satisfaction. It is noted that deep knowledge and understanding of expectations is crucial for those who offer services (Zeithaml, 1988, pp. 2-22). Therefore, the quality of service and, hence, customer satisfaction cannot be analyzed without measuring expectations. Service expectations can be categorized as desired services and appropriate services. Desired services express what the consumer hopes to receive. However, he or she will accept a certain deviation from the desired output. Adequate services, in turn, are services that are considered acceptable and satisfactory. Therefore, we say that there are “minimum tolerant expectations”. The difference between the desired and adequate (appropriate) service quality expectations is called the Tolerance Zone. The services that fall into this zone do not cause much interest because everything is as expected. Also, this zone is often referred to as a zone of apathy.

Factors that affect students’ satisfaction are diverse and include personal needs, psychological state, options, short-term knowledge, situation and predicted performance (Gronroos, 1989, pp. 52-60). As a result, even when they receive the same service, users may feel different about the quality due to different tolerances to the same level of performance. Separately from personal indicators, it has also been explored whether consumers have the same expectations from different service providers operating in the same branch.

There are many ways to measure expectations. Some researchers require participants to directly specify the nature of their expectations. Others prefer to leave the respondents to answer to what extent their expectations have been met and how they evaluate the performance of the service or product. In this way, they indirectly measure expectations. Still others, in order to measure expectations ask the respondents about the level of importance (Zeithaml, 2003, House, 1998). Lo (2000) further illustrates the significance of ratings for the importance of satisfaction. Through many student satisfaction studies, it has become evident that students are less satisfied with the availability of parking spaces and the quality of catering services. After all, students give little importance to these areas in terms of their total experience and hence it is difficult to conclude that students are very satisfied with these services when, in fact, they do not care much about them.

Although the study recognizes the usefulness of rating ratings for assessing satisfaction, the approach to using them is rejected. It is considered that ratings for the importance of students and their expectations are sufficiently different concepts to make the two measurements feasible.

### **Theory of Disconfirmation**

Due to the dynamic nature of satisfaction, the approach of expectations-disconfirmation is the dominant model in the research of consumer satisfaction. Its framework is built on the expectations of consumers before consumption and their perception after consumption. The comparison of the two states aims to evoke a sense of satisfaction with the product or service. Hence, satisfaction is the difference between the expectations of the person about the outcome of the process before having experience with the service process and the current output as perceived by the person after the experience with the process (Thomas & Galambos, 2004, pp. 251-269). Here, the expectations for the product become apparent as they come from the belief about the product. In the model, negative disconfirmation occurs when service perceptions do not meet consumer expectations. On the other hand, positive disconfirmation is the result of a perception of service that exceeds the initial expectations of consumers. Thirdly, there is a possibility of a simple confirmation of zero disconfirmation that occurs when the consumer's perception of the service meets his / her expectations. However, the tolerance zone can be applied.

Satisfaction is a function of the positivity of disconfirmation. Subsequently, satisfaction is positively influenced by positive disconfirmation (when experience exceeds expectations). In contrast, satisfaction is adversely affected by negative disconfirmation (when experience does not meet the respective expectations).

For the purposes of this research paper, research was carried out with students from different universities. The selection of the examinees was performed with the appropriate "snowball" sample. This type of sample is also called opportunistic because the researcher chooses those respondents available to him, who he believes will be able to cooperate and who will be able to give him the necessary information. The name of this sample expresses the analogy with a snowball, rolling down the hill becomes "bigger". The sample was formed gradually using information from one source, then another, etc. First contact with several students and these interviewees further enabled the questionnaire to be filled by other students who know them personally. They obtained information and contacts for contact with third respondents, and thus, following their network of relationships, the sample was formed. Also, the survey link was available to student groups from various universities on social networks. This sample does not fully examine the criteria of a representative sample. The survey covered 176 students, with representative respondents from state and private universities, ie 140 students from state universities, and the remaining 36 from private universities.

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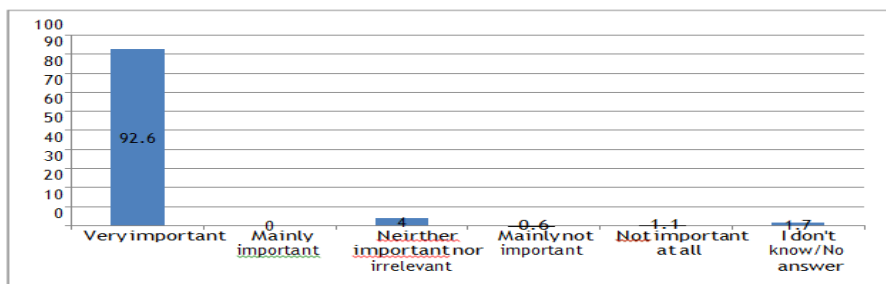
and private universities, ie 140 students from state universities, and the remaining 36 from private universities.

### **The Importance of the Study Factors During Studying**

After determining the importance for students of particular factors (aspects) of studying before their enrollment at the university, it is of great importance to measure the importance of a wider range of aspects during the course of their studies. Therefore, the students were asked the following question: "Please note how each of these aspects is important for you as a student": how well the curriculum is logically structured and well organized, is the communication between the students and the lecturers personal, whether there are enough computers, printers, photocopiers and the like; opportunity to get to know a lot of people, the library to have all the materials you need for learning, the staff at student services to be available and give you useful tips, the subjects to be interesting and challenging, the professors to be always available to you; teaching content includes everything you need for a future career in your area; the teaching content is flexible; lecturers are able to transfer their expert knowledge; the program will stimulate you personally and academically; offer of evening classes; offer weekend classes; summer school offer; offer of off-campus or distance learning; knowledge for the preparation of scientific papers; availability of tutor-service; offer career counseling; availability of lecturers outside the lectures; teaching content that deals with the latest achievements in the field and is useful for work; quick registration procedures; expanding computer knowledge; the cost of studying; possibility to modify the curriculum in order to meet the student interests; assessment based on projects, papers and participation in lectures, rather than just tests; lectures with many discussions; lectures in which the professor teaches most of the time; flexibility in visiting lectures; gaining extensive academic knowledge.

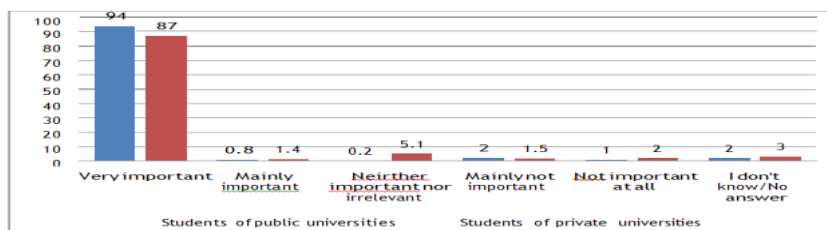
### **Structure and Organization of the Teaching Content**

In this context, the students were first asked the following question: "Please, note how each of these aspects is important for you as a student: the content to be logically structured and well organized?" As can be seen from the following Figure, almost every examined student or 92.6% answered that it is very important that the curriculum be structured and well organized. Only 4% answered that it is neither important nor irrelevant, and 1.1% it is mostly irrelevant or not at all important.



**Figure 1. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to you as a Student: to Make the Teaching Content Logically Structured and Well Organized?**

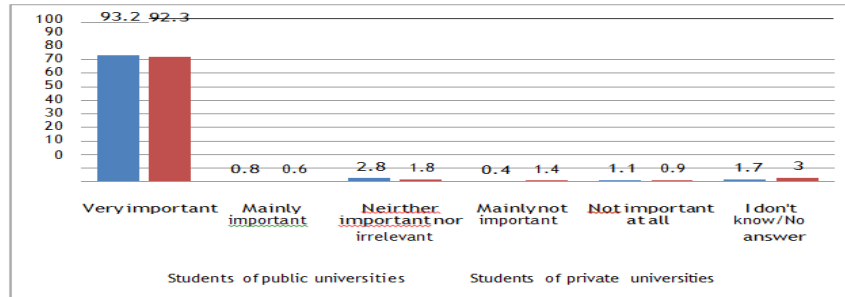
As can be seen from the next Figure, 94% of students from public universities responded that it is very important for them the teaching content to be logically structured and well- organized, while 87% of students from private universities share the same opinion. However, this is not a statistically significant difference that can be seen from the conducted ANOVA, i. e. sig = 0. 358>0. 05.



**Figure 2. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student:the Teaching Content Should be Logically Structured and Well Organized (the Answers are from Students from a Public and Private University)**

### Subjects to be Interesting and Challenging

On the following question: “Please note how each of these aspects are important for you as a student: the subjects to be interesting and challenging?” A high 93. 2% of the students answered that it is very important to them, 2. 8% that they are neither important nor unimportant, and 1. 1% that it does not matter to them at all.

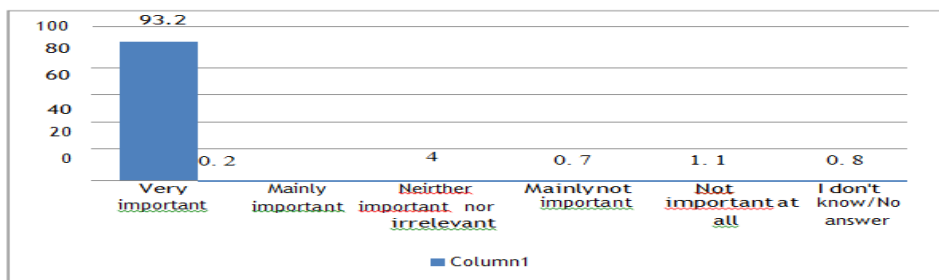


**Figure 3. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: the Subjects to be Interesting and Challenging (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

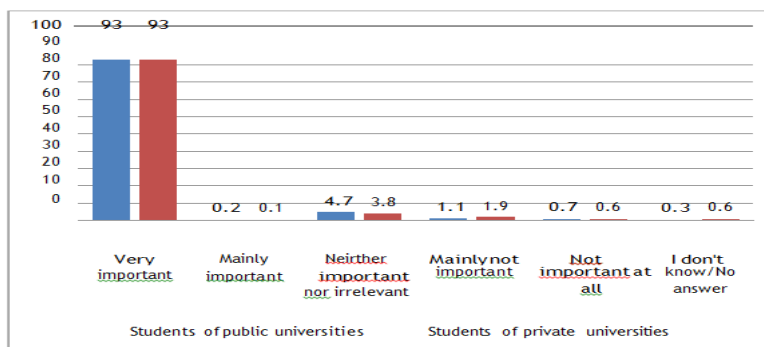
As can be seen from chart above, an equal percentage of students from public and private universities (93%) answered that it is very important for them to be interesting and challenging. This is confirmed by the ANOVA analysis, i. e. sig = 0.694 > 0.05.

**The Teaching Content to Include Everything that You Need for a Future Career in Your Selected Area**

Considering the great significance of the knowledge gained at university for their future profession, when asked: “Please, note how many of these aspects are important to you as a student: the teaching content includes everything you need for your future career in your area” 93.2% of the students expectedly answered that it is very important to them, 4.0% that it is neither important nor irrelevant, and 1.1% that they are generally irrelevant or not at all important to them.



**Figure 4. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: the Teaching Content Includes Everything You Need for a Future Career in Your Area**

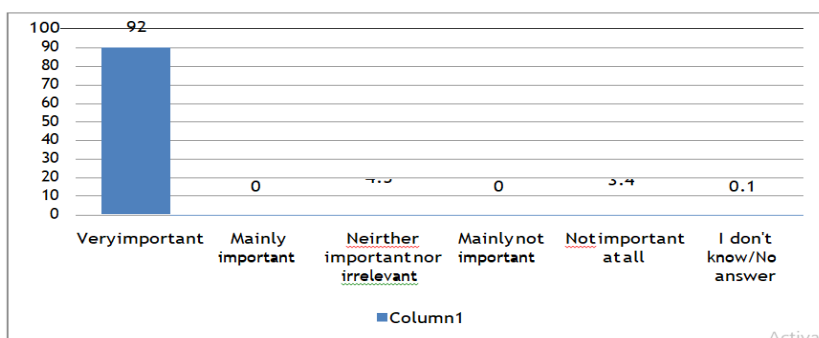


**Figure 5. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: the Teaching Content Includes Everything You Need for a Future Career in Your Area (Answers from Students of Public and Private Universities)**

An equal percentage of students (93%) from state and private universities responded that it is very important to them the teaching content to include everything they need for their future careers in their area (see chart above). This is also perceived by the results of the ANOVA analysis, where  $\text{sig} = 0.569 > 0.05$ .

**The Teaching Program Stimulates You Personally and Academically**

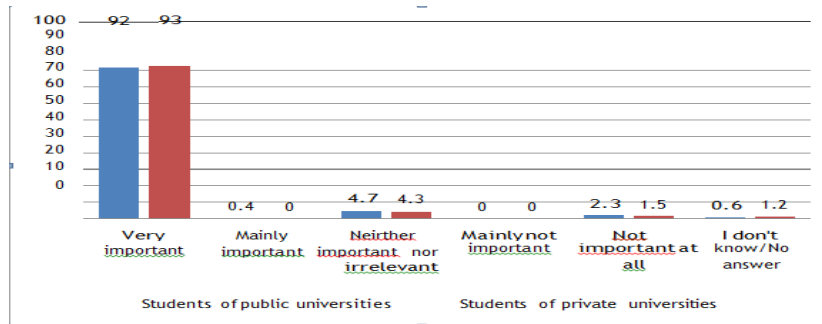
The personal and academic incentives offered by the curriculum are important for 92% of students, they are neither important nor unimportant for 4.5% of students and are not seen as important for 3.4% of the students. This can be seen from the answers to the question: “Please, note how each of these aspects is important to you as a student: the program will stimulate you personally and academically”, which are presented in the following chart.



**Figure 6. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: the Program Will Stimulate You Personally and Academically**

There are no statistically significant differences between the responses of respondents from state and private universities regarding the importance of a

curriculum that stimulates both personally and academically. Namely, 92% of students from state universities in the country and 93% of those from private universities responded that this aspect is important to them. The multivariate analysis ANOVA confirmed the absence of differences, i. e. sig = 0. 586>0. 05.

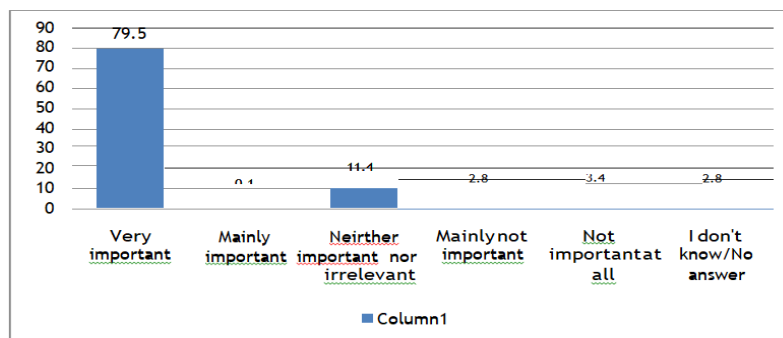


**Figure 7. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: the Program to Stimulate You Personally and Academically (Answered by Students from Public and Private Universities)**

### The Quality of the Teaching Staff - the Professors

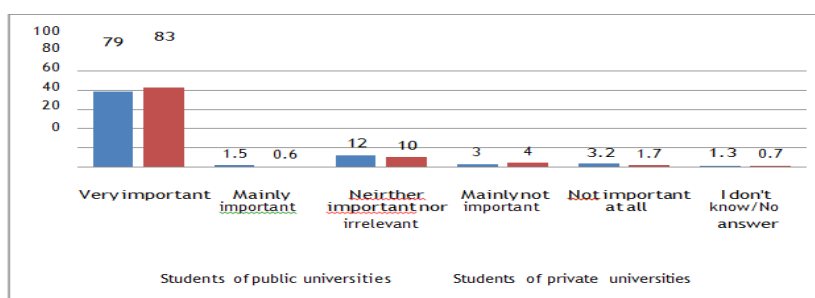
#### Communication between Students and Professors

Additionally, students were asked: “Please note how each of these aspects is important for you as a student: communication between students and lecturers (professors and assistants) to be personal.” From the responses of students presented in the following Figure, it is observed that a high percentage of students in the country (79. 5%) think that personal communication between students and lecturers is very important, 11. 4% answered that neither is important nor is it important, and 6. 3% that summed up is not important.



**Figure 8. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Communication between Students and Lecturers to be Personal**

If the answers of the respondents are viewed depending on whether they study at any of the state or private universities in the country shown in the following Figure, it is noted that 83% of the students from the private universities and 79% of the state students answered that it is very important that there is personal communication between lecturers and students. However, this difference is not statistically significant because the coefficient sig = 0.391, or sig > 0.05.



**Figure 9. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Communication between Students and Lecturers to be Personal (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

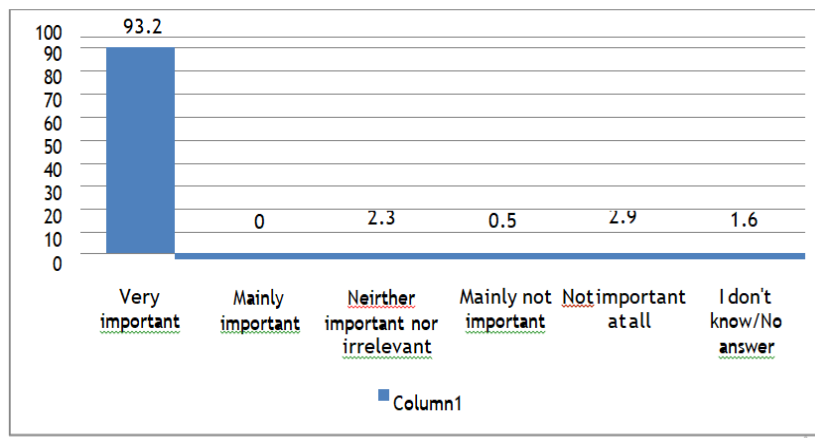
Statistically significant differences in the importance of personal communication between students and lecturers appear depending on the university they attend (sig = 0.012 < 0.050). This aspect is the most important for students from “Goce Delchev” University and FON University (average grade of importance of 1.00), it is less important for students from St. Cyril and Methodius and other universities in the country (average satisfaction ratings 1.62 and 1.92 respectively).

**Table 1. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to you as a Student: Communication between Students and Lecturers to be Personal (Average Grade by University)**

University	Average rating
St. Cyril and Methodius	1.62
St. Kliment Ohridski	1.17
Goce Delchev (Stip)	1.00
FON University (Skopje)	1.00
Other universities	1.92

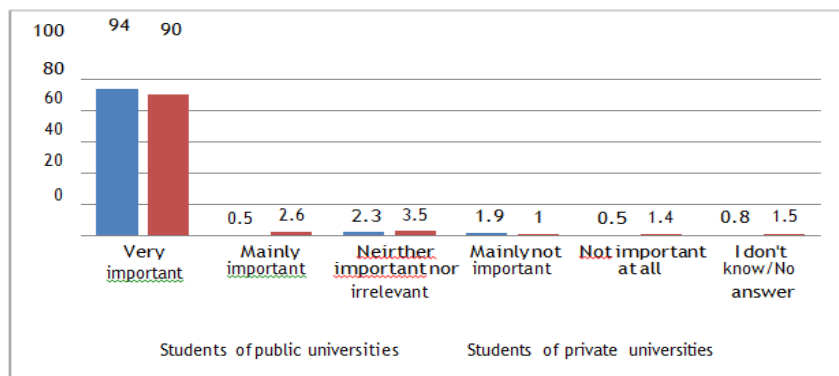
### The Ability of Professors to Transfer their Expert Knowledge

Apart from the availability of lecturers, their ability to convey their own expert knowledge is seen as another factor of importance for students during their studies. Therefore, the students were asked the following question: "Please note how important was the following aspect to you as a student: The ability of professors to transfer their expert knowledge". From their answers that are presented in the following Figure, it can be noted that 93.2% said it was very important to them, 2.3% that it is neither important nor important, and 2.9% think that it does not matter.



**Figure 10. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You As a Student: The Ability of Professors to Transfer their Expert Knowledge**

It was also noted that 94% of students from state universities responded that it was very important to them for (professors and assistants) to be able to transfer their expert knowledge, while 90% of the students of private universities had the same attitude. It represents no significant statistical difference in the answers between these two groups of respondents, which is confirmed with the conducted ANOVA, with sig = 0.995 > 0.05.



**Figure 11. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You As a Student: The Ability of Professors to Transfer their Expert Knowledge(Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

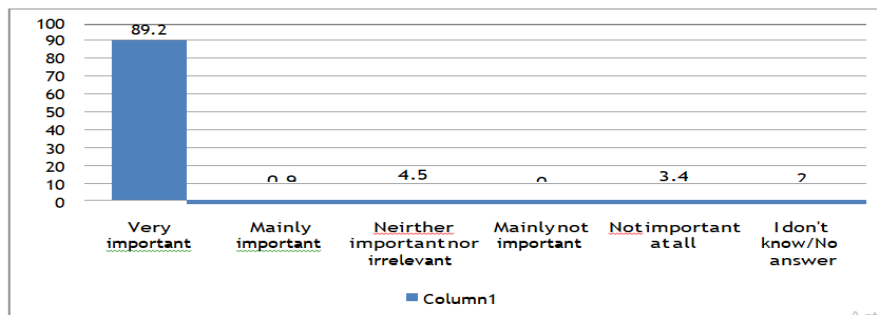
**Importance of Other Factors**

**Student Services Should be Available and Give You Useful Advice**

The main function of the institution of student services according to the Statute of Universities is realized in the following 2 domains: 1) within the process of enrollment and verification of exams, where they review the submitted documents in order to verify with their stamp the student card and archive these documents; and 2) informing interested persons about information from specific branches (to which they as such have access through the website of the particular faculty or through public announcements on the faculty board). In addition to this, in this particular region of the world, universities have long introduced methods of work that have remained generally unchanged for decades (with the exception of the introduction of new technologies which may, but do not necessarily entail relatively gradual changes in their statutes) in the processes that the administrators are obliged to perform.

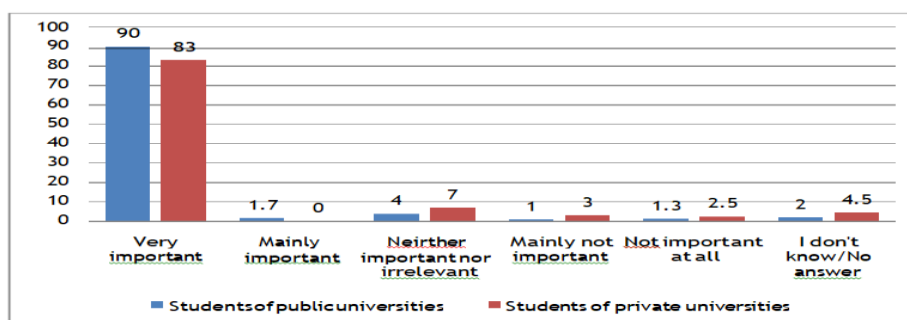
In recent years, we have been witnessing increasing complaints from students, especially at state universities, from the unkind and disgruntled attitude of the staff at student services aimed at the students themselves. In order to measure the importance of this service offered by universities, which recently as a result of the implementation of the latest technological advances some universities have abolished, the students were asked: “Please note the importance of the following aspect to you as a student: Student services should be available and give you useful advice”. Almost nine out of ten respondents or 89. 2% of them answered that it is very important to them, only 4. 5% think that it is neither important nor irrelevant, and 3. 4% think that it is irrelevant.





**Figure 12. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You As a Student: Student Services Should be Available and Give You Useful Advice**

The analysis of student responses depending on university ownership at first glance shows that the accessibility and advice of employees on student services is more important to students from public universities (90% answered that they are very important), as opposed to those from private universities (83 % answered that it is very important to them). However, the conducted ANOVA analysis does not reveal statistically significant differences between students from public and private universities in the answers to this question, and so  $\text{sig} = 0.800 > 0.05$ .

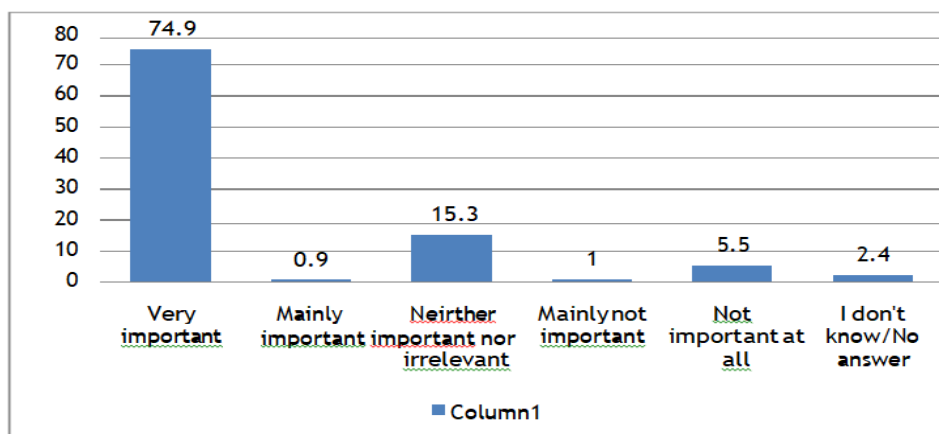


**Figure 13. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Student Services Should be Available and Give You Useful Advice (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

### Rapid Registration Procedures

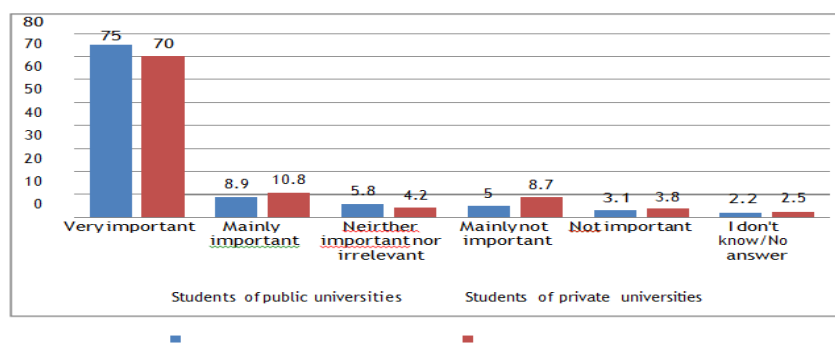
The long queues at student services for exams, registering semesters and for other administrative matters should be completely eliminated by introducing new and quick registration procedures. The need for swift registration procedures is perceived by the answers to the question: “Please note the importance of the following aspect to you as a student: Rapid registration procedures” which are presented in the following Figure. Namely, 73.9% of the students answered that it is very important

for them to have quick registration procedures, 15.3% that it is neither important nor irrelevant, and 5.1% think that they do not matter.



**Figure 14. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Rapid Registration Procedures**

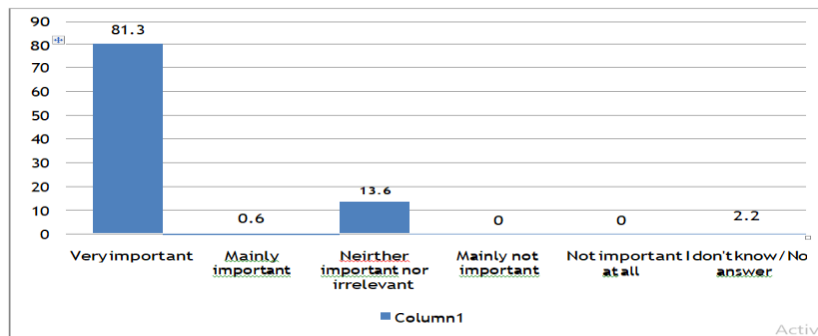
There are no statistically significant differences between the responses of the respondents from state and private universities. Thus, 75% of students from state universities and 70% of private respondents said that it is very important for them to have quick registration procedures ( $\text{sig} = 0.677 > 0.05$ ).



**Figure 15. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Rapid Registration Procedures (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

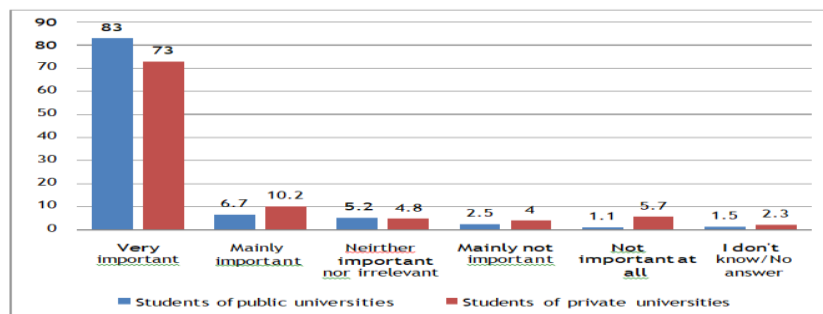
### The Cost of Studying

Expectedly, the cost of studying is perceived as an important aspect for students in the country. Thus, to the question: “Please note the importance of the following aspect to you as a student: the price of studying”, as many as 81.3% of the respondents answered that they are very important, 13.6% that they are neither important nor unimportant and 2.3% see it as unimportant (see the next Figure).



**Figure 16. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: The Cost of Studying**

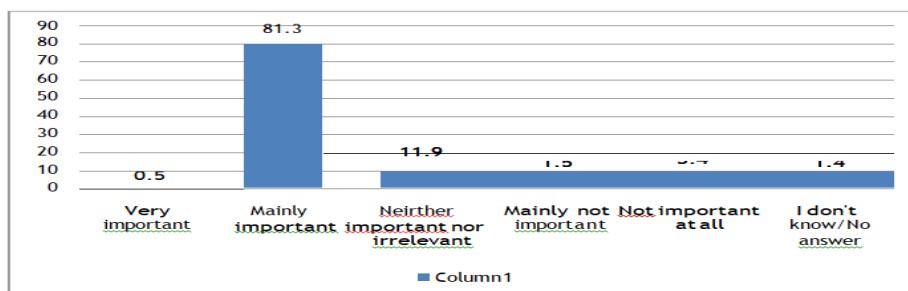
For students from public universities, the cost of studying is more important than for students from private universities. Namely, 83% of the students from the state universities answered that the price of studying is very important, while 73% of the students from the private universities share the same attitude. However, the ANOVA analysis shows that it is not a statistically significant difference, i. e.  $\text{sig} = 0.320 > 0.05$ .



**Figure 17. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: The Cost of Studying (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

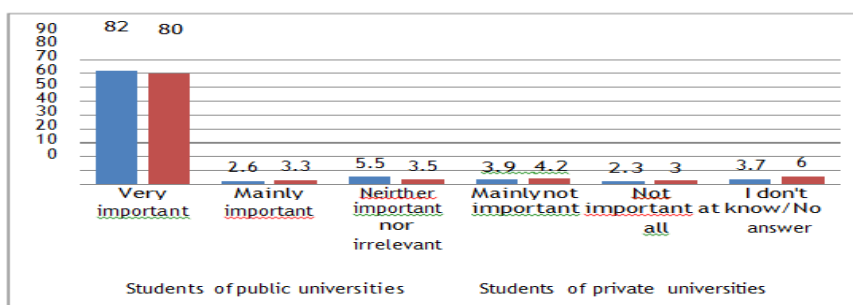
**Assessment Based on Projects, Papers and Participation in Lectures, Rather than just Tests**

A high 81.3% of the students when questioned: "Please note the importance of the following aspect to you as a student: assessment based on projects, papers and participation in lectures, rather than just tests ", answered that it is important for them, 11.9% that it is neither important nor irrelevant, and 3.4% that they see it as irrelevant. The answers are presented in the following Figure.



**Figure 18. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Assessment Based on Projects, Papers and Participation in Lectures, Rather than just Tests**

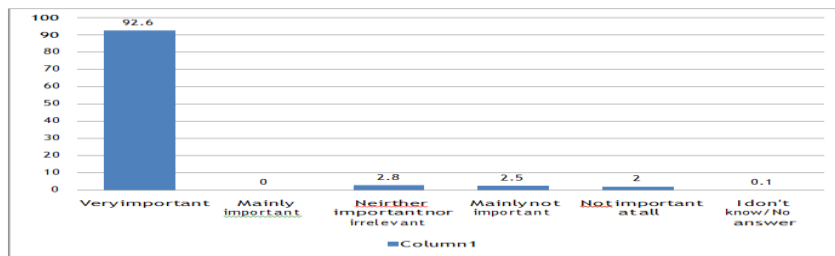
Also, 82% of students from public universities and 80% of those from the private universities answered that assessment based on projects, papers and participation in lectures, rather than just tests is very important to them. It is noticed that this is not a statistically significant difference, and this is confirmed by the ANOVA analysis, i. e. sig = 0.585 > 0.05.



**Figure 19. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Assessment Based on Projects, Papers and Participation in Lectures, Rather than just Tests (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

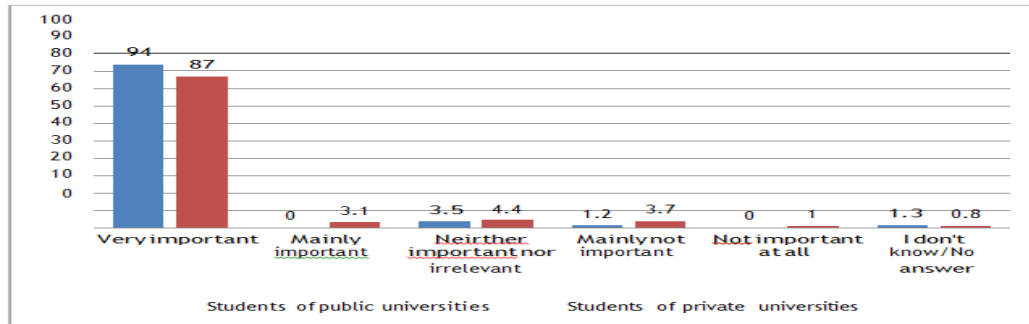
### Acquisition of Broad Academic Knowledge

Almost all students agree on the importance of gaining extensive academic knowledge during their studies. Specifically, to the question: "Please note the importance of the following aspect to you as a student: gaining extensive academic knowledge", 92.6% of the students answered that it is important to them, 2.8% that it is neither important nor important, 4.5% that it is mostly or not at all important to them. The results are shown in the following Figure.



**Figure 20. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Gaining Extensive Academic Knowledge**

94% of state university students and 87% of those studying at private universities in the country responded that it is important for them to gain extensive academic knowledge during their studies (see the next Figure). In the ANOVA analysis, it was found that this difference was not statistically significant, i. e.  $\text{sig} = 0.742 > 0.05$ .



**Figure 21. Please Note the Importance of the Following Aspect to You as a Student: Gaining Extensive Academic Knowledge (Answers of Students from Public and Private Universities)**

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The three most important factors for students in this country during their studies are the ability of the lecturers to transfer their expert knowledge, the acquisition of extensive academic knowledge and finally interesting and challenging subjects. The three least important aspects, however, are the offer of evening classes, the weekend classes and the summer school offer (medium rating of importance 2.82). There are no statistical differences between students from public and private universities regarding the importance of factors during the course of their studies.

The ANOVA analysis showed that students from private universities are more satisfied compared to students from state universities with the evening classes offer, with the average grade of student satisfaction for students of public universities being 3.44, while the grade for students of private universities is 2.68 (sig = 0.06 < 0.050). Furthermore, the average assessments of students' satisfaction from public and private universities on the time allocated by professors for consultations are 2.86 and 2.24 respectively (sig = 0.017 < 0.050). Students from private universities are more satisfied than those from the state universities from the abundance of lectures with many discussions, with the average evaluations being 2.15 (private universities) and 2.69 (state universities), while sig = 0.020 < 0.050.

## **Recommendations**

The analysis about the functioning of the marketing instruments of the marketing models in the economy of Macedonia must go from both the historical and the current aspects of the problems.

The historic problems include the highlighting of these functions from the aspect of the past period, i. e. the already formed assortment structure in the economy in the Republic of Macedonia and the past effect of marketing and its market position.

When talking about the current aspects of the problem, then we think of the active role of marketing in the current development of the economy of the Republic of Macedonia in the broadest sense of the word. One of the basic features of the assortment of the economy of the Republic of Macedonia from the aspect of the application of marketing instruments in the past period is the passive attitude of that assortment in relation to the whole complex of marketing functions. A significant part of this assortment is formed on the basis of traditional methods of market research.

The market assumptions of the projected investments in principle belonged to the second phase of this process of requesting and verifying the market value of the projected assortment, the qualitative, and possibly also the quantitative verification of the scope and global structure of production within certain techno-economic units.

To illuminate the relationship between the labor market and higher education, we need the following disciplined scientific aspects:

Work as a socially organized form of creating new value in the society in the form of products and services provided by economic and non-economic institutions is subject to the scientific interest of ergology as the most common science of work;

Labor market laws, as part of the total market, are subject to economic studies;

Higher education is only a special type of educational activity whose parent scientific discipline is pedagogy;

The state as an institution for regulating relations in the economy and in the society as a whole treats the politics scientifically.

Sociology studies the relations in society, as the widest social community, its structure of social strata and social groups and relations in them.

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