

Global Changes and the Question of Quality in Higher Education

Scientific article

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KEY WORDS: quality management, higher education on teaching

ABSTRACT - The text considers current approaches to the quality of education based on the external control of outcomes (mechanistic-technicistic orientation and economic logic), as well as the alternative proposed by the advocates of socio-culture and critical currents within pedagogy, insisting on the respect for essential characteristics of the educational process (uniqueness, comprehensiveness, development, complexity, dynamics, context and unpredictability, etc.). The quality of higher education teaching is considered according to the assessment of the degree of implementing essential indicators referring to: the acquisition of study programmes, the realisation of one's own development, the harmonisation of one's personal value system with the benefit of social progress, the ability of practical application of what has been learnt and the ability of independent learning and innovativeness. The research is explorative and the assessment was carried out by students as actors in the educational process (purposeful sample – 240; the Teacher Training Faculty – Belgrade University and the Faculty of Philosophy – Novi Sad University). The basic finding refers to the students' evaluation indicating a low level of efficacy of higher education teaching in view of being equipped for practical application of what has been learnt, being prepared for independent learning and trained for innovativeness.

Znanstveni prispevek

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KLJUČNE BESEDE: kakovost, visokošolsko izobraževanje

POVZETEK - V članku obravnavamo trenutne prijstope k fenomenu kakovosti, ki temeljijo na zunanjji kontroli rezultatov (mehanično - tehnična orientacija in ekonomska logika) in alternativ zagovornikov sociokulture in kritične smeri v pedagogiki, ki vztraja na spoštovanju bistvenih značilnosti izobraževanja (enkratnost, celovitost, razvojna kompleksnost, dinamičnost, kontekstualnost, nepredvidljivost ...). Kakovost visokega šolstva je obravnavana glede na oceno ravni dosežkov temeljnih kazalnikov, ki se nanašajo na obvladovanje študijskih programov, doseganje lastnega razvoja, usklajenosť osebnega sistema vrednot s koristmi družbenega napredka, usposobljenost za praktično uporabo pridobljenega znanja, uposobljenost za samoučenje in za inovacije. V raziskovalno študiju so bili vključeni študenti kot akterji izobraževalnega procesa (namerni vzorec - 240, Pedagoška fakulteta Univerze v Beogradu in Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Novem Sadu). Najpomembnejše so bile ugotovitve študentov o nizki učinkovitosti visokošolskega izobraževanja glede kvalifikacij za praktično uporabo naučenega, usposobljenosti za samoučenje in za inovacije.

1 Introduction

Teaching quality management, especially in higher education teaching, is considered an essential determinant of sustainable development in the conditions of highly competitive global market. Sustainable development implies changes in management that does not remain at the level of adaptive responses to the environment, but rather emphasises development innovativeness, implying certain competences among which the central place belongs to readiness for change; from the psychological point of view, this means the presence of highly developed flexibility, creative and non-dogmatic thinking, as well as to ability to accept pluralism of ideas, the ability to tolerate

suspense and uncertainty in cognitive sense, whereas in conative sense it refers to taking initiative, being innovative and ready for taking risks (Djurisić-Bojanović, 2008, pp. 45). The changes introduced in higher education, created by the Bologna process, should have contributed to the realisation of these tendencies. The ongoing discussions point out that the current approaches to the phenomenon of quality have introduced assessment culture grounded on the external control of outcomes (mechanistic-technicistic oriented values and economic logics); as a consequence, an alternative to this has appeared, advocated by the representatives of socio-cultural and critical movement within pedagogy, insisting on the respect for fundamental characteristics of educational process (uniqueness, comprehensiveness, development, complexity, dynamics, context, unpredictability...). It is often found in the literature that quality is a socially construed concept (Stančić, 2012, pp. 289), depending on the context in which it is talked about (Stančić, 2012, pp. 289). Such an approach implies that all the actors should create a shared understanding of quality and search for more appropriate ways of reaching it (Stančić, 2012, pp. 302), expecting from high education didactics to invest more efforts into focusing on emancipatory approaches to learning in the sense of creating the “culture of knowledge quality”. In contrast to this viewpoint, there are approaches to quality in education nowadays in Serbia, relying on the standardisation, unification of measures and procedures, with the aim of ensuring better results through these arrangements. Assessment culture grounded on the external control of the outcomes is considered to be oriented towards utilitarian values and mechanistic-technicistic approaches, normative philosophy and economic logics, which is in fact a concept of quality different from the previous one.

2 Quality of Studies

The quality of university studies is considered a complex phenomenon, and it seems that there are no issues in the realisation of teaching concepts, not regarding quality (Nikolic, Paunovic, according to Bojovic, 2012, pp. 36-37). This was probably the starting point of those advocating the Bologna process, since they assumed that structural changes directed to the coherence of European higher education area would further improve the quality of studies. As it now seems, the greatest manifestation of these tendencies within the reforms has reflected merely on what had always been worked on, i.e. structural changes. Essential changes which should have been manifested in the quality of higher education are still not visible. Various efforts and approaches to the notion of quality, as a set of significant dimensions (features) manifested within education, are in question, and are the result of, among other things, the differences in ways quality is considered, conditioned by differences in theoretical standpoints permeating the grounds of theoretical analyses (Antonijevic, 2012, pp. 25). The majority of starting points in the attempts to determine the essence of education quality deal with what quality of education is and what it involves (Anderson, according to Antonijevic, 2012, pp. 25), whereas the answers to the previous questions are in accordance with the theoretical orientation underlying the search for the

answers to the raised questions; thus the following dimensions have been emphasised in the reform of the system of education in Serbia, which started in 2000: openness, measurability and verifiability, efficacy, effectiveness, righteousness, legislative regulations, sustainability, coherence, etc. (Kovac-Cerovic, 2004). It could be concluded, according to the previously stated, that in the aforementioned dimensions there are no unambiguous indicators that the system would go towards essential changes of studies, ensuring the culture of teaching and learning, which could be taken as the basic, essential dimension directly promoting the quality of higher education.

The understanding of education quality is characterised by various approaches to defining the quality of education, which is a consequence of multi-layered emphasised social-interest fragmentation (Djermannov-Kostovic, 2006, pp. 253) and the fact that quality is differently defined in various fields, contributing to the relativity of meaning of the term, which is being used more as a descriptive than as a normative notion (*Ibid*). Various views on quality, e.g.: quality as an attribute in a broader and narrower sense; as a degree of excellence; as a value and as an assessment (Djermanov, Kostovic, 2006, pp. 254) permeate complex conceptual definitions of the notion, as well as its understanding in the field of education. Therefore, under the influence of one of them, quality is viewed as the benefit that education provides through the value that education has as a qualitative determinant of the educational process and achieved results, as well as an attribute feature of subjects involved in the educational process (Djukic, 2002, pp. 510). Since the efforts within higher education quality defined in the Lisbon Convention from 1997 emphasise the question of the quality of aims, actor programme, processes and results, there is a need to more clearly determine the notion of quality; it has turned out that this is not a simple question. Some authors have pointed out that quality is “impossible to seize”, an unreachable ideal, in a sense “moving target” (Goddard, according to Djukic, 2002, pp. 56).

Analyses have indicated that there is no generally accepted definition of education quality, but the term could imply value education has; in other words, it could refer to value determinants of pedagogical work, as well as attributive features of the subjects involved in the educational process (Vlahovic, 1996). The categories of definitions of higher education quality found in the relevant literature could be classified as: quality as a measure of values, quality as the extent to which the targets have been met, and the third refers to quality as a measure of standard fulfilment (Djukic, 2002, pp. 510). It is inevitable to include multidimensionality in considerations of the essence of quality, and the majority of authors hold that it is a significant feature being in the grounds of complexity conditioned by numerous factors and their permeation at the individual and social level. All this leads to the fact that a consensus has already been reached today that individual quality indicators cannot lead to reliable and valid indicators for a relevant evaluation of higher education quality (Tunijnman, Batani, 1994, pp. 76). Educational indicators are considered to be the data talking about the functioning of the educational system, indicators of states, indicators enabling assessments of the current state of affairs and the functioning of the system of education. A standpoint is found in the literature (Djukic, 2002, pp. 512) that there is agreement on the following

features of educational indicators: they are quantitative, but they are more than a mere numeric expression; they give summary information on relevant aspects of the educational system functioning; they inform interested actors; as diagnostic means, they form the basis of evaluation; in certain cases, they can be a glimpse, an insight into a broader circle of other indicator meanings; in other words, in a sense it can be an indicator of interaction of a number of factors, their interrelations, thus having a great informational value (Tunijnman, Batani, 1994, pp. 56).

Three groups of indicators can be identified in consulted literature as relevant for higher education: input indicators: material and professional (professional and pedagogic teacher competencies); process and indicators of performances (curricula, content sources, students' activities, assessment of students' success, etc.); output indicators (specific knowledge, abilities, skills, values, attitudes, motivation, independent learning abilities, etc.). Attention has been paid to the output factors which are in the text considered from the angle of students' understanding of quality. Such an approach to observation of phenomenon of higher education quality aimed at bypassing evaluation of quality is based on the external control of outcomes (mechanistic-technicistic orientation and economic logics); thus it could fall within alternative approaches proposed by the advocates of socio-cultural and critical currents within pedagogy, insisting on the respect for the essential characteristics of the phenomenon of education (uniqueness, comprehensiveness, development, complexity, dynamics, context, unpredictability, etc.). The quality of higher education teaching is considered according to the evaluation of the level of fulfilment of essential indicators referring to the following: the level to which study programmes are mastered, the realisation of one's own development, the harmony of one's personal value system with the welfare of social progress, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, being equipped for self-learning and independent learning, and being trained for innovativeness. The majority of starting points in the attempts to determine the essence of education quality deal with what quality of education is and what it involves (Anderson, according to Antonijevic, 2012, pp. 25), whereas the answers to the previous questions are in accordance with the theoretical orientation underlying the search for the answers to the raised questions; thus the following dimensions have been emphasised in the reform of the educational system in Serbia, which started in 2000: openness, measurability and verifiability, efficacy, effectiveness, righteousness, legislative regulations, sustainability, coherence, etc. (Kovac-Cerovic, 2004). It could be concluded according to the previous dimensions of educational system quality what quality is and how it is defined, what determines the essence and the phenomenon of quality of education, and how it is possible to incite quality improvement, and what the dimensions according to which the general level of quality within the system of education could be encouraged are. However, according to the previously stated, it could be concluded that in the aforementioned dimensions there are no unambiguous indicators that the system would go towards essential changes of studies, ensuring the culture of teaching and learning, which could be taken as the basic, essential dimension, directly leading to the quality of higher education.

What seems rather important for the positioning of the research problem into the theoretical context relevant for the consideration of the issue of quality is the fact that indicators of higher education quality are considered according to the evaluation of students, thus observing the contribution of higher education teaching to more comprehensive self-observation and self-reflexive, self-managed learning, which should ensure freedom of person's action inspired by contemporary philosophical discussions leading towards the creation of competencies expected in a modern working and social context. This is the reason why participatory epistemology is introduced in the theoretical context of the research, having in mind that, from the viewpoint of modern philosophy of knowledge, it is considered to be in the function of the realisation of emancipatory potentials of students recognised in the awareness of students about the importance of knowledge, and the need to develop creative potentials, flexible knowledge structures, creativity, critical attitude in observation, thinking, learning and problem solving, readings to take risks, expected in the conditions of a highly competitive global market... What is also considered as one of the indicators of emancipatory potentials refers to learning with understanding, raising questions and search for answers, which further implies that the ways of moving towards the "culture of learning" as an indicator of higher education quality are to be found in emancipatory higher education didactics.

3 Methodological Framework

The methodological framework of the research could be outlined in the following way: the research is explorative; problem and aim: to consider the attitude of students towards indicators of the quality of studies, which means considering to what extent the type of studies (academic, vocational), the average mark during studies, and the assessment of the adequacy of choice of studies influence the evaluation of certain indicators of the level of realisation of the quality of studies (the level to which the study programme has been mastered, the realisation of one's own development, the harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, being trained for independent learning and innovativeness); it has been assumed that students equally appreciate the aforementioned success indicators, whereas differences are determined according to the type of studies, academic success and the evaluation of the adequacy of choice of studies; the sample: purposeful ($N = 178$; the Preschool Teacher Training College in Vrsac and the Faculty of Philosophy – Novi Sad University); variables: independent: average mark during studies, choice of studies, type of studies; dependent: indicators or the level of reached quality (the level to which the study programme has been mastered, the realisation of one's own development, the harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, being trained for independent learning and innovativeness).

4 Findings and Interpretation

4.1 The choice of studies

The average mark of students ranges between 6.55 to 9.72, and the average mark for the sample as a whole is 7.89. The sample includes 44.4% of subjects studying at the Preschool Teacher Training College in Vrsac and 55.6% subjects from the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. Considering the sample as a whole, the majority of subjects (95.8%) believe that they have made a good choice when their studies are in question. In other words, students think that their choice of the study programme they have enrolled is adequate, meaning they are satisfied with their choice; as a consequence, their learning motivation should be intrinsic, and, according to standpoints of emancipatory didactics, their interest in the quality of studies should also be expressed.

4.2 Contribution of studies to the level of the realisation of the educational aspect

The average estimation of the contribution of studies to certain aspects of education ranges from medium to high (scope from 1 to 5). The average of the highest mark is 3.99 and it refers to the indicator being trained for independent learning. The average marks of the contribution of studies are almost uniform, which means the differences are not noticeably expressed; thus, it could be said that students pay equal attention to all the stated indicators of the quality of studies; in other words, they consider that their studies have evenly contributed to their advancement according to all the indicators; the finding could be considered an answer to the question or the research problem, meaning it could be considered the confirmation of the assumption. Namely, it has been assumed that students think that their studies have equally contributed to all the aforementioned indicators, i.e. education aspects.

4.3 Success of studies and indicators of higher education quality

The data on the relation between success in studies and the indicators of higher education quality show that none of the Pearson coefficients of correlation is statistically significant, leading to a conclusion that students, regardless of their success during studies, equally value the quality of the observed quality indicators. In other words, it could be concluded that success in studies is not a variable influencing the differences in regard to the contribution of studies to their progress in a variety of aspects (the level to which the study programme has been mastered, the realisation of one's own development, the harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, being trained for independent learning and innovativeness).

A step further in consideration of the finding refers to the factor analysis of the indicators of higher education quality, which has been conducted according to the main component analysis method and Kreuzer's criterion for identification of the number of factors. Since only one factor has been extracted, it was not possible to carry out rotation. Furthermore, it should be noticed that all the factor saturations were significant,

which is another confirmation of the equal assessment of contribution of studies to the stated indicators. The value of communalities of individual indicators is in favour of the assumption that each of them could be a sufficient representation of the quality of studies. Namely, individually, all the indicators have a significant place when dealing with the quality of studies, whereas all of them together have been classified within a single factor; in other words, they contribute to the same thing, the understanding of the quality of studies, which is in accordance to the previous finding. According to the level of variance (the extracted factor explains 46.14 % of the variance of quality indicators), it is noticeable that the stated indicator explains slightly less than half of the indicators which might mark the contribution to success in studies, referring to the need to broaden the list of the observed indicators of the quality of studies.

Table 1: The factor burden matrix

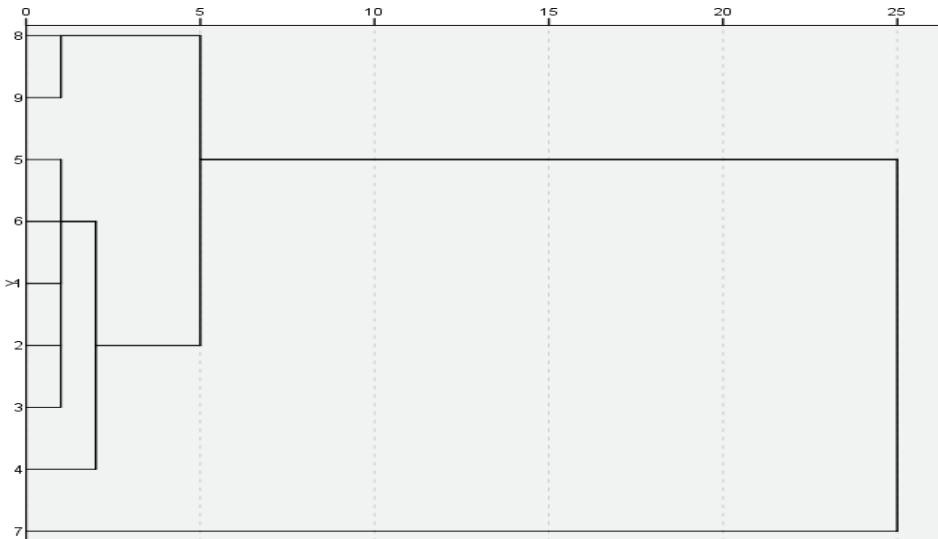
| <i>Quality indicators</i> | <i>Factor</i> |
|--|---------------|
| | 1 |
| The level to which the study programme has been mastered | .653 |
| The realisation of one's own development | .669 |
| The harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress | .650 |
| Being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt | .613 |
| Being trained for independent learning and innovativeness | .720 |
| Being trained for innovativeness | .760 |

The relations between the observed variables have been more clearly expressed in cluster analysis, conducted in a hierarchical cluster of all research variables, according to the between-group linkage method. Quadratic Euclidean distance has been used for measuring the distance between clusters. The cluster analysis was carried out in 8 steps. It has turned out that in the first step the following variables were clustered in one cluster: 8. the choice of studies was appropriate and 9. faculty, i.e. college, whereas another cluster consisted of: 1. The level to which the study programme has been mastered, 2. The realisation of one's own development, 3. The harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, 4. Being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, 5. Being trained for independent learning and 6. Being equipped for innovativeness. It could be argued accordingly that these are the two most closely correlated sets of variables, along with the observation that the second set consists of the variables which could be labelled as the indicators of the quality of studies, which might also be another confirmation of a solid choice of the indicators of the quality of studies. The dendrogram also shows other relations of the observed variables; it could be also noticed that the clustering is the confirmation of previous statements on good correlative relations between the indicators of the quality of studies.

The list of variables in cluster analysis: 1. The level to which the study programme has been mastered, 2. The realisation of one's own development, 3. The harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, 4. Being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, 5. Being trained for independent

learning and 6. Being equipped for innovativeness, 7. Average mark during studies; 8. The choice of the study programme was appropriate, 9. Faculty, i.e. college.

Graph 1: Dendrogram



4.4 The differences between the students of the Preschool Teacher Training College Vrsac and the students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad in regard to quality indicators

The differences between the students of the Preschool Teacher Training College in Vrsac and the students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad in regard to quality indicators have been examined according to canonical discriminant analysis, stepwise method. The analysis was conducted in two steps and in the second step two variables have found themselves in the model: being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt and being trained for independent learning. The rest of the variables were rejected from the analysis, since they did not give significant contribution to differentiating between groups. Only one canonical discriminant function has been identified in the analysis, and the correlation between the discriminant function and the faculty-college students enrolled is of medium level (.474); in other words, there are moderate differences between the students of the Preschool Teacher Training College in Vrsac and the students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad in regard to quality indicators in view of the discriminant factor (canonical correlation is statistically significant – Wilks lambda .775; Chi-square 40.216, df 2; p .000). It is also worth mentioning that the discriminant function is in positive correlation to being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt (.876) and in negative relation to being equipped for independent, i.e. self- learning (-.138). Discriminant function is more emphasised in the case of the Preschool Teacher Training College students (.0650) in comparison to the students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad (-.440). In other

words, according to the evaluation provided by the students in Vrsac, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt is more expressed in their studies, whereas in the case of students from Novi Sad, this correlation is inverse in regard to being equipped for self-learning. This might be explained as the consequence of the type of studies. There are noticed difference between vocational and academic studies, which, in case such a finding were confirmed by subsequent studies, would be in favour of both types of studies, which means putting all the efforts to more clearly articulate academic studies and differentiate them from vocational studies, having in mind that there is still an ongoing discussion on the matter in professional circles.

Furthermore, the correlations between success in studies and quality indicators in the case of the Preschool Teacher Training College students in Vrsac and the Faculty of Philosophy students in Novi Sad, expressed by Pearson's coefficient, have shown that none of the Pearson's correlations between success in studies and quality indicators is statistically important, and that only one correlation between success in studies and quality indicators in the case of academic studies students is statistically significant. It is the correlation between the success in studies and the level to which the study programme has been mastered, which has a rather low mark by these students, but statistically significant (.219*). The interpretation of the finding could accept the possibility that the students enrolled in academic studies rather than vocational, and have paid more attention to the importance of this variable for the quality of studies on the whole. What remains is the issue of the essence of this correlation. We do not know which average marks of students' success during studies have contributed to this correlation. The value of the average mark would be significant for the interpretation of the finding. If it is assumed that high average values of success have significantly contributed to the identified correlation, it could be argued that the students enrolled in academic studies have highly ranked the level to which the study programme has been mastered, as a quality indicator, and vice versa.

4.5 The shortcomings hindering success in studies

According to the statements referring to shortcomings, meaning the factors hindering success in studies and influencing the quality of studies, practice has been identified as one of the hindrances in the realisation of the quality of studies. We were interested in the practice factor as a hindering factor. According to the canonical discriminant analysis data, it can be seen that in the second step two variables were found in the model: being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt and the level to which the study programme has been mastered. The rest of the variables were rejected from the analysis, since they did not give significant contribution to differentiating between the groups. In other words, it has been estimated that the shortcomings of practice have influenced the variables being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt and the level to which the study programme has been mastered. It is also noticeable that the correlation between the discriminant function and the shortcomings of practice is of medium value, which means there are moderate differences between the students who have stated the shortcomings of prac-

tice as a hindrance during studies and those who have not chosen that statement (.423). The function identified according to the analysis is statistically significant ($p = .000$). The findings have also shown that the discriminant function is in positive correlation with being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt (.795) and in negative correlation with the level to which the study programme has been mastered (-.304) as quality indicators; in other words the shortcomings of practice have marked a poorer level of being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, whereas they are not connected to the level to which the study programme has been mastered as quality indicators. At the same time, the discriminant function is more emphasised in the case of students who did not state the shortcomings of practice as a hindrance (.271) in comparison to those who did (-.794).

What remains beyond all the stated is the issue of how students actually see the level to which the study programme has been mastered, what does that mean to them, what is the level at which the study programme is actually mastered, what is this level in the sense of the known taxonomies of realisation, etc. This might be considered from the viewpoint of the understanding of competencies, familiarising students with the competencies expected from them after studies and bringing them into relation with the evaluations of success in their studies, whereby they actually do not associate inadequacy of practice with the realisation of the programme, etc. One of the possible interpretations would be that vocational students get in contact with practice sooner and more intensely, thus they are able to better consider its significance; this might lead to a conclusion that they have conditioned the importance of this indicator, whereas the negative mark of the function in the case of the indicator of the level to which the study programme has been mastered has been influenced by academic students.

What has been found among those hindrances influencing the quality of studies is poor organisation of studies. The differences between the students who have stated poor organisation of studies as an impediment and those who have not have been examined according to the canonical discriminant analysis, stepwise method. The data show that the analysis was carried out in one step, resulting in the model including the variable being trained for the practical application of what has been learnt. The rest of the variables were rejected from the analysis, since they did not give significant contribution to differentiating between groups. The analysis identified only one canonical discriminant function. It can also be noticed that the correlation between the discriminant function and poor organisation of studies as a hindrance is rather low, which means there are small differences between those students who have stated poor organisation of studies as a hindrance and those who have not, in regard to the discriminant function. The function established according to the analysis is statistically significant (canonical correlation: .186; relevance: $p = .018$). It is important that the discriminant function is in maximum positive correlation with being trained for the practical application of what has been learnt (1.00), which actually means that the discriminant function is boiled down to the variable being trained for the practical application of what has been learnt. The discriminant function is more expressed in the case of the

students who have stated poor organisation of studies as a hindrance (420), than with those students who have not (-.085).

Inadequate lectures have also been stated as a hindrance to higher quality of studies. The differences between the students who have stated inadequate lectures as an impediment and those who have not have also been examined according to the canonical discriminant analysis, stepwise method. The data show that analysis was carried out in two steps, having in the second step identified the model including two variables: being trained for the practical application of what has been learnt and the extent to which the study programme has been mastered. The rest of the variables were rejected from the analysis, since they did not give significant contribution to differentiating between groups. The analysis identified only one canonical discriminant function. It can also be seen that the correlation between the discriminant function and poor organisation of studies as a hindrance is moderate, (.363), which means there are medium differences between those students who have stated inadequate lectures as a hindrance and those who have not, in regard to discriminant function; furthermore, the function established according to the analysis is statistically significant ($p: .000$). The findings have also shown that the discriminant function is in positive correlation with being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt (.585) and in negative correlation with the level to which the study programme has been mastered (-.575). The discriminant function is more emphasised in the case of students who have not stated inadequate lectures as a hindrance (.326) in comparison to those who have (-.458). As a consequence, it could be concluded that inadequate lectures are the greatest hindrance for being trained for the practical application of knowledge. The interpretation would be the same as in the previous one.

What has also been found among those hindrances influencing the quality of studies is the lack of time. The differences between the students who have stated the lack of time as an impediment and those who have not have also been examined according to the canonical discriminant analysis, stepwise method. The data show that there are no variables significantly contributing to differences between groups, so that there is none included in the analysis. In other words, there are no significant differences between the students who have stated the lack of time as an impediment and those who have not, in view of the quality indicators. Thus, it could be concluded that the evaluations of the indicators of the quality of studies are not significantly correlated with the lack of time.

The above stated findings as well as their interpretations are considered as answers to the question: to what an extent the type of studies (academic, vocational), the average mark during studies and the evaluation of the adequacy of the choice of studies influence the evaluation of certain indicators of the level of realisation of the quality of studies (the acquisition of study programmes, the realisation of one's own development, the harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, being trained for independent learning and innovativeness); the findings have confirmed the assumption that students equally evaluate the aforementioned indicators of success

in studies, whereas the differences are conditioned by the type of studies. The second part of the hypothesis regarding the discriminate function, student success and the evaluation of the adequacy of the choice of studies has not been confirmed.

5 Conclusion

According to the expressed coherence, quality indicators considered in the research have confirmed that students evaluate the quality of their studies in accordance with the theoretical approach advocated by participatory epistemology, which is, from the viewpoint of contemporary philosophy of knowledge, considered to be in the function of the realisation of emancipatory potentials of students. This is recognised in the importance given to the acquisition of study programmes, the realisation of one's own development, the harmonisation of the personal value system with the welfare of social progress, being equipped for the practical application of what has been learnt, being trained for independent learning and innovativeness. As a consequence, a conclusion could be made that the paths of moving towards the culture of the quality of learning could take a direction towards the improvement of quality dimensions, such as those dealt with in this paper, since they are heading towards knowledge acquisition, the need to develop creative potentials, flexible knowledge structures, creativity, critical attitude in observation, thinking, learning and problem solving, risk taking readiness ... these are the abilities expected to be components of the competencies expected in the conditions of a highly competitive global market (Eberhardt, 2010, pp. 39). Therefore, it could be concluded that, in the research, the quality of higher education teaching has been considered according to the evaluation of the level of the realisation of essential indicators; this does not exclude the possibility to involve other dimensions encompassed by other approaches to considerations of quality, as consequences of differences between theoretical frameworks (openness, measurability and mobility, efficacy, righteousness, regularity, sustainability, coherence, etc.). What can be acknowledged, according to the observed dimensions of the quality of higher education, is the way of defining the essence and the phenomenon of education quality, the ways we expect to drive and encourage quality improvement, dimensions according to which the general level of educational system quality could be raised. It is also possible to conclude that this is the way to consider contribution of higher education to more comprehensive self-observation and self-reflexive, self-managed learning which should ensure the freedom of action of a personality according to modern philosophical discussions leading towards the creation of competencies expected in a contemporary working and social context; from the standpoint of modern philosophy, they are considered to be in the function of the realisation of emancipatory potentials of students; this is in favour of the viewpoint that the ways heading towards the "culture of learning" as an indicator of higher education quality are to be found in emancipatory higher education didactics (Gojkov & Stojanovic, 2011, pp. 230).

What is indicative among the findings is the expression of the discriminant function of quality indicators in the case of vocational students (.650) and academic students (-.440). The students enrolled at academic studies have given more importance to being trained for the application of knowledge, whereas this relation is in their case reverse in view of being equipped for independent or self-learning. This might be explained as a consequence of the type of studies. There are noticed difference between vocational and academic studies, which, in case such a finding were confirmed by subsequent studies, would be in favour of both types of studies, which means putting all the efforts to more clearly articulate academic studies and differentiate them from vocational studies, having in mind that there is still an ongoing discussion on the matter in professional circles. Finally, it might be argued that the observed indicators are the guidelines for the creation of the concept leading to higher quality of learning culture.

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Globalne spremembe in vprašanje kakovosti v visokem šolstvu

Kakovost v visokem šolstvu je povezana s strategijo trajnostnega razvoja in odvisna od pogojev na zelo zahtevnem globalnem trgu. Trajnostni razvoj pomeni upoštevanje sprememb pri vodenju, ki se ne odziva le okolju prijazno, inovacije v razvoju namreč vključujejo tudi pristojnosti, med katerimi ima posebno mesto pripravljenost na spremembe, ki z vidika psihologa pomeni visoko razvito prožnost, ustvarjalno in nedogmatsko razmišljanje, sposobnost sprejemanja različnih idej, strpnost do negotovosti v kognitivnem smislu, v konativnem pa spobudo, inovativnost in pripravljenost na prevzem tveganja (Đurišić-Bojanović, 2008, str. 45). Spremembe po bolonjski reformi pa naj bi v visokošolskem izobraževanju pomagale uresničiti te težnje.

Razprave dokazujejo, da sedanji pristopi k fenomenu kakovosti temeljijo na rezultatih zunanje kontrole (mehanično-tehničnih usmeritev in ekonomske logike), kot alternativa pa se pojavljajo zagovorniki sociokulturne in kritične smeri v pedagogiki, ki vztraja pri spoštovanju bistvenih značilnosti izobraževanja (enotnost, celovitost, razvoj, dinamika, kontekstualnost, nepredvidljivost ...). Danes se veliko piše o kakovosti, nismo pa še prišli do dogovora o tem, kaj sploh je kakovost.

V literaturi se pojavlja mnenje, da je kakovost družbeno skonstruiran koncept (Stančić, 2012, str. 289), odvisen od vrednosti konteksta, v katerem se o njej razpravlja (prav tam, str. 289). Ta pristop predpostavlja, da so vsi akterji ustvarili skupno vizijo kakovosti in iščejo ustrezne načine, da bi jo dosegli (prav tam, str. 302). Od visokošolske didaktike se torej pričakuje, da več pozornosti posveti emancipacijskemu pristopu k učenju v smislu ustvarjanja »kulture kakovosti znanja.«

Nasprotno temu razumevanju imamo danes tudi v Srbiji pristope h kakovosti izobraževanja, ki se opirajo na standardizacijo, poenotenje ukrepov in postopkov, da bi s tem omogočili boljše rezultate. Test kulture, ki temelji na zunanjem nadzoru rezultatov,

je usmerjen k utilitarističnim vrednotam in mehanicistično-tehnicističnim pristopom, normativistični filozofiji in ekonomski logiki, kar pomeni drugačen koncept kakovosti od prejšnjega. Kakovost študija se šteje kot kompleksen pojav in pri izvajanju izobraževanja skoraj ni stvari, ki ne bi bila povezana s kakovostjo (Nikolić, Paunović, po Bojović, 2012, str. 36-37).

Iz tega so verjetno izhajali tudi zagovorniki bolonjskega procesa, če upoštevamo, da bodo strukturne spremembe s poudarkom na usklajenosti evropskega visokošolskega prostora poskrbele za nadaljnji razvoj kakovostnega študija. Kot je zdaj očitno, so najbolj izražene težnje v okviru te reforme tiste, na podlagi katerih je bila tudi zasnovana, torej strukturne spremembe. Opaznejših sprememb v kakovosti visokošolskega izobraževanja še ni videti. Različna prizadevanja in pristopi k ugotavljanju kakovosti kot pomembne dimenzije (funkcije), ki se kaže v izobraževanju, povzročajo med drugim razlike v načinu razumevanja kakovosti, povezane z razlikami v teoretičnih izhodiščih, ki podpirajo teoretične analize (Antonijević, 2012, str. 25).

Večina izhodišč za določitev bistva kakovosti izobraževanja se ukvarja z vprašanjem, kaj je kakovost izobraževanja in kakšna je vsebina kakovosti izobraževanja (Anderson, po Antonijević, str. 25). Odgovori na ta vprašanja pa so skladni s teoretično orientacijo, ki se osredotoča na specifične dimenzije v kakovosti izobraževanja. Tako so v reformi izobraževalnega sistema v Srbiji, ki se je začela po letu 2000, poudarjene naslednje: preglednost, merljivost in preverljivost, učinkovitost, uspešnost, pravičnost, zakonitost, trajnost, skladnost in druge (Kovač-Cerović, 2004).

Iz navedenih dimenzij kakovosti sistema izobraževanja lahko sklepamo, kaj in kako definira, določa bistvo in pojav kakovosti izobraževanja in s čim se pričakuje, da lahko spodbuja izboljševanje kakovosti, s katerimi dimenzijami bi lahko spodbudili splošno raven kakovosti izobraževanja. Iz zgoraj navedenega bi bilo mogoče sklepati, da v teh dimenzijah ni jasno razvidno, da je sistem usmerjen v temeljne spremembe izobraževanja, ki bi zagotavljale kulturo poučevanja in učenja, kar bi lahko vzeli kot osnovno, temeljno dimenzijo, ki vodi neposredno v kakovost visokošolskega izobraževanja. Kazalniki kakovosti, obravnavani v tej raziskavi, z izraženo skladnostjo potrjujejo, da kakovost študija ocenjujejo glede na teoretični pristop, ki zagovarja participativno epistemologijo, ta pa z vidika sodobne filozofije znanja omogoča urešničiti emancipacijske potenciale študentov.

To se prepozna v ovrednotenju obvladovanja študijskih programov, dosežkih njihovega razvoja, usklajevanju osebnega sistema vrednot s prednostmi družbenega napredka, usposobljenosti za praktično uporabo naučenega za samostojno učenje in inovativnost. Iz tega lahko sklepamo, da so možnosti za kulturo učenja v izpopolnjevanju kakovosti usposabljanja, kot je tu navedeno, saj so usmerjene k pridobivanju znanja, potrebi po razvoju ustvarjalnih potencialov, fleksibilni strukturi znanja, ustvarjalnosti, kritičnosti pri zaznavanju, mišljenju, učenju in reševanju problemov, pripravljenosti za tveganje ..., kar so običajno pričakovane sposobnosti, ki naj bi bile zelo konkurenčne na zahtevnem globalnem trgu (Eberhardt, 2010, str. 39).

Lahko sklepamo, da se pri raziskavah kakovosti visokega šolstva gleda na oceno stopnje doseganja ključnih kazalnikov, kar ne izključuje prisotnosti dimenzij, ki jih

zajemajo drugi načini za ugotavljanje kakovosti in so posledica razlik v teoretičnih pristopih (preglednost, merljivost in preverljivost, učinkovitost, uspešnost, pravičnost, zakonitost, trajnost, usklajenost ...). Iz opazovanih dimenzij kakovosti v visokem šolstvu so razvidni način definiranja, določanje bistva in pojava kakovosti izobraževanja, načini, ki naj bi spodbujali izboljšanje kakovosti, dimenzije, ki bi lahko spodbudile splošno raven izobraževanja.

Sklepati je mogoče tudi, da je to način za opazovanje prispevka visokega šolstva k popolnejši samopodobi in samorefleksivnemu, samostojnjemu učenju, ki naj zagotovi svobodno delovanje osebnosti po vzoru sodobnih filozofskih razprav, ki vodijo k oblikovanju kompetenc, pričakovanih v sodobnem delovnem in socialnem kontekstu in za katere z vidika sodobne filozofije znanja pričakujemo, da želijo omogočiti emancipacijski potencial študentov, kar še dodatno potrjuje dejstvo, da je ključ do »kulture učenja« kot kazalniku kakovosti visokega šolstva v emancipativni visokošolski didaktiki (Gojkov, Stojanović, 2011, 230).

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