

## STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS AND THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION – RESEARCH REPORT

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**Purpose:** The purpose of the conducted research was to find out students' opinions on their expectations in the context of ensuring optimal quality of education at the university.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research, using the method of diagnostic survey carried out with the survey technique, was conducted at the Faculty of Management and Command (WZiD) of the War Studies University in Warsaw. The research was conducted in January 2023 among 336 students.

**Findings:** According to the research obtained, the main measures that the university should take to prepare students for the modern requirements of the labor market are: providing students with professional career counseling, increasing the scope of cooperation with entrepreneurs in the form of internships/internships offered by the university, and developing the offer of the career office, i.e. supporting students in the job search process.

**Research limitations/implications:** The research on students' expectations in the context of ensuring optimal quality of education at the university, was conducted at one university, which limits the possibility of generalizing the results to the entire population of students in Poland. The research sample was not representative.

**Practical implications:** Based on the results obtained from the survey, it should be concluded that in order to meet the expectations of students, it is of great importance that universities adapt their educational offerings to the needs of the labor market. The results indicate the need for regular evaluation of educational programs, taking into account the opinions of teaching staff, external stakeholders and students themselves. It is also crucial to develop students' practical skills through cooperative programs with experienced teachers and professionals. Universities should offer opportunities for personal development, access to modern resources and communication tools, and develop internship and work experience programs. Cooperation with industry and flexibility in the approach to learning are important to increase student satisfaction.

**Originality/value:** The article describes the results of a survey conducted in 2023, thus constituting a new empirical study of student expectations in the context of providing quality education.

**Keywords:** student expectations, education quality, university.

**Category of the paper:** Research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Ensuring at a high level the quality of education in a university is the most important factor determining the success of its graduates. Effective management of educational quality in a university is linked to the need to consider several important aspects. The first under consideration are accreditations from external institutions, whose regular evaluations translate into care in maintaining high standards, both didactically and academically. Another aspect is properly prepared educational programs, which must be constantly monitored and adjusted to both the needs and requirements of the modern labor market and scientific progress. A factor of great importance is also the appropriately selected and prepared, in terms of their competence, teaching staff. University managers should invest in the professional development of university teachers, e.g. through postgraduate studies, training or other initiatives that will increase their competence in new teaching or research methods. Teaching methods that take into account students' learning styles are also noteworthy. Any university wishing to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage should encourage and enable its scientific and teaching staff, as well as students, to conduct research, the results of which could ultimately improve educational programs. Given that the mission of every university is to equip the student with the right competencies to find a rewarding job, it is necessary to establish cooperation with industry in the broadest sense. Such activities help prepare the student for the realities and requirements of the modern labor market. Hence, each university should also maintain high standards of international student exchange programs, which would also enrich students with both educational experience and equip them with additional competencies, such as language. When considering the quality of education, one should also not forget about student support programs. These programs should primarily concern career development, soft skills development or psychological support.

All the above-described activities should be reviewed by students. Their evaluation of the lectures, exercises and general conditions for development and learning at the university, should be taken into account in making changes in its operation. It is indisputable that students' expectations of higher education institutions are high. The diversity of needs can be determined by the chosen field of study, individual variables, socio-cultural conditions, as well as future career plans. Students expect that quality education will enable them to acquire practical skills that they will use in the performance of their professional duties, but also allow for personal development that will contribute to professional success.

## 2. Ensuring the quality of education at the university

Presenting the results of the research, which focused on the issue of the quality of education at the university, it is necessary to pay attention to how quality in the strict sense is perceived. For there is no doubt that the very concept of quality is difficult to define unambiguously. It is usually understood as everything that has to do with certain characteristics that affect the customer's evaluation of a certain product or service. Thus, it can be seen that it is usually a subjective evaluation, clearly linked to the expectations of a particular customer. In many cases, quality is perceived as the high value of a product or the level of fulfillment of customer expectations. Thus presented, the concept of quality referred mainly to business activities, in which the formal expression is the fulfillment of the requirements contained in the ISO 9001 standard. The mentioned standard is treated as a set of principles (guidelines) that can help the organization to achieve high quality of both the management process and the products proposed to the customer (Mroczko, 2012).

Today, most authors define quality as meeting or exceeding customer requirements. Every organization has a set of certain values on the basis of which its quality is judged, and at the same time the quality of the products it offers. The listed values are usually divided into two groups, which should be as identical as possible (Mroczko, 2012):

- advertised values, i.e., those that show the organization in its message to external customers (recipients of the products offered) and internal customers (members of the organization),
- observed values, i.e., those that the organization realistically adheres to.

When considering the concept of quality, it is also worth touching on another aspect, which is the understanding of the concept of quality in relation to the social responsibility of the organization. Hence, managers should pay attention not only to internal quality (e.g., products, services, service), but also to the four main stakeholder groups, which are: shareholders, customers, societies and employees.

From the perspective of the considerations made, it should be noted that in order to structure the process of evaluating the quality of a service by the customer, criteria are given that play the role of a kind of template, which is used when evaluating a specific service (Stoma, 2012). The determinants of service quality, which are reflected in the evaluation of the quality of education in higher education, include:

- professionalism and qualifications of employees (members of the organization),
- behavior and attitudes of employees in relations with customers,
- flexibility and accessibility to the goods offered by the organization,
- reliability of the service offered,
- reputation and credibility of the organization, viewed through the prism of the opinions of previous customers.

The above considerations indicate that educational quality is also a relatively difficult term to define. It is often understood intuitively, it is also a relative concept by which different groups participating in the educational process understand the term “quality” differently. Therefore, it should be assumed that the quality of education is a multidimensional, heterogeneous concept. At the same time, there is no consensus on how to define it (Popek, Świda, 2011). This can be done in more than a dozen ways, as can be seen in the extensive literature on the subject.

At universities the quality of education is a fundamental factor that determines the effectiveness of the educational process, as well as the preparation of graduates to function in the dynamically changing labor market. At a time of increasing competition between universities and globalization, providing quality education is a strategic priority for academic institutions (Wilson, 2023).

The concept of educational quality in higher education is multidimensional and includes a number of interrelated elements. According to R. Thompson and K. Richardson (Thompson, Richardson, 2022), the quality of education consists of: study programs, academic staff, teaching infrastructure and the educational management system. The above definition is also supplemented by M. Anderson (Anderson, 2023) also turning back the aspects of internationalization and cooperation with the socio-economic environment.

Nowadays, education is considered as a process that is a fundamental element of the university's activity. Its quality is influenced by a whole spectrum of elements, the most important of which include the input level of skills, knowledge and competencies of students entering education and their activity in the educational process. Other factors influencing the quality of the educational process are primarily (Bakonyi, 2012):

- properly prepared study programs,
- active scientific and teaching staff with practical experience,
- developed and implemented comprehensive system of evaluation and control of educational quality,
- modern teaching infrastructure.

Evaluation of educational quality at the university is carried out externally (institutional) and internally (intra-university). In accordance with the current regulations, the following external quality assurance processes are envisaged ([eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/pl/](http://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/pl/), 2024):

- initial institutional assessment: assessment of applications for entry and registration of newly established non-public higher education institutions in the register,
- institutional re-assessment: assessment of applications for renewal and extension of non-public higher education institutions in the register,
- initial program evaluation: evaluation of applications for permission and issuance of permits for the establishment of first and second degree programs and single master's degree programs in all fields of study - in the case of newly established universities and existing public and non-public universities that do not meet the statutory conditions for

autonomous establishment of degree programs; and additionally evaluation of applications / accreditation for the establishment of degree programs in nursing and midwifery,

- periodic program evaluation, including: evaluation of first and second degree programs and single master's degree programs in all fields of study.

All four current processes and the evaluation of the quality of education at the doctoral school combine the supervisory (accreditation) function with the function of improving the quality of education. On the one hand, they are mandatory in nature and culminate in the issuance of a formal decision that conditions the establishment or continuation of non-public universities or the establishment or continuation of a degree program or doctoral school in public and non-public universities. On the other hand, the criteria, the analysis of the material and the reports of the teams conducting the assessment are aimed at improving quality ([eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/en/](http://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/en/), 2024). Hence, universities implement their own quality assurance systems, which include, among other things, regular evaluations, hospitalizations of classes, student satisfaction surveys, as well as career tracking. S. Peterson (Peterson, 2023) notes that effective internal educational quality assurance systems are characterized by comprehensive and systematic evaluation activities.

External quality assurance is currently the responsibility of the Minister of Science and Higher Education and the Polish Accreditation Commission (PKA), as well as the Minister of Health and the National Accreditation Council for Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (KRASzPiP). Two new processes, comprehensive evaluation and evaluation of the quality of education at doctoral schools, which have not yet been introduced, will be the responsibility of PKA and the Commission for the Evaluation of Science (KEN), respectively.

In the case of internal quality control of education, on the other hand, the regulations stipulate only general rules for study programs, teacher evaluation and periodic evaluation of courses by students. Detailed solutions are regulated in the internal regulations of universities. PKA and KRASzPiP take into account internal quality assurance mechanisms in external evaluations ([eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/en/](http://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/en/), 2024).

External accreditations and certifications are a very important part of verifying the quality of education in a higher education institution. P. Harrison (Harrison, 2022) points out that external educational quality assurance systems contribute to the standardization of education internationally.

Ensuring quality education in higher education requires a systemic approach, as well as the involvement of all stakeholders in the teaching process. M. Wilson and S. Taylor (Wilson, Taylor, 2023) conclude that investments in the quality of education translate directly into the competitive position of the university and the professional success of its graduates. Therefore, it is necessary for every higher education institution to systematically improve the competence of its academic staff, continuously update its educational programs, invest in modern research

and teaching infrastructure, implement innovative teaching methods, as well as constantly develop international cooperation.

In the context of the above considerations, it is also necessary to define the concept of competencies, which play a key role in shaping the quality of education. According to the general division, competences can be divided into professional competences, which are usually identified with hard competences (knowledge, specific skills related to the profession or work experience), and personal competences, which are usually referred to in the reference books as soft competences. These include self-awareness, motivation, innovation or social skills, i.e. leadership, teamwork, communication or conflict management (Kaczmarek, Kurek, Majewski, 2023).

It should be noted that in higher education, competencies—both hard and soft—may be reflected, for example, in the following ways:

- Teachers with well-developed pedagogical skills are able to effectively convey knowledge and inspire students to actively participate in classes.
- Competencies related to curriculum design enable the development of content that is current, engaging, and relevant to labor market needs.
- Teachers who possess classroom management skills can create an environment conducive to learning and collaboration.
- Competencies in assessment and the provision of constructive feedback are essential for monitoring student progress.
- The development of soft skills—such as effective communication, teamwork, and problem-solving—is just as important as the teaching of theoretical subjects.
- In the face of dynamic technological and social changes, competencies related to educational innovation and the use of modern technologies are becoming indispensable.

In summary, appropriate skills contribute to the effectiveness of educational processes and better alignment with the challenges of the contemporary labor market.

### **3. Results of empirical studies**

#### **3.1. Research methodology**

The research, the results of which are presented in this article, was conducted in January 2023 at the Faculty of Management and Command (WZiD) of the Academy of Military Arts in Warsaw. The research was conducted by a team consisting of: A. Kaczmarek, D. Kurek and T. Majewski. The main objective of the conducted research was to find out the opinions of students regarding expectations in the context of quality assurance of education at the

university. The main research problem was formulated in the form of the question: *What factors determine the quality assurance of education at the University?*

Solving the main research problem formulated in this way required solving several specific problems, defined in the form of the questions presented below:

1. *What measures should the University take to prepare students to meet the demands of the labor market?*
2. *What is the level of students' satisfaction with studying?*
3. *Does the level of satisfaction with studying vary by gender and major?*
4. *Is there a correlation between the level of satisfaction and the year of study?*
5. *Is there a correlation between the level of satisfaction and the type of study?*
6. *Would students choose the same field of study at ASzWoj again?*
7. *Is there a correlation between re-choosing a major and the age of the students?*
8. *How do students of the Faculty of Management and Command evaluate the teaching offer and the potential of the University?*
9. *Does remote learning have an impact on the formation of students' competencies?*
10. *What is the attitude of students towards remote learning?*

For the purposes of the research conducted, the main hypothesis was formulated as follows: Ensuring the quality of education at a higher education institution is a very complex process in which many factors must interact. Hence, it is extremely important to invest in the development of staff or infrastructure, as well as to create educational programs that take into account the needs of the modern labor market. This will increase the university's chances of success, as well as prepare students for future challenges.

Due to the diagnostic nature of specific problems 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, specific hypotheses were not formulated. Hypotheses were formulated for problems No. 3, 4, 5 and 7 as follows:

- H3. The overall level of satisfaction with studying is different between men and women and those studying management and command, logistics and aviation.*
- H4. There is a relationship of at least weak strength between the level of satisfaction and the increase in the year of study.*
- H5. There is a relationship of at least weak strength between the level of satisfaction and the type of study.*
- H7. There is a relationship of at least weak strength between re-choosing a field of study and the age of students.*

Students' expectations were taken as the independent variable, while the dependent variable was the quality of education at the university.

### **3.2. Sample structure**

Diagnosing opportunities for the development of soft competences, in order to adjust educational programs to the needs of the labor market, should be carried out in each university, regardless of its nature or the courses offered. The research analyzed the competences of

students of the Faculty of Management and Command at the War Studies University, which was due to the place of work of the authors of the article, as well as was related to the first stage of the research carried out, during which the research tool – a survey questionnaire – was analyzed in detail, which, after validation, will be used in subsequent stages of the research. The authors of the article would like to carry out the research of students' competences periodically, which will allow to reveal the impact of changes in educational programs on students' competences.

The structure of the research sample is shown in Table 1. The research sample was characterized by six basic criteria, such as gender, age, level and type of study, field and year of study, and place of residence.

**Table 1.**  
*Sample structure*

| Criterion                 | Responses                                | N   | %     |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Gender of the respondents | Female                                   | 139 | 41.37 |
|                           | Male:                                    | 197 | 58.63 |
| Age of respondents        | Up to 22 years old                       | 206 | 61.31 |
|                           | 23-25 years                              | 89  | 26.49 |
|                           | More than 25 years                       | 41  | 12.20 |
| Level and type of study   | Full-time undergraduate studies          | 177 | 52.68 |
|                           | Full-time graduate studies               | 40  | 11.90 |
|                           | Part-time bachelor's degree program      | 73  | 21.73 |
|                           | Part-time graduate studies               | 46  | 13.69 |
| Field of study*           | Command and Management                   | 123 | 36.72 |
|                           | Logistics                                | 153 | 45.67 |
|                           | Aviation                                 | 59  | 17.61 |
| Year of study*            | I                                        | 159 | 47.46 |
|                           | II                                       | 120 | 35.82 |
|                           | III                                      | 56  | 16.72 |
| Place of residence        | village                                  | 73  | 21.73 |
|                           | city with up to 19 999 inhabitants       | 29  | 8.63  |
|                           | city with 20,000 to 99 999 inhabitants   | 79  | 23.51 |
|                           | city with 100,000 to 499 999 inhabitants | 17  | 5.06  |
|                           | city with 100,000 to 499 999 inhabitants | 138 | 41.07 |

\*For field of study and year of study, 335, and not 336 students, responded to the survey.

Source: Own research results.

A total of 336 students were surveyed, so 59.79% of the total number of students studying at the Faculty of Management and Command participated in the survey. This included 41.37% of women and 58.63% of men. The survey included undergraduate students, with a total of 250, and graduate students, with a total of 86. The survey questionnaire was completed by 159 first-year students, 120 second-year students and 56 third-year students. The largest group was made up of students from the field of logistics (45.67%). The remaining students studied management and command – 36.72% and aviation – 17.61%. Most of the students surveyed were residents of cities with a population of 20 000 to 99 999 (23.51%) and cities with a population of more than 500 000 (41.07%).

### 3.3. Results and conclusions of the study

The first question that was analyzed was the students' expectations regarding the measures that the university should take to prepare students to meet the demands of the labor market. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Actions, which the university should undertake in order to prepare students to meet the requirements of the labor market*

| Responses                                                                                                          | %     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| provide students with professional career counseling                                                               | 64.07 |
| increase the scope of cooperation with entrepreneurs in the form of training/internships offered by the university | 56.29 |
| develop the offer of the career office - support for students in the process of looking for a job                  | 45.51 |
| pay more attention to the formation of language competencies                                                       | 41.14 |
| pay more attention to the formation of soft competencies                                                           | 30.84 |
| pay more attention to the formation of hard competencies of students                                               | 30.84 |
| increase the employment of practitioners as lecturers                                                              | 27.84 |
| pay more attention to digital competencies                                                                         | 26.65 |
| increase the number of hours of practical classes                                                                  | 21.56 |
| increase the competence of the university teaching staff                                                           | 18.86 |
| increase the number of hours of compulsory trainings/internships                                                   | 7.78  |
| other                                                                                                              | 2.40  |

Source: results of own research.

Analyzing the answers given by students, we can see, that the most important aspects for them are those that will enable them to find an interesting and rewarding job in the future. Students indicated the importance of providing professional career counseling (64.07% of indications), increasing the scope of cooperation with entrepreneurs in the form of trainings/internships offered by the university (56.29% of indications), and developing the offer of the career office, i.e. supporting students in the job search process (45.51% of responses). Therefore, it is worth organizing meetings that would allow students to establish contact with representatives of companies, which at the Faculty is provided in the form of organizing job fairs or Practical Management Workshops. Other measures that students believe should be taken at the university are the acquisition of language skills (41.14%) and the formation of competencies, both soft (30.84%) and hard competencies (30.84%). Students also indicated that there should be more hiring of practitioners as lecturers (27.84%), more attention to digital competencies (26.65%), and more hours of practical classes (21.56%).

All of the above-mentioned expectations of students affect their perception of the university. A university that can meet these expectations can gain a competitive advantage, as well as build a positive image, which is an extremely important aspect for future student recruitment.

Taking the above into account, therefore, the level of student satisfaction with studying at the university was checked. The results obtained are included in Table 3.

**Table 3.***Level of student satisfaction with studying*

| Responses       | %     |
|-----------------|-------|
| Definitely high | 7.19  |
| Rather high     | 41.02 |
| At medium level | 39.52 |
| Rather low      | 8.08  |
| Definitely low  | 4.19  |

Source: results of own research.

Definitely and rather high level of satisfaction with studying was indicated by almost 48% of respondents. A medium level was indicated by 39.82% of respondents, while dissatisfaction was indicated by 12.27% of students.

In order to identify potential differences in the level of satisfaction between the surveyed groups, distinguished by gender and field of study, the U-Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used. During the conducted research in terms of satisfaction among men and women, the differentiation of satisfaction levels was not confirmed ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). Differences in satisfaction were identified by considering the opinions of students of each field of study, as illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4.***Kruskalla-Wallis test results - satisfaction vs. field of study*

|                            | Management and command (n = 122) | Logistics (n = 153) | Aviation (n = 58) |          |               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------|
|                            | average rank                     | average rank        | average rank      | <i>H</i> | <i>p</i>      |
| Satisfaction with studying | 152.95                           | 166.68              | 199.71            | 10.74    | <b>0.0046</b> |

n - number of observations; *H* - result of Kruskal-Wallis test; *p* – significance.

Source: results of own research.

There is a difference in the level of satisfaction with studying between two groups of students - those studying management and command and aviation. The study shows that higher levels of satisfaction with studying are manifested by students majoring in aviation (64.41% indicated levels 4 and 5), while lower levels are manifested by students majoring in management and command (40.98% indicated levels 4 and 5).

It was also indicated (weak strength of relationship) that the level of satisfaction decreases as the year of study at the university increases (Spearman's Rho  $-0.17$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).

In turn, using Cramer's V coefficient, the relationship between the level of study and the type of study was identified (weak strength of relationship V Cramer  $0.17$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). Indeed, it turned out that a higher level of satisfaction was manifested by full-time BA students.

From the point of view of the research conducted, it was also important to check whether WZID students would choose their current field of study again. The collected responses are included in Table 5.

**Table 5.***Re-choosing the same field of study*

| Responses        | %     |
|------------------|-------|
| Definitely yes   | 22.75 |
| Rather yes       | 40.72 |
| Difficult to say | 21.86 |
| Rather no        | 8.38  |
| Definitely no    | 6.29  |

Source: results of own research.

The analysis of the obtained results allows us to conclude that the vast majority of WZID students - 64%, would again choose the field of study in which they are currently studying. For 22% of respondents it was difficult to answer this question, while 15% of respondents would not choose their major again.

Therefore, it was checked whether there was a correlation between the re-choice of the field of study and the age of the students. It turned out that younger students were more likely to declare a re-choice of their current major (Cramer's  $V$  0.16,  $p = 0.02$ ).

A correlation was also detected between the year of study and re-choice of the field of study - re-choice was declared more often by first-year students ( $V$  Cramer 0.15,  $p = 0.04$ ), which confirms the correctness of the calculation of the correlation indicated in the previous paragraph.

The quality of education at a university is a key aspect that affects the reputation of the institution, as well as the future of students - the possibility of finding an interesting and rewarding job. Hence, from the point of view of the research conducted, it was extremely important to find out the opinion of students regarding the evaluation of the teaching offer and potential of the University. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.***Assessment of the teaching offer and potential of the University*

| Responses                                                                                           | Definitely no | Rather no | I have no opinion | Rather yes | Definitely yes |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| Students have access to valuable library resources and reading rooms                                | 2.68%         | 3.28%     | 23.28%            | 42.68%     | 28%            |
| The University has an extensive teaching infrastructure (lecture halls, high-quality laboratories)  | 8.05%         | 18%       | 32.53%            | 30.14%     | 11.34%         |
| Teaching staff is easily accessible (by email, on-call, etc.).                                      | 2.99%         | 11.67%    | 25.44%            | 45.80%     | 14.07%         |
| Teachers support students in the development of talents                                             | 9.58%         | 26.43%    | 36.82%            | 20.65%     | 6.58%          |
| Students have the opportunity to participate in foreign exchange programs, internships, internships | 1.20%         | 4.20%     | 29.12%            | 41.44%     | 24.02%         |
| Students have access to high quality computer equipment                                             | 21.55%        | 24.25%    | 26.04%            | 24.25%     | 3.89%          |
| The level of teaching at the University is high                                                     | 4.20%         | 15.91%    | 34.23%            | 37.83%     | 7.80%          |
| The University has a high level of requirements for exams/assessments                               | 0.89%         | 7.46%     | 20.29%            | 46.26%     | 25.07%         |

Cont. table 6.

|                                                                                                                                                |        |        |        |        |        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Exams are conducted reliably                                                                                                                   | 2.38%  | 4.76%  | 22.02% | 48.80% | 22.02% |
| Teachers are always reliably prepared for classes                                                                                              | 1.49%  | 7.16%  | 14.32% | 48.35% | 28.65% |
| The quality of teaching materials recommended/provided by lecturers is very high                                                               | 2.39%  | 8.08%  | 25.14% | 46.40% | 17.96% |
| As part of the course, students learn practical problem solving                                                                                | 8.03%  | 27.08% | 31.25% | 23.80% | 9.82%  |
| The study program is adapted to the needs of the labor market                                                                                  | 8.63%  | 21.42% | 40.47% | 24.40% | 5.05%  |
| The career office cooperates with many employers offering a wide range of internships and placements                                           | 8.35%  | 16.11% | 60.29% | 11.34% | 3.88%  |
| As part of the course of study, students have the opportunity to learn software programs computer programs necessary to work in the profession | 15.61% | 23.42% | 27.32% | 27.02% | 6.60%  |
| The university offers assistance in career planning and entering the labor market                                                              | 11.64% | 25.07% | 45.07% | 13.13% | 5.07%  |
| The university has good sports infrastructure                                                                                                  | 6.56%  | 13.43% | 32.23% | 36.71% | 11.04% |
| Students have a real impact on didactics and university management through members of the student government                                   | 9.85%  | 21.19% | 40.59% | 21.49% | 6.86%  |
| The quality of internships offered by the career office is high (one can gain interesting and useful experience)                               | 7.25%  | 10.57% | 67.97% | 10.57% | 3.62%  |
| Participation in student internships increases the possibility of students to find an attractive job                                           | 4.50%  | 10.21% | 36.93% | 35.43% | 12.91% |
| Students have ample opportunities to choose thesis supervisors                                                                                 | 10.21% | 8.70%  | 36.33% | 33.53% | 11.11% |
| The University is fully prepared to provide online classes                                                                                     | 5.07%  | 14.02% | 15.82% | 40.89% | 24.17% |
| Students are free to choose faculties                                                                                                          | 11.78% | 12.99% | 26.58% | 32.93% | 15.70% |
| At the University, during foreign language classes, students learn industry vocabulary necessary for professional work                         | 9%     | 13.81% | 33.63% | 29.42% | 14.11  |

Source: results of own research.

In order to better illustrate the results obtained, all the factors listed in the table were divided into four categories, which included: infrastructure and resources, teaching staff, as well as educational methods, curriculum and student support. According to the author, there are key areas, the provision of which, as well as their continuous development, contributes to increasing the quality of education and the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market.

The first category mentioned is the **infrastructure and resources** owned by the university. In a university, investments in infrastructure, such as modern lecture halls, laboratories or access to various databases, as well as scientific literature, are essential for effective education. Students rated very highly the access to valuable library resources and the reading room operating at the university (71% of indications). The quality of teaching infrastructure, such as lecture halls, laboratories, was rated slightly lower (42% of positive indications). Students were divided in their opinions regarding the assessment of the availability of high-quality computer equipment - answers definitely no and rather no were given by almost half of the respondents

(46%), while answers definitely yes and rather yes were selected by 28% of students. The rest did not express an opinion in this regard, choosing the answer I have no opinion. Another important factor from the point of view of the research conducted, was the students' assessment of whether the university has good sports infrastructure. Almost 48% of students gave a positive assessment of this factor. The university should also provide access to technologies that support learning, so students were asked for their opinion on whether the university is fully prepared to teach online - almost 64% of students gave a positive opinion on this aspect. Nowadays, the use of online teaching tools plays an increasingly important role in modern education because it improves communication between the teacher and the student, improves the teaching and learning process, thereby determining the achievement of learning objectives.

Further, WZID students expressed their opinion on the **teaching staff** employed at the university, as well as **teaching methods**. Academic teachers not only impart knowledge to students, but also play an important role in terms of inspiring students to learn independently, as well as to think critically, the use of various teaching methods by teachers, such as case studies, learning by doing or interactive lectures, can significantly increase student involvement, as well as enhance their analytical skills. It is also worthwhile to introduce various elements of project work that help develop practical skills, as well as stimulate creativity. The results from the survey indicate that the students very highly rated the reliability of the lecturers' preparation (77% of indications) and the quality of the teaching materials recommended/provided by the lecturers (64% of indications). Only 27% of surveyed students believe that teachers support students in the development of talents, and 37% of respondents had no opinion in this aspect. In the context of the research conducted, it is also worth noting the availability of teachers, both in and out of class. Therefore, respondents were asked to assess whether teaching staff are easily accessible (by email, on-call, etc.) - 60% of students positively assessed this aspect. The last factor that students were asked about was the ability to choose thesis supervisors. 45% of students positively assessed this aspect. Choosing a supervisor who will adequately guide students as they conduct their research, as part of their thesis development, is extremely important. 36% of students were unable to assess this aspect - however, these were mainly students who were in their first year of undergraduate studies.

The next category assessed by WZID students, which has its own not inconsiderable impact on the quality of education at the university, is the **curriculum**. It should be emphasized that curricula should be flexible and adapted to the changing requirements of the modern labor market, as well as technological advances. The factor regarding the high level of teaching at the university was positively assessed by 46% of students. The answer I have no opinion was given by as many as 34% of all respondents. Aspects that were rated very highly by students were the high level of requirements for exams/assessments (71% of indications), the reliability of the exams conducted (71% of indications), the freedom to choose faculties (49% of responses) and the teaching during foreign language classes of industry vocabulary necessary for professional

work (44% of indications). The least positive evaluations of students were recorded in the areas of opportunities to learn computer programs necessary for professional work (34%), learning practical problem-solving in class (34%), matching the curriculum to the needs of the labor market (29%), and the reality of student influence on didactics and university management through members of the student government (28%). It should also be noted that when evaluating these aspects, 30-40% of respondents did not know how to evaluate these factors, choosing to select the answer I have no opinion. Nevertheless, new subjects should be introduced to reflect current trends, as well as to increase the attractiveness of majors. It is also important to take into account soft skills, such as communication, teamwork and resistance to stress.

The final category assessed was student support. Nowadays, more and more attention should be paid to taking care of students' well-being by introducing various programs for professional support, personal development or psychological support. These programs can significantly affect student satisfaction and comfort. Among the aspects students rated best were the opportunity to participate in foreign exchange programs, internships, apprenticeships (65% of indications) and participation in student internships that increase the possibility of finding an attractive job (48%). Other aspects students were not able to assess, due to lack of knowledge in this area because the students surveyed did not use the programs available at the university. The difficulty of assessment was related to the following variables: the career office cooperates with many employers offering a wide range of internships and placements; the university offers assistance in career planning and entry into the labor market, the quality of internships offered by the Career Office is high (one can gain interesting and useful experience).

In the context of the research conducted, another important aspect was to find out students' opinions on the impact of remote learning on the formation of competencies. The results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.**

*Influence of remote teaching on the formation of students' competencies*

| Responses                                | %     |
|------------------------------------------|-------|
| Yes, it influenced definitely positively | 24.48 |
| Yes, it influenced rather positively     | 38.21 |
| Yes, it influenced rather negatively     | 14.33 |
| Yes, it influenced definitely negatively | 3.88  |
| Difficult to say                         | 14.33 |
| It did not                               | 4.77  |

Source: results of own research.

The analysis of the results from the conducted surveys shows that for 63% of WZID students, remote teaching has a positive influence on their competence development. No variation in students' responses (statistically significant correlations) was revealed in terms of socio-demographic variables.

Some of the competencies that can be shaped through remote learning include: creativity in teaching (innovation in creating educational materials), development of technological skills (use of e-learning platforms or communication and collaboration tools and applications), self-directed learning, networking (students can connect with other students from all over the world) or development of digital competencies.

Taking the above into account, during the research attention was also paid to the attitude of students towards remote learning. The results obtained are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.**

*Students' attitudes towards remote learning*

| Responses                                                                                                           | %     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| All classes should be conducted remotely                                                                            | 20.60 |
| All lectures should be conducted remotely                                                                           | 56.72 |
| Only subjects that develop soft competencies should be conducted remotely                                           | 12.54 |
| Remote learning allows the development of competencies at the same level as on-site learning                        | 21.19 |
| Remote learning does not allow for the development of competencies at the same level as on-site learning            | 18.51 |
| The implementation of classes in a remote mode allows for the development of skills in the organization of own work | 31.34 |
| The implementation of classes in a remote mode allows for the development of skills necessary for teamwork          | 9.55  |

Source: results of own research.

According to nearly 57% of WZID students, all lectures should be implemented in a remote mode. According to students, the implementation of remote learning allows the development of skills in the field of organization of own work - 31% of indications. 21% of students pointed out that remote learning allows the development of competencies at the same level as on-site learning. However, a similar percentage of students (18%) believe that remote learning does not allow the development of competencies at the same level as on-site learning. Thus, it can be concluded that remote learning has great potential for the development of students' competencies, but the implementation of this solution requires constant adaptation or innovative actions on the part of both universities and teachers. The introduction of hybrid activities - combining stationary and remote learning, is a good solution for students with different expectations. This is because there is a possibility of choosing the hours of classes or recording lectures by teaching staff, so that students can listen to them at a time convenient for them.

Although remote learning has recently gained prominence, the results of conducted research (See: Pitula, Grzyb, 2021, pp. 88-116; Franczyk, Rajchel, 2024; [ksztalceniezdalne.psrp.org.pl](https://ksztalceniezdalne.psrp.org.pl), 2024) indicate that the effectiveness of remote learning depends on a number of factors to which universities should pay special attention, which include, for example, the quality of educational programs, adaptation of infrastructure, availability of resources or, finally, the ability of students to learn independently.

## Research conclusions

As a result of the conducted research, the most important key aspects affecting the quality of education in the opinion of students were identified. This article formulates the main research problem in the form of a question: What factors determine the provision of quality education at the University? Providing answers to the main research problem was preceded by providing answers to specific problems.

The main activities that the university should undertake in order to prepare students for the modern requirements of the labor market are: providing students with professional career counseling (64.07% of indications), increasing the scope of cooperation with entrepreneurs in the form of internships/internships offered by the university (56.29% of indications), and developing the offer of the career office, i.e. supporting students in the job search process.

WZID students mostly (48%) feel a high level of satisfaction with their studies. The survey shows that higher levels of satisfaction with studying are manifested by aviation students (64.41% indicated levels 4 and 5), while lower levels are manifested by management and command students (40.98% indicated levels 4 and 5). Higher levels of satisfaction were manifested by full-time undergraduate students. What's more, the vast majority of WZID students - 64%, would again choose the major they are currently studying.

From the point of view of the research conducted, it was extremely important to find out the opinion of students regarding the evaluation of the University's teaching offer and potential. The factors that students evaluated were divided into four categories, which included infrastructure and resources, teaching staff as well as educational methods, curriculum and student support. From the point of view of the infrastructure and resources available at the university, students rated very highly the access to valuable library resources and reading room operating at the university (71% of indications). The university has extensive, high-quality teaching infrastructure, such as lecture halls, laboratories (42% of positive indications). Students also felt that the university is fully prepared for online classes - almost 64% of students expressed a positive opinion in this aspect.

Further on, WZID students expressed an opinion about the teaching staff employed at the university, as well as teaching methods. The results of the survey indicate that students rated very highly two extremely important aspects - the reliable preparation of instructors for classes (77% of indications) and the quality of teaching materials recommended/provided by lecturers (64% of indications).

The next category that WZID students rated was the curriculum. The factor regarding the high level of teaching at the university was positively assessed by 46% of students. Students noted that the university has a high level of requirements for exams/assessments (71% of indications), exams are conducted reliably (71% of indications), and students are free to choose faculties (49% of responses).

The last criterion was student support. Among the aspects best rated by students were, first of all, the opportunity to participate in foreign exchange programs, internships, apprenticeships (65% of indications) and participation in student internships increasing the possibility of finding an attractive job (48%).

In the context of the research conducted, another important aspect was to find out students' opinions on the impact of remote teaching on the formation of students' competencies. For 63% of WZID students, remote teaching has a positive impact on the development of student competencies. Some of the competencies that can be shaped through remote learning include: creativity in learning, development of technological skills, independent learning, development of digital competencies, among others.

In the context of the ongoing discussion, it is also worthwhile to provide a brief overview of research conducted at other academic institutions in Poland and abroad. Studies carried out at institutions such as the Vistula University of Finance and Business, WSB Merito University, and the University of Technology and Economics (UTH) indicate that students prefer programs tailored to labor market needs, offering individualized, innovative, and practical learning paths. Therefore, it is essential for universities to integrate student expectations into decision-making processes, which will enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of their educational offerings. These findings highlight the need for a dynamic approach to curriculum design that responds to the evolving expectations of students and the demands of the labor market (Kocot, Kwasek, 2024).

Meanwhile, research conducted in the context of higher education in Turkey suggests, among other things, that quality assurance systems should incorporate advanced technologies such as AI and big data analytics; strengthen partnerships with industry to better align curricula with labor market needs; pursue international accreditations and develop global partnerships; adopt evaluation frameworks that reflect the unique characteristics of new-generation universities; and actively involve students, faculty, and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes (Nurgül Durmuş Şenyapar, 2024).

In summary, the research findings point to several important trends that may influence the quality of education in the coming years, including:

- the growing importance of the practical dimension of education,
- the need for greater flexibility in study programs,
- the necessity of integrating technology into the teaching process,
- the increasing relevance of intercultural competencies,
- the expectation of personalized educational pathways.

These trends reflect the dynamic development of higher education aimed at enhancing educational quality and better preparing students for the challenges of the modern labor market.

## 4. Summary

Meeting the expectations of students in the context of ensuring the quality of education requires the university's commitment in the form of continuous monitoring and, above all, adapting the educational offer to the needs of the labor market. Hence, universities should rely on regular evaluations of educational programs, both using the opinions of teaching staff, external stakeholders and students. Another important factor shaping quality education in universities is that students can develop practical skills. That's why it's very important to introduce various programs through which experienced academics or professionals from various industries will support students in better understanding the labor market, for example. Universities should also focus on opportunities for students' personal development, such as through various courses or workshops, in the course of which young people could develop their talents, passions or interests. To this end, it is also worth ensuring that students have access to modern resources such as laboratories, libraries or e-learning platforms. Universities, in order to ensure high quality education, should use modern communication tools, such as mobile applications, thanks to which students would have easy access to information. One should not forget to constantly develop internship or work experience programs, which would help young people to get in touch with people from a particular industry and, as a result, to gain experience.

Attention to ensuring the quality of education, cooperation with industry, as well as flexibility in the approach to learning are key elements that significantly affect the fulfillment of students' expectations and increase their satisfaction with studying.

## Acknowledgment

The article was financed from the research task "Psychological aspects of management in the context of ensuring business continuity in modern organizations" of scientific activity specified in the "Financial plan of ASzWoj scientific activity for 2024", code II.2.7.

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