

The Impact of Study Quality on the Image of a Higher Education Institution

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Issues concerning the image and reputation strengthening of higher education institutions have recently been given an important consideration in Lithuania and other European countries. In the article we will discuss the fundamentals of the university education quality and image strengthening in theoretical premises, and illustrate them using data of studies performed at the Vilnius University. The research results demonstrate that the quality of studies is the main factor in determining the image of a higher education institution.

Key words: *study quality, image, higher education institution.*

Introduction

The creation of the European higher education area compels higher education institutions (HEIs) to consider the competitiveness, international mobility, employment

level of graduates and their integration into the European labour market. The main way of achieving these goals is a constant enhancement of the quality of studies. On the other hand, when the national and the

international scopes of competitiveness augment among the HEI, the image of a HEI receives a crucial implication.

The role of a HEI is robustly gaining the importance in the changing and unifying European community. HEI are community centers for scientific research, innovations and community learning. They are created and supported by society with the expectations that the dispersion of knowledge will enhance personal experience and lead society to prosperity. The community of students at HEIs is amplifying due to constantly expanding activities beyond the walls of the institutions, a more active participation in traditional courses and programmes, the spread of various distance-learning forms in the world (Glion Declaration II, 2000). On the other hand, the intensifying globalization promotes the fast internationalization of research and at the same time the rapidly growing number of students in HEIs all over the world. Recently the number of exchange programmes has multiplied, and the financing conditions of these programmes have improved. In the last decade, HEIs (both public and private) have also increased the international student flows through offering various study programmes designed for foreign students. The global higher education market is developing rapidly, it influences the teaching plans and research programmes, as well as standards, accreditation and quality assurance (Rutkauskiene et al., 2006). Therefore, due to new tasks and additional responsibilities in competitive and rapidly changing technological conditions, the significance of HEIs is increasing, and these institutions become research subjects themselves more often.

The aim of the work was to establish a connection between the quality of studies and the image of a higher education institution, based on theoretical and empirical research.

The research methods: systemic analysis of the scientific literature, logical analysis and quantitative research methods.

Study quality and the image of HEIs: theoretical presumptions

First of all, we would like to discuss the role of the image of a HEI. In the modern world, HEIs cannot just confine themselves only to proclaiming their research achievements or the variety of their study programmes. HEI activity cannot be restrained just to students' preparation for the labor market; studies on the needs of society and its separate groups, search for the ways to satisfy diverse needs of society and students become essential. Universities as well as other HEIs must search for the ways how to reach and please a large variety of internal and external influence groups in order to meet these needs and thus create among these groups a good image, reputation and eventually prestige.

In addition, the understanding of the role of image, reputation and prestige helps HEI executives to use them more effectively in the communication strategy aimed at enhancing the HEI positioning statement (Nguen and LeBlanc, 2001). Consequently, the institutional image has two key components (Kennedy, 1977): functional and emotional (Nguen and LeBlanc, 2001). The functional component is associated with

tangible characteristics that can be easily measured, while the emotional component is related to psychological dimensions—feelings and attitudes towards the institution. These feelings are derived from individual experiences and the processing of information on the attributes that constitute functional indicators of image. Institutional image is, therefore, the result of an aggregate process by which the public compares and contrasts the various attributes of organizations (Nguen and LeBlanc, 2001).

In the case of HEIs, we could identify the following attributes: geographical location, university type (state or private), complexity of entry requirements and the grade averages of the applicants, achievements of faculties, the quality of studies, offered programmes, endowments of libraries, university budget size, tuition fees, sport teams, etc. Sometimes several other indirect factors that cannot be controlled by the university are listed: demographic and economic development, social peculiarities, technological progress and public policies (Albert and Whetton, 1985; Conant, 1992; Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Kazoleas et al., 2001; Gudoniene et al., 2007; Pratt and Foreman, 2000; Theus, 1993).

However, researchers (Kazoleas et al., 2001) found that image factors managed by the university itself (existence of particular programs, strength of academic programs, sports programs, libraries, and technical facilities) were stronger than the demographic characteristics of respondents or environmental factors (location, tuition compared to other universities, and admission standards compared to other universities).

Therefore, they stated that personal experiences with the university in question had a greater impact on its overall image than media exposure related to the university (Arpan et al., 2003).

In addition, some researchers propose to group the university image elements into three groups:

- cognitive image (facilities, courses, atmosphere, admission possibilities, tuition fees, teachers, education quality, student preparation, practical / theoretical variation, requirements, student orientation, student–teacher communication distance, distances between the university and society, university and business, the number of students, the popularity of the university, elite university, traditional university, innovative university, age of university, etc.);
- emotional image (pleasant–unpleasant, boring–stimulating, stressful–relaxed, gloomy–lively);
- General image (positive–negative) (Gudoniene et al., 2007; Palacio et al., 2002)

J. Ivy (2001) claims that university image depends on a university’s strategy, its implementation and understanding by the influence group creating the university image. People frequently lack information needed for an objective perception of a university image; therefore, the formed image is usually inadequate. Nevertheless, such image has an effect on individuals while selecting a university, when recommending it or sponsoring, and perhaps even for the employment at the university. Subsequently, from the

standpoint of the university, it is important to acknowledge the university image created by society and to reach out for a more correct and favourable image (Ivy, 2001; Gudoniene et al., 2007).

University image is not a self-oriented matter; it should support the formation of favourable attitudes towards a particular university and determine decisions in selecting a university as a place to study, work or as a partner. Thus, determining the actions that can establish a university perception and are controllable is of great importance.

University image and the quality of studies must be assessed together. The quality of studies is generally affiliated with such characteristics as theoretical knowledge, practical skills, relevance of the subjects taught, professional teaching, communication skills, personal attention, the content of the study programmes, objective grading, proper facilities and inventory etc. (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996). However, theoretical and empirical research carried out by Lithuanian and foreign researchers (Cizas, 1999; Galiniene, 2005; Galiniene et al., 2005; Krisciunas and Daugeliene, 2001; Lagrosen et al., 2004; Menon, 2003; Savickiene, 2005; Woodhouse, 1999) indicates that the conception and characteristics of the quality of studies are perceived in a very different way. The study quality conception emerges and develops in result of changes in university environment or growth of know-how in the higher education system and separate institutions. Thus, the perception of the quality of university studies is often very subjective and diverse.

It becomes apparent that diverse influ-

ence groups in an organization and outside (teachers, students, administration personnel, graduates, employers, governmental institutions, parents etc.) link the quality of studies to different characteristics. According to M. Owlia and E. M. Aspinwall (1996), all study quality dimensions are important for students, whereas potential employers are mostly interested in study results. Therefore, they pay more attention to the graduates and their skills, university's credibility and ability to reach its goals. According to these researchers, university personnel are mostly concerned with such dimensions of study quality as materiality, competency, content and reliability (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996). Moreover, we could clearly state that even within each of the interest groups there might be essential differences due to the disparity of individual goals and quality perception.

Study quality and image of a HEI: empirical researches

In the Lithuanian context, theoretical discussions as well as practical university image and study quality research aspects are of crucial importance foremost because today Lithuanian universities feel a great pressure as a result of the implementation of the Lisbon strategy goals and Bologna's process, increasing competition in the European higher education and research area. On one hand, Lithuanian newspapers are full of articles regarding the insufficient quality of studies at local higher education institutions in comparison with studies abroad; on the other hand, universities face the lack of

student's and personnel motivation. For instance, the research shows that 74 % of young Lithuanian scientists would leave Lithuania if a job offer from abroad is received (Mockaitis et al., 2005)¹, whereas executives of Lithuanian companies consider that universities insufficiently develop such generic skills as independence, creativeness and knowledge application for practical tasks, mostly because the didactical approach, based on presenting the information but not developing skills in its application, still prevails in higher education institutions (Jeciuviene, 2008).

The important underpinning for successful learning is the permanent communication between the student and the university. The need for such communication is related to the growing competition among universities inside and outside the country, as well as associated concerns of universities about the study quality satisfaction of the students. The assessment of students' expectations and of what they have actually received provides a basis for sharing learning objectives with students and for monitoring their progress. The information collected during the assessment can help the universities align their teaching content and methods in response to students' needs. It is acknowledged that the assessment should be an integral part of teaching, learning, feedback or feed-forward and should be embedded in curriculum practices. Most universities around the world collect a large

variety of feedback from students, including teaching, facilities, the study environment, etc. Universities undertake student surveys to learn their expectations in order to react out properly to their needs. However, this issue is not well discussed from the theoretical point of view in the literature. Here, there were a few attempts. Bernard Longden discussed the necessity to meet students' expectations as a tool in stabilising retention rates (Longden 2006). Thierry Chevaillier, in his paper presented at a conference organized by CHER, discusses new expectations coming from part-time students, working students, industry or various sectors of society (Chevaillier 2002). In his opinion, to know them, to understand their needs and motivations, to provide them with the kind of education they expect has become crucial for the survival of universities. Therefore, the universities in their questionnaires not only try to discover students' satisfaction with their study process or results, but also seek to obtain their suggestions on what improvements are necessary to achieve a higher students' satisfaction. However, most researchers agree on the benefits of student surveys, and the majority are cautious on the publicity of the feedback data (Miskinis et al., 2007).

Thus, in order to strengthen their positions in the country and abroad, Lithuanian higher education institutions must carry out researches on their influence groups' opinions. It should be noted that most of Lithuanian researchers concentrate their researches on the improvement of study quality. During these researches, usually three groups are surveyed, namely students,

¹ Data of survey of young researchers carried out by A. Mockaitis, L. Salciuviene and E. Vaiginiene in October 2005.

teachers and administration personnel, while less frequently the opinions of graduates and their employers are assessed. The study of R. Adomaitiene "A research of economist and manager preparation quality" (2002), as well as of J. Ruskus and L. Liukineviciene "Interaction between university studies and labour market: Priorities and changes (The case of Šiauliai University)" (2003) could be noted. Meanwhile, researches assessing the university image factors are rare.

Consequently, the authors of this paper set an aim to analyze the factors affecting the image of a higher education institution and to find a correlation between university image and the quality of studies. Vilnius University, one of the oldest and most famous Eastern European higher education institutions, was chosen as a research object. For a long time Vilnius University had been the only higher education institution in Lithuania. The university had a great influence on the cultural life not only in Lithuania, but also in neighbour countries, it raised a few generations of scientists, poets and cultural activists. Today Vilnius University has 2881 employees, 1150 professors and associate professors, and 22 865 students currently enrolled.

We performed several studies together with other researchers from Vilnius University. In the winter of 2005, a research was carried out on the second through fourth year bachelor students and on master students. The scope of the survey included students from all the faculties, institutes and Vilnius University International Business School – in total 1499 students. The questionnaire comprising 80 questions was aimed at

assessing the internal image of Vilnius University. The following objectives were determined during this research: the students' valuation of communication tools and channels; students' satisfaction with internal communication processes – communication, informativeness; how employees value the image of the organization, its establishment and recognition in society. These objectives aided in reaching the main aim of this research – to evaluate the internal image of Vilnius University.

Afterwards (spring 2005), one more survey was carried out, in which the quality of studies at Vilnius University was assessed. One thousand three hundred fifty eight students filled out the questioners composed of 117 questions. In the course of the research, these following study quality aspects were evaluated: the politics and culture of study quality at VU; administration and other factors influencing efforts and results in improving study quality in VU; lecturers' qualification and its influencing factors; the quality of the study process; students' internships and the VU technical base.

Later, a survey on the first-year students and their parents was carried out, in which 1169 students and 665 parents were involved. The aims of this survey were to determine why and how students chose to study at Vilnius University; to reveal the image of Vilnius University with respect to other Lithuanian universities; to understand the motivation behind choosing Vilnius University; to determine the informativeness level about Vilnius University of the first-year students; to reveal information sources on which students based their choice to study

at Vilnius University; to understand the expectations towards VU, and to analyze the views on the studies in foreign higher education institutions.

In the parents' survey, the authors tried to see what are the parents' expectations regarding their children's studies at Vilnius University, whether are they satisfied with the fact that their child was admitted to Vilnius University; how it was determined in the family which university to choose for the daughter's (son's) studies; did the family have enough information about Vilnius University when making the decision; which type of information they would prefer to have about Vilnius University; the respondents were asked to explain why they think their child has chosen to study at Vilnius University; the respondents were also asked to name three main sources on which they based their opinion about Vilnius University.

These four important surveys allowed us to identify four problematic zones:

- Information and communication at Vilnius University

Information reflects the internal communication quality of the organization and has influence on its internal image which determines the formation of the image of the University in society. The research showed that the introduction, information and promotion material was valued positively by only 47.5 % of respondents. The second-year students valued introduction, information and promotion material about VU negatively (over 8 % of respondents); a trend could be noticed that selectively second-year students have adverse views towards VU active communication. It is important to mention

that more than 6 % of respondents admitted having no information about this activity.

Information regarding Vilnius University activity, its changes and other relevant questions received plenty of critique as well; only 22.5 % of respondents evaluated it positively. Most dissatisfaction with available information about VU activity had the fourth-year students (only 10 % of them valued it positively). It is important to mention that almost 28 % of respondents proclaimed having no information about this activity. Only 17 % of respondents perceived the available information about future changes positively and 47 % admitted having no information about the ongoing changes at VU and its faculties.

Research also concluded a lack of common events and celebrations at Vilnius University – this was noted by a quarter of student respondents, mostly by third- and fourth-year students. Only 15 % of respondents always participate in the organized events. The responses of KHF (Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty of Humanities) students are different, students of this faculty feel somewhat isolated.

- The quality of studies at Vilnius University

Quality improvement efforts and results received an average valuation from Vilnius University students. After researching the students' judgement concerning their ability to participate in the process of improving the quality of studies, we noticed that criticism is mostly directed towards the ability of individual students to officially state their opinion regarding the quality of teaching. On the other hand, the efforts to

ensure the dialogue with students by the faculty leaders were evaluated quite positively. We could also note that before the research the presumption prevailed, that the teaching quality of older staff was higher compared to that of young lecturers; the research undoubtedly denied the presumption. The overall students' average was 2.53 points out of the 5 possible. Notably, students working in the same field as their studies (2.31 points out of 5) and the third-year bachelor students (2.35 points out of 5) negatively valued the effect of lecturer's age on teaching quality. The analysis of this factor affecting teaching quality on the faculties shows substantial signs of valuation differences. The negative valuation of lecturer's age affecting teaching quality was noted at the Faculty of Economics (2.05 points out of 5), Communication Faculty (2.14 points out of 5) and Faculty of Physics (2.23 points out of 5). To determine the reasons for such a low valuation, the lecturers' age structure and other personnel qualities of the mentioned faculties should be analyzed. Students do not give priority to older lecturers, vice versa, they prefer younger lecturers who have professional experience. Most likely this choice is determined by the need to have a modern teaching content and innovative methods, which are limited at the moment.

The research also did not confirm the presumption that the academic title (Assistant Professor, Professor) means a higher teaching quality as compared with other lecturers. The influence of the lecturers' academic title on teaching quality was most negatively evaluated (2.19 points out of 5)

by students of the Faculty of Economics, more positively than negatively (3.08 points out of 5) at the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, and positively (3.33 points out of 5) in the International Business School. Most likely their choice was based on the need for modern teaching content and innovative methods, their availability being very limited.

In general, Vilnius University lecturers are valued positively, they are perceived as good specialists in their fields. A positive valuation was given to the professional ability of Vilnius University lecturers to communicate their knowledge and experiences. A comparison of master and bachelor students showed the greatest resemblance between the first-year bachelor and second-year master students. Why? We could guess, that first-year students have no sufficient experience to compare knowledge that should be attained and knowledge that is provided, therefore they are less pretentious, whereas second-year master students are too close to graduation, hence they are not concerned with the study problems. They are writing their final thesis, and study processes do not concern them.

- A gradual (through the years of studies) decrease in satisfaction with studies

After the first semester in Vilnius University, a tendency of a slightly decreasing satisfaction becomes noticeable: the number of "very satisfied" and "satisfied" students decreased from 96.3 % to 90.3 %.

Frequently freshmen provide the following sources of dissatisfaction: organization of the teaching process (lack of books, heavy load, irregular schedules of classes); tea-

ching, communication with teachers and administration; grading (occasional bias grading); personal stresses related to assignments and exams (fear, stress before assignments and exams, lack of time, fatigue, heavy load, tension, sleepless nights, several students stated health problems due to tension). We presume that support of students and extension of their expression scope are vital in the active adaptation period. Subsequently, it is necessary to identify how students' needs change with the years of studies.

These surveys allowed identification of the main problematic areas; however, in order to determine the causes of these problems a deeper insight was crucial. Thus, we raised one more goal, namely, to elucidate the factors that affect the image of a higher education institution and to discover a correlation between university image and the quality of studies. To this end, a research at Vilnius University Faculty of Economics was performed in the spring of 2007. The aim of this research was to evaluate the image-influencing factors at the VU Branch and to find a correlation between image its and the offered quality of studies. The research 160 bachelor students (one random group) from each year of business administration and management studies (8 groups in total), 55 master students (one random group) from each year of business administration and management studies, Economics study (4 groups in total) and 29 teachers (questionnaires were distributed to all departments according to the number of teachers at the department). Two separate questionnaires were constructed, one being

intended for students and the other for teachers. The questionnaires contained four closed end questions and three open end questions. Closed end questions aided in evaluating the image of Faculty of Economics, identifying most influential factors in the image and revealing the connection between an "ideal university" and VU Faculty of Economics. Open-end questions aided in evaluating the connection between the image of Faculty of Economics and the quality of studies, as well as it encouraged the respondents to analyze what is their contribution to the improvement of these processes. Demographic-psychographic questions were not asked in the surveys of this research since the study scope itself outlined certain personal features of the respondents, such as age, education, etc.

The results showed that students and teachers were willing to express their thoughts regarding the quality of studies and the university image. Consequently, we were able to get to the depth of the issue.

In the course of the study we tried to determine the major factors that affect the image of a higher education institution. As shown by the previous researches, it is important to concentrate not only on the university, but also on the faculties; therefore, we decided to carry out the research at the Faculty of Economics which is perceived as one of the most prestigious faculties of VU and of the country. Previous researches had identified five major factors affecting the university image: information in the media, the quality of studies, the content of study programmes, personnel and students. A survey at the Faculty of Economics has

demonstrated that in the bachelor students' opinion the quality of studies has the greatest impact on the image of the university, whereas least important is the information in the media (almost one third of the respondents claimed this element to be almost unimportant). The master students of the Faculty held the same position. Concurrently, the opinion of this group (differently from bachelor students) was that the content of study programmes is quite important for the image of the faculty. The teaching staff thought otherwise, they believed the main factor of image to be the personnel. The quality of studies was ranked by teachers as being of second importance. In the opinion of all groups (students and teaching staff), the factor least important for the university image is information in the media.

Perception of the good quality of studies

We also tried to determine how members of society comprehend the term "good quality of studies". Bachelor students affiliate the good quality of studies with six factors: professional teachers (this aspect is mentioned in every second comment), teaching methods (innovativeness, fair grading system), modern infrastructure, study programmes, obtained practical skills, and good relations between the teaching personnel and the students. The same elements were present in the master students' answers, however, with specific explanations. In their opinion, professional teachers should be good not only in theory but also in practical

aspects; as for the teaching methods, more consideration should be given for practical tasks, while attendance requirements should be abolished; a modern infrastructure is associated with a good library; in study programmes, very important is their relevance; good relations between the teaching personnel and the students should be sincere and mutually useful. Teachers associate the good quality of studies with study programmes, strong theoretical foundations and a high qualification of the teaching staff.

Associations of image at HEIs

In the process of this research, we decided to evaluate the image of a faculty in terms of the content by applying the semantic differential. Usually it is composed of four factors: "cognition", "evaluation", "activeness" and "strength". "Cognition" encompasses direct associations related to the research object, "evaluation" includes "good-bad" aspects, "strength" reflects spatial characteristics, and "activeness" shows time characteristics. The following pairs of notions represent each factor: the cognition factor: reliable – unreliable, honest-dishonest, young-old, modern-traditional, private-state-owned, stable-unstable, universal-specific, large-small; the activeness factor: active-passive, fast-slow, progressive-stable, visible-invisible, advertised-not advertised; the evaluation factor: friendly-unfriendly, reputable-disreputable, attractive-unattractive, warm-cold, liberal-conservative, open-closed, simple-complex. The profile of the semantic differential is calculated using the weighted averages of

each pair and is usually presented in a diagram.

We tried to determine how would an “ideal” university look like, using the concept of association, what would the Faculty of Economics be associated with and whether there are any fundamental differences between these associations. As we can see from the results, bachelor students see the following features of an “ideal” university as essential: progressive (“moving forward”, weighted average 4.6 points), reliable (4.5 points), modern (4.5 points), reputable (4.4 points) and active (4.4 points). This group sees the Faculty of Economics as “reputable” (3.9 points), “reliable” (3.6 points) and “friendly” (3.4 points). The qualities such as modern and progressive are evaluated less positively (weighted average makes up 2.8 points). When comparing the attributes of an “ideal” university with the associations of the Faculty’s bachelor students, we can see that three characteristics “match” most, namely that the Faculty of Economics is “reputable”, “attractive” and “reliable” (see Figure 1).

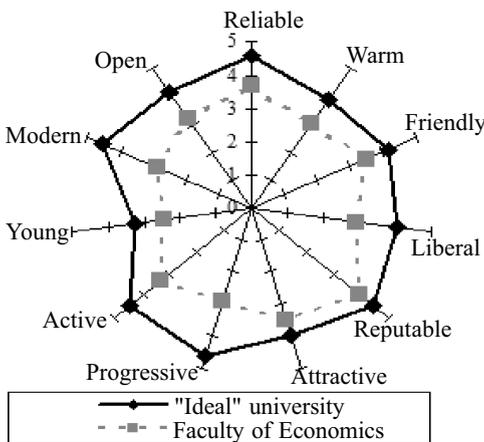


Figure 1. Comparison of “ideal” university and associations of bachelor students

Master students see an “ideal” university as modern (4.6 points), reputable (4.6 points), active (4.4 points) and open (4.4 points). From the associations the master students had towards the Faculty of Economics we can see that our organization is perceived as reputable (3.6 points), “reliable” (3.4 points) and “attractive” (3.2 points). Meanwhile, the weighted averages of the qualities such as modern, progressive and open are below three points (see Figure 2).

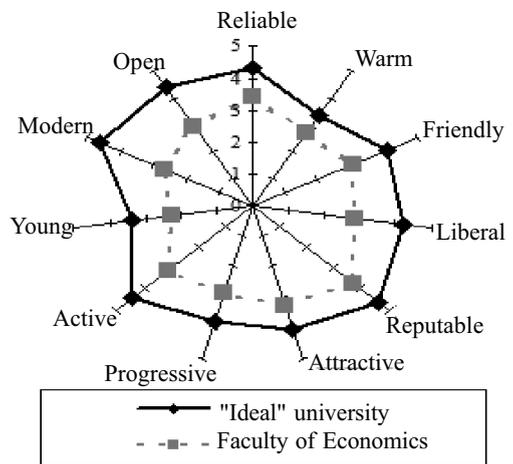


Figure 2. Comparison of “ideal” university and associations of master students

The surveyed teaching staff sees an “ideal” university as “reliable” (4.6 points), “reputable” (4.5 points), “active” (4.3 points) and “friendly” (4.3 points). In their associations, members of this group see the Faculty of Economics as “reliable” (3.8 points), “attractive” (3.8 points), “reputable” (3.7 points) and “active” (3.4 points). The valuations of the teaching staff show the gap between “ideal” university and the Faculty of Economics to be inessential – less than 1 point (Figure 3). In the answers of all groups an “ideal”

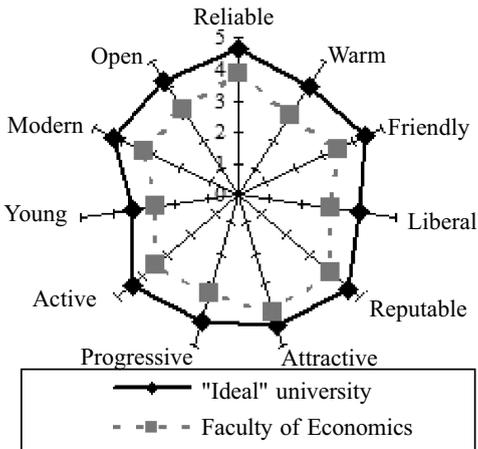


Figure 3. Comparison of "ideal" university and associations of teaching staff

university and the Faculty of Economics are associated with "old".

However, we could presume that the image of the Vilnius University, in respect of all its faculties, will probably slightly vary since the attitudes of the students from different faculties are based on different qualities of the object. Nevertheless, students from different faculties will create a general image of the entire University on the basis of their impressions and convictions. Therefore, a broader research (on the University level) should be made for verifying these presumptions.

Conclusions

- It is advisable to evaluate the dynamics of HEIs' image on the annual basis, assessing also the level of information available for society about the HEI, trends of its academic activities, research potential and outputs, and other aspects.

- Incorporating members of a HEI (teachers, students and other personnel) into its popularization process is advisable. This would facilitate creating the image of a HEI as a stable, proficient and reliable institution.
- It makes sense to increase the amount of the dispersed information concerning the professional experience of the teaching staff. One of the solutions could be making available the CVs of all teachers on a HEI's website as well as providing financial and technical support for young researchers wishing to create and maintain their own websites.
- Researches aimed at identifying a HEI identity are significant in the long run. These researches would discover the main characteristics a HEI would like to be associated with. In addition, it would become the basis for the formation of a consistent image.
- Identification and valuation of students' expectations towards the HEI and determining the tendencies of their changing needs caused by internationalization of studies and economic globalization processes is significant for improving the quality of studies. These researches should become constant as a significant means of obtaining a feedback on the quality of studies as well as in disseminating information about university programmes and research important for the improvement of a HEI's image.

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STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS ĮTAKA AUKŠTŲJŲ MOKYKLŲ ĮVAIZDŽIUI

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Santrauka

Europos aukštojo mokslo erdvės kūrimas skatina šio kontinento aukštąsias mokyklas susimąstyti apie aukštojo mokslo konkurencingumo ir jo vertės didinimą. Tai pasiekti Lietuvos aukštosios mokyklos gali tik nuolat gerindamos studijų kokybę, savo įvaizdį ir reputaciją. Šiame straipsnyje aptariamos bendrosios studijų kokybės ir įvaizdžio gerinimo aukštosiose mokyklose teorinės prielaidos, jas iliustruojant tyrimų, kurie buvo atlikti visame Vilniaus universitete ir atskirai Ekonomikos fakultete, duomenimis. Visuose Vilniaus universiteto padaliniuose 2005–2006 m. atlikome keturis didelio masto tyrimus (įvertinome vidinį

Vilniaus universiteto įvaizdį, studentų požiūrį į studijų kokybę, pradedančiųjų studijuoti Universitete ir jų tėvų lūkesčius, tų lūkesčių pokyčius po pirmojo studijų pusmečio) ir identifikavome pagrindines problemines sritis. Siekdami nustatyti šių problemų priežastis, mėginome pažvelgti dar giliau – atlikome tyrimą viename Vilniaus universiteto padalinyje (Ekonomikos fakultete), kuriuo aiškinomės, kokie veiksniai daro įtaką aukštosios mokyklos įvaizdžiui ir kaip Universiteto įvaizdis siejasi su siūlomų studijų kokybe.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: studijų kokybė, įvaizdis, aukštoji mokykla.

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