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Distant Students' Satisfaction as an Indicator of Institutional Success in Higher Education[1]

SUMMARY

In higher education in Hungary, correspondence courses play an important role alongside the state funded (full-time) courses.[2] Students enrolled in these courses usually learn while working and these studies complement or supplement the students' earlier educational path. Higher education institutions are competing for correspondence students and therefore the satisfaction of these students acquires a special significance. However, researchers have pointed out that their satisfaction depends not only on the quality of services but also on the commitment of the students.[3] Satisfaction depends on several factors (e.g. on expectations, on preliminary considerations), according to Bean and Bradley[4] this means an emotional stance in fact, which is associated with isolation and dissatisfaction in the case of fulltime students. Several international and also some Hungarian studies confirmed the connection between the dissatisfaction and non-embeddedness of students.[5] In the research project *Learning Regions in Hungary: From Theories to Realities* we questioned part-time students from three dominant higher education institutions (N = 1092). In our research we examined the following questions in the case of part-time students: what is the connection between motivation or commitment and achievement? And what

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[1] Indicators and explanations based on data from Hungarian survey.

[2] The empirical part of the study is made up of the research *Learning Regions in Hungary: From Theories to Realities (2011-2014)*, OTKA (K-101867). The research was led by Prof. Dr. Tamás Kozma.

[3] Cf. J. Rautopuro, P. Väisänen, *The Function of Goal Orientation and Commitment to Studies in Different Fields of University Education*, "The Finnish Journal of Education" 2002, Kasvatus 33, 1, pp. 6-20.

[4] Cf. J.P. Bean, R.K. Bradley, *Untangling the Satisfaction Performance Relationship for College Students*, "Journal of Higher Education" 1986, 57, 4, pp. 393-412.

[5] Cf. G. Pusztai, *A láthatatlan kéztől a baráti kezekig. Hallgatói értelmező közösségek a felsőoktatásban* [From the Invisible Hand to the Gladhand. Students' Interpretive Communities in Higher Education], Budapest 2011.

kind of demands and requests turn the correspondence students into actors of Higher Education?

→ **KEYWORDS** – ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION, DISTANT EDUCATION, HEIS

STRESZCZENIE

Satysfakcja studentów uczących się w trybie d-learningu jako wskaźnik instytucjonalnego sukcesu w szkolnictwie wyższym[6]

W systemie szkolnictwa wyższego na Węgrzech prywatne kursy korespondencyjne odgrywają równie istotną rolę jak „pełnoetatowe kursy" finansowane przez państwo. Uczestnicy kursów korespondencyjnych to najczęściej osoby pracujące, które pragną uzupełnić swoje wykształcenie. Uczelnie wyższe zabiegają o studentów kursów korespondencyjnych, stąd też satysfakcja tych studentów wymaga bliższej analizy. Badawcze zagadnienia wskazują na istotny czynnik wpływający na satysfakcję studentów kursów korespondencyjnych, jakim jest nie tylko poziom nauczania oferowany przez poszczególne uczelnie wyższe, ale również samo zaangażowanie indywidualnych studentów w naukę[7]. Satysfakcja studentów zależy od różnych czynników (m.in. od oczekiwań, wstępnych rozważań). Bean i Bradley[8] wskazują w tym przypadku na emocjonalną postawę, która wiąże się z izolacją i niezadowoleniem „studentów pełnoetatowych". Badania przeprowadzone przez kilku międzynarodowych i węgierskich naukowców potwierdziły związek zachodzący pomiędzy brakiem satysfakcji i brakiem „zakorzenienia" studentów[9]. W ramach realizacji projektu badawczego *Learning Regions in Hungary: From Theories to Realities* przeprowadziliśmy ankietę wśród studentów trzech najważniejszych uczelni wyższych studiujących w niepełnym wymiarze studiów (N = 1092). Poprosiliśmy studentów o udzielenie odpowiedzi na następujące pytania: Jaki związek zachodzi pomiędzy motywacją lub zaangażowaniem a osiągnięciami? Jakiego rodzaju wymagania i żądania przemieniają studentów studiów korespondencyjnych w studentów uczelni wyższych?

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[6] Wskaźniki i wyjaśnienia użyte w artykule oparte zostały na wynikach ankiety przeprowadzonej na Węgrzech.

[7] Cf. J. Rautopuro, P. Väisänen, *The Function of Goal Orientation and Commitment to Studies in Different Fields of University Education*, op. cit.

[8] Cf. J.P. Bean, R.K. Bradley, *Untangling the Satisfaction Performance Relationship for College Students*, op. cit.

[9] Cf. G. Pusztai, *A láthatatlan kéztől a baráti kezekig. Hallgatói értelmező közösségek a felsőoktatásban*, op. cit.

Indicators of Student Success and Satisfaction

The increased social interest in higher education and the competition for dwindling resources have focused attention on the issue of comparing institutional performance and productivity. A crucial question is the development of students during their years of study and how the institute contributes to their success. This is especially important if we take into consideration the internal diversity of the institutional system and the institutes themselves, along with the heterogenic trend of student societies. In order to get a grasp of the development, we need to identify the acceptable indicators of success.

Szczepanski formulated this in his classic high education sociology that grasping the term of 'student success' is not an easy task.[10] When examining this phenomenon, we are faced with a host of dilemmas: is a standardised measurement system viable? Do the particular institutions or individual students provide a valid definition of their own concept of success? Should we base our findings on objective data, or on the perception of success? An important question is also which segment of time is appropriate for registering success; is it the time of completing one's studies – or rather, years later? Can student achievement be grasped in a positive or negative direction? Is it considered an achievement if one simply does not drop out? Or is it only a success if a students takes and passes all of his exams? Or to stays in the same institute? Another issue often debated is whether success should be rated within the reference system of higher education, or should we consider external reference systems instead.[11]

External indicators include getting a job, job competency, possessing the work attitude sought by employers; however, education research often adopts internationally accepted indicators of

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[10] Cf. J. Szczepanski, *Higher Education in Eastern Europe*, New York 1974.

[11] Cf. G. Pusztai, *A láthatatlan kéztől a baráti kezekig. Hallgatói értelmező közösségek a felsőoktatásban,* op. cit.

success on the labour market without reflection.[12] In research, employee or professional success is generally represented by external factors such as income and employment, or whether the job matches the qualification of the person concerned; internal factors, on the other hand, are less frequently considered – such as whether the expectations of the alumni are met. Certainly, job competency is also hard to track from the employer's side. The basic principle of the human capital theory is that education and success on the labour market stand together;[13] however, the predictors referring to the job competency of future experts are still undefined. Research shows that having a degree or diploma and its rating does not by itself correlate to the individual's performance in the workplace.[14] Some economists tie the increase in productivity to possessing a degree as a document, but this explains only a part of the effect. Research aimed at measuring work efficiency determines value orientations, dispositions and attitudes as predictors of success in this field: suitability for fully-fledged role fulfilment, sense of one's profession, taking responsibility for both the closer and broader social environment, operosity, self-discipline and the capability for co-operation, planning and leadership.[15]

Other models, however, approach the issue of students' efficiency not from the aspect of job competency, but rather from either that of social cohesion or the complex term of quality of life. These consider not only economic, but also social and ethical

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[12] Cf. A.I. Kun, *Oktatási jelzés és szűrés a munkaerőpiacon – az empirikus vizsgálatok tanulságai*, "Competitio 2013, 12.1, pp. 39-60; J. Varga, *A pályakezdő diplomások munkaerő-piaci sikeressége 2011-ben,* in: *Frissdiplomások 2011,* ed. Garai Orsolya-Veroszta Zsuzsa, Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft. Felsőoktatási Osztály 143-173, 2013; G. Pusztai, *The Effects of Institutional Social Capital on Students' Success in Higher Education International*, "Journal of Educational Development" 4/ 2014 (forthcoming).

[13] Cf. T.W. Schultz, *Investment in Human Capital*, "The American Economic Review" 1961, 51. 1, pp. 1-17.

[14] Cf. A.I. Kun, *Oktatási jelzés és szűrés a munkaerőpiacon – az empirikus vizsgálatok tanulságai*, op. cit.

[15] Cf. W.E. Knox, P. Lindsay, M.N. Kolb, *Does College make a Difference? Long-term Changes in Activities and Attitudes*, Westport 1993; A. Hirschi, A. Fischer, *Work Values as a Predictors of Enterpreunerial Career Intentions: A Longitudinal Analysis of Gender Effect*, "Career Development International" 2013, 18, 3, pp. 216-231; G. Pusztai, *The Effects of Institutional Social Capital on Students' Success in Higher Education International*, op. cit.

ranges of interpretation,[16] which also allow for the deduction of the internal indicators of students' efficiency that can be interpreted within the educational system. This involves students' engagements as citizens, social responsibility and service in the community, which has a recognised position in measuring the success of higher education.[17] Research has shown that these have a positive relation with professional identity and leadership capabilities.[18]

It seems that lately, the interest of researchers has shifted more to searching for the teaching-learning oriented indicators, due to the uncertain availability, debated validity and low reliability of external indicators. However, the set of dimensions to be examined has expanded substantially; apart from the learning-teaching results, several other predictors have been found that forecast future efficiency. Of these, the following are measured: capabilities that presumably support the realisation of successful behaviour after leaving higher education (social and citizen competency); or performance, that is, cross-sectional or longitudinal (during the years spent in higher education) changes in activities that become habitual, as well as attitudes and opinions that merge into views.

For the sake of perspicuity, researchers classify indicators as affective-psychological and as affective-behavioural.[19] If they intend to research students' experiences, existing practices or related opinions in the fields of co-operation in a multi-national environment or social problem-solving, then they analyse the statistics of questionnaire data; if they compare the related internal condition systems, knowledge and capabilities of students either to one another or to pre-set criteria, then they employ psychometrical tools. In this way, they regard a certain level of, or a significant shift in, the competence measured as efficient.

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[16] Cf. *Choosing Students. Higher Education Admissions Tools for the 21st Century*, eds. W.J. Camara, E.W. Kimmel, London 2005; B.L. Heuser, *Academic Social Cohesion within Higher Education*, "Prospects" 2007, 37, 3, pp. 293-303.

[17] Cf. E.T. Pascarella, P.T. Terenzini, *How College affects Students. A Third Decade of Research*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 2005.

[18] Cf. J.C. Smart, K.A. Feldman, C.A. Ethington, *Academic Disciplines: Holland's Theory and the Study of College Students and Faculty*, Nashville 2000.

[19] Cf. A.W. Astin, *What matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 1993, E.T. Pascarella, P.T. Terenzini, *How College affects Students. A Third Decade of Research*, op. cit.

While the methods monitoring job competency are predominantly widespread in Europe, and there is no consensus as to whether learning performance can correspond to professional capacities that can be mobilised outside of laboratory conditions, the majority of highly successful students' efficiency concepts prevailing overseas are competence-based.[20] Astin's taxonomy identifies them as cognitive-psychological type indicators of efficiency. Efficiency means a relevant change in capabilities that can be measured using standardised tools.[21]

Astin's taxonomy regards the success achieved in studies – based on self-assessment – as a part of the cognitive-behavioural dimension. If advancement in learning become the centre of attention, then successful admission to the levels of higher education in accord with personal career plans, progression through the different educational levels, learning and institutional continuity, the average of grades in terms of the individual or that of aggregates, attaining a degree, commitment to studies and student work according to academic norms can all be regarded as measures of efficiency.[22]

A peculiarity of the education system is that it measures performance in points and grades. Therefore, it should be obvious to regard entry points as input data and the qualification of the degree as output data. A lot of research operates based on the qualification of the degree or on grade point average. These average grades are represented in analyses both as objective indicators and – in order to avoid the use of different assessment standards – as the grade point average compared to the rest of the students in the institution or faculty.[23] Another accepted indicator of efficiency is

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[20] Cf. S.P. Klein, G.D. Kuh, M. Chun, L.S. Hamilton, R.J. Shavelson, *An Approach to Measuring Cognitive Outcomes across Higher-education Institutions*, "Journal of Higher Education" 2005, 46. 3, pp. 251-276.

[21] Cf. ibidem.

[22] Cf. S.P. Klein, G.D. Kuh, M. Chun, L.S. Hamilton, R.J. Shavelson, *An Approach to Measuring Cognitive Outcomes across Higher-education Institutions*, op. cit.; E.T. Pascarella, P.T. Terenzini, *How College affects Students. A Third Decade of Research*, op. cit.; V. Tinto, *Research and Practice of Student Retention: What Next?*, "Journal of College Student Retention Research" 2006, Theory & Practice, 8. 1, pp. 1-19; T.W. Banta, G.R. Pike, *Revisiting the Blind Alley of Value-Added*, "Assessment Update" 2007, 19. 1, pp. 1-15.

[23] Cf. G. Pusztai, *A láthatatlan kéztől a baráti kezekig. Hallgatói értelmező közösségek a felsőoktatásban*, op. cit.; Zs. Veroszta, *A mesterképzésig juttató erők – A felsőoktatási bachelor/master átmenet szelekciós tényezőinek feltárása*,

the progress through educational levels, although this is not independent from the possibilities available in the institution or region, the field and form of the training concerned; moreover, there are differences between plans and actual progression levels.[24]

More subjective efficiency indicators include commitment to learning, which in the narrow sense refers to resolute and value-oriented participation in learning; in the broader sense, it refers to active inclusion in the learning environment. Further subjective indicators of learning efficiency include choosing studies in compliance with the person concerned, their view regarding involvement, the goal set to attain a degree and persistence within a selected institution.[25]

Surveys employing the viewpoint of organisational research establish a connection between student satisfaction and student efficiency. In the course of a student satisfaction survey, where satisfaction was regarded as an indicator of quality, it was ascertained – even though both the definition of quality and the identification of the actual consumer is questionable – that statements made by students about themselves can be viewed as valid and reliable indicators. These researchers insist that students are indeed competent when creating an image of themselves, their opinions cannot be questioned, although they cannot rank the standard of educational content.[26] Students attending the same institution perceive differently not only the subjective institutional characteristics (requirements, communication), but

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in: *Frissdiplomások 2011*, ed. G. Orsolya–Veroszta Zsuzsa, Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft. Felsőoktatási Osztály 2013, 9-37.

[24] *Employability and Mobility of Bachelor Graduates in Europe Key Results of the Bologna Process*, eds. H. Schomburg, U. Teichler, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam 2011; G. Pusztai, *A láthatatlan kéztől a baráti kezekig. Hallgatói értelmező közösségek a felsőoktatásban*, op. cit.; Zs. Veroszta, *A mesterképzésig juttató erők – A felsőoktatási bachelor/master átmenet szelekciós tényezőinek feltárása*, op. cit.

[25] Cf. J.P. Bean, R.K. Bradley, *Untangling the Satisfaction Performance Relationship for College Students*, op. cit.; V. Tinto, *Leaving College. Rethinking the Causes ad Cures of Student Attrition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago – London 1993; S.L. Thomas, *Ties that Bind: A Social Network Approach to Understanding Student Integration and Persistence*, "The Journal of Higher Education" 2000, 71. 5, pp. 591-615; J. Rautopuro, P. Väisänen, *The Function of Goal Orientation and Commitment to Studies in Different Fields of University Education*, op. cit.

[26] Cf. J. Rautopuro, P. Väisänen, *The Function of Goal Orientation and Commitment to Studies in Different Fields of University Education*, op. cit.

the objective ones as well. Therefore, the real question is why these factors have a greater impact on some students than on others. Satisfaction is a very soft term, the meaning of which is influenced by several factors: preliminary considerations, expectations, points of reference – and in fact, this refers to an emotional stance.[27] According to research, dissatisfaction often goes together with a lack of integration, isolation, and the impression of inadequate adaptation to the institution, the scarcity of friends and perceiving the amount of social support as too small.[28]

These results drew attention to the fact that higher education institutions are able to most effectively support the development and progression of students not through various structural and infrastructural factors – which have proven to be mediatory variables only –, but rather through the interactive field they project around themselves.[29] Tinto[30] regarded the integration of students into the institutional society as a very powerful predictor. In his encompassing model, he analysed the process of joining formal, learning-related and informal, social systems and asserted that integration into these systems affects performance in such a manner that consequently, students break away from the forces attracting them away from the world of higher education and through frequent interactions, they conform to the forces attracting them to higher education. As the integration of students improves, their commitment to learning goals and the institution also increases, all of which has a beneficial effect on performance. Lack of integration, on the other hand, leads to marginalisation and eventually to joining a different institute, or to complete dropout.

The Learning Regions Research

The research entitled *Learning Regions in Hungary: From Theories to Realities* examines the various forms of learning

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[27] Cf. J.P. Bean, R.K. Bradley, *Untangling the Satisfaction Performance Relationship for College Students*, op. cit.

[28] Cf. ibidem.

[29] Cf. E.T. Pascarella, P.T. Terenzini, *How College affects Students. A Third Decade of Research*, op. cit.

[30] Cf. V. Tinto, *Leaving College. Rethinking the Causes ad Cures of Student Attrition*, op. cit.

(formal, informal, personal, social learning). One of the pillars of the research is formal learning; within this category, we deal with non-traditional students taking part in higher education, in the framework of which we surveyed adult students. A qualitative and quantitative survey was carried out in three major higher educational institutions located in the Észak-Alföld region, in 2013. The questionnaire-based survey was prepared with the help of structured interviews in the three participating institutions – the University of Debrecen (UD), the College of Nyíregyháza (CNY) and the College of Szolnok. All part-time students participated in the questionnaire survey, and the number of completed forms returned was 1092.

In what follows, we examine the relation between students' satisfaction and their efficiency, trying to find an correlation between the approach to studying in higher education, the students' attitude, the learning environment and the performance of students. We also seek to answer the question of whether there is a connection between the institutional integration of part-time students and their learning efficiency.

In order to find the connections between efficiency and satisfaction, we created an efficiency indicator. On the one hand, this indicator was made up of items making objective assessment possible, such as the average of grades acquired in the last semester, foreign language skills and taking a language exam. On the other hand, it also included variables connected to the students' relation to learning and learning motivation, based on the subjective opinion of students. (For example: motivation expressed on a 100-point grade, how often they attend lectures, the rate of activity at seminars, how thoroughly they prepare for exams, etc.) Based on the established efficiency indicator based on 14 items, we placed the project participants into three groups. The group containing students with above-average motivation was named 'very successful student group.' This comprises 30% of the participants. 45% of the students belong to the 'average' category, while a quarter of all students involved made up the 'less successful' group.

The groups formed on the basis of efficiency show connections of variable strength with demographic background variables. Most of the women (79%) belong to the 'very successful' group, with only 21% of the men in this category; however, 45% of the men belong to the 'less successful' category (p=0,000).

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The educational background is not such an important determinant, although some of the more successful students graduated from secondary grammar schools and went on to higher education right after their GCSEs. Interestingly, the educational background of parents does not significantly influence the classification of students; the qualification of spouses is not a determinant, either. The usual settlement slope also fails to show up, as there are more successful students coming from small towns, than students living in big cities, for example.

Therefore, the groups do not tightly correlate with origin background variables, yet the family background is all the more significant. Half of those belonging to the 'very successful' group are married, while singles generally perform worse than those living together with a spouse. (p = 0.001) 53% of those with the best results raise a child, while 72% of less successful students are single (p = 0.000). Efficiency is positively influenced by the number of children raised; nearly half of those coming from a big family are amongst the very successful students, while more than a third of those with one or two children belong to the same category (p = 0.002).

Interrelations between the Efficiency and Satisfaction of Adult Students

Even though the factors that play a role in pursuing studies in higher education are not directly related to student satisfaction, they can nonetheless refer to the nature and extent of the learning attitude, which in turn could influence the feeling of satisfaction. Among the motives influencing the decision to pursue studies in higher education in adulthood, inner motivations play a definitive role: interest in a particular major or minor, keeping mental capacities in top form, the need to acquire further knowledge, the love of learning, enhancing and developing existing knowledge. All of these increase in direct proportion with the extent of success (p = 0.000). There is an inverse proportion in case of external motives, as students who learn in order to advance at the workplace, to get a degree or due to parental encouragement mostly belong to the 'less successful' category (p = 0.000).

The factors experienced during studies in higher education form a similar pattern (Figure 1). We asked the students to rate

to what extent certain factors encourage them in the current learning process. Comparing the averages of incentives rated on a scale of 1-4 reveals that the most successful students still display a strong set of primary motives. They value the knowledge gained as highly important from the aspects of perseverance, self-verification and usefulness. The three groups converge more closely to one another in respect of the secondary motives: workplace expectations, acquiring social status and recognition from the family.

Figure 1. Learning motives according to efficiency groups, average
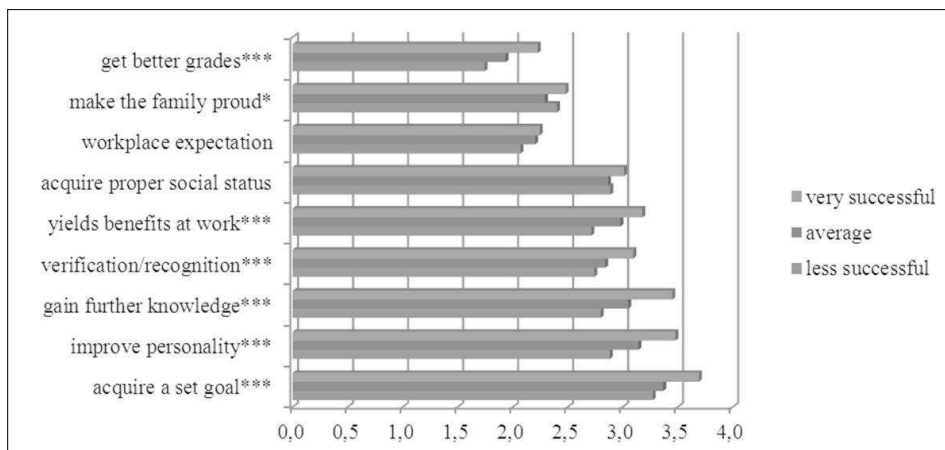
***p = 0.000 **p = 0.04
Source: own study.

It can be seen that both the road leading to studying in higher education and a favourable attitude during the studies are the characteristics of the more successful students. The same holds true for learning-related plans: the more successful the student is, the greater the willingness for permanent self-training. 35% of very successful students plan to continue their studies in higher education; the same is true for 27% of their less successful peers (p = 0.04). A similar ratio increase can be observed regarding the need for participation in educational instruction and OKJ trainings, as well as other forms of learning. Taking part in workplace trainings either before, or parallel to studying in higher education shows a similar trend: 37% of the less successful students, 42% of average students and 46% of very successful students participate in adult training activities.

Therefore, it seems that the set of motives brought along when entering higher education also has a determining role

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during one's studies, and the incentive power shown in both stages is in close interrelation with efficiency. We have managed to verify the meaning of commitment to studies: enduring diligence, the internal and external utilisation of knowledge and the determined broadening of knowledge speaks of value orientation. The question we intend to pose is whether a broader sense of commitment – that is, the active integration of students in the study environment – shows a similar connection in terms of efficiency.

Student Relations in Light of Efficiency

In the following, we selected the variables of the questionnaire that refer to the relations formed in the higher education environment (Figure 2). Less successful students believe that full time students enjoy a more favourable system of relations because they meet in their common space more often and more intensively. The other two groups share this feeling to a lesser extent only (the average mark is 2.2 on a scale of 1-4). At the same time, students belonging to the very successful and average groups sense a more effective co-operation among themselves, and not only in relation to full time students. It is true, however, that they too give a low mark (the average being 1.6-1.8), yet this is significantly higher than in the case of their less successful peers. They would be happy to change this: when examining the section of the questionnaire concerning needs, it is revealed that the need for keeping in contact with their peers is the highest in the case of the less successful students, while it is equally important for the other two groups (p = 0.000).

Regarding the connection between students and their tutors, Figure 2 draws our attention to similar results. Once again, less successful students tend to agree that there is better collaboration between full time students. However, the intention to change this does not appear here, as they have the lowest need for more frequent consultations.

Therefore, the positive relationship between efficiency and the learning environment seems to be verified. This is further augmented by the fact that the more successful students are, the more they perceive that correspondence students are more determined and purposive (p = 0.000), despite the fact that the

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requirements are the same as in full time studies (the judgement of the requirements increases with efficiency, p = 0.015).

All three groups agree to the same extent that for part time students, learning poses a bigger burden. They think to a similar extent that it is difficult to perform well in one's studies alongside work and family responsibilities. Apart from showing the connection between learning attitude and efficiency, we deem it necessary to outline the problems related to learning in order to get a more complete sense of student satisfaction.

Figure 2. Assessing the relations of students according to efficiency, average
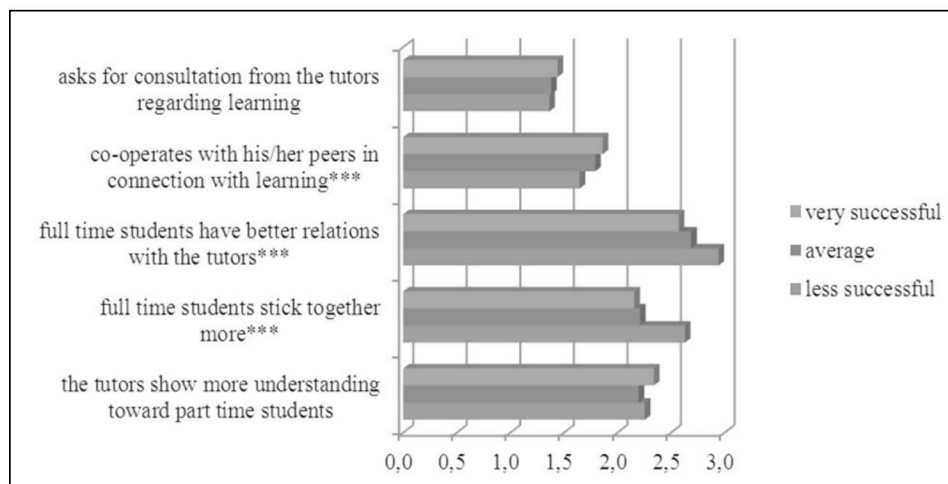
***p = 0.000
Source: own study.

Factors Having an Adverse Effect on Learning

We listed several adverse effects in the questionnaire that could influence learning performance. The problems associated with learning affect the most successful students the least, in comparison with the members of the other two groups. Less successful students generally face obstacles that match the practice of higher educational institutions: like the handling of issues related to studies or the procurement of books. However, absence from the workplace, getting study leave, participating in consultations, harmonising travelling or family life with one's studies are also frequent problems.

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Figure 3. The needs arising during studies according to efficiency, average
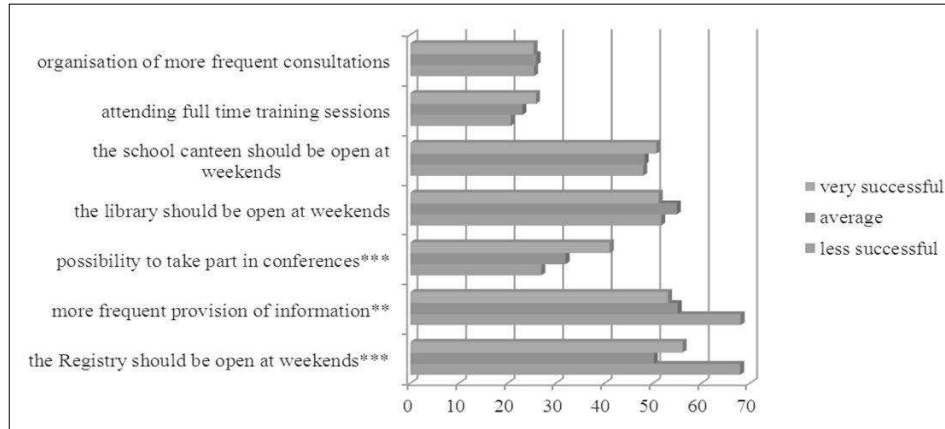
***p = 0,000
Source: own study.

We offered some possibilities to the students who filled out the questionnaire, which are supposed to help them continue their studies efficiently, as well as to assist in their integration. Figure 3 shows that less successful and average students would require a more flexible institutional practice, such as: access to the registry and the library, as well as the modernisation of information flow. Successful students are less dissatisfied with these, as they would rather have the same opportunities as full time students: the option to attend full time studies and to participate in conferences and vocational events. Put another way, the qualitative criterion regarding the contents of the training increases jointly with the increase in efficiency; while as efficiency drops, expectations concerning the environmental conditions of learning become more pronounced.

Conclusion

In the framework of our regional research, we examined the part time students of higher educational institutions, analysing the connections between success and satisfaction. When establishing the success-based groups, we saw that in case of adult students, the origin effect seems to wane, while the actual private life background increases its effect. For example, stable and lasting relationships, the existence and number of children all have a positive impact on learning efficiency. This is to say that

the narrowest personal learning environment greatly influences learning performance in adults. A similar effect can be observed with regard to the broader student environment: successful students are more effective at forming a bond with entities of the higher educational institution. Those who perform better maintain a more intense connection with their tutors and peers alike.

More favourable integration, however, also shows a strong correlation with the attitude to learning. Successful students arrive in higher education institutions with a strong motivational set and continue to be driven in the course of their studies. Their needs concerning higher education are focused on quality training and require modifying its contents. Less successful students, on the other hand, are affected by external motives, with their expectations and dissatisfaction concentrated on the structure and circumstances of training.

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