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PREFERABLE COURSE OF STUDY AND LEARNING SUPPORT BY BUSINESS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Assessment of higher education is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. Therefore this paper focuses on assessment of preferences by business university students. The aim of this paper is to identify preferable course of study and benefits of business higher education in case private business university. The paper shows how students perceive and evaluate study support by modern information and communication technologies and identifies most important areas of their preferences during studies. The results are based on a quantitative survey by questionnaire data collection from all students of surveyed Business University. Descriptive statistics, correlation analyisis, analysis of differences and factor analysis was conducted to find responses from students regarding their perception of the educational process. The analysis found groups of variables with significant appearance of students' main preferences. The results show orientation of students on benefits of university education mostly in career development ($p = 0.000$). Prefered curiculum of graduates most importantly contains independent work, significant position at job market and self management. In the area of study support students mostly prefer flexibility and availability of study texts and materials online using mobile applications (Cramer's $V = 0.314$, $p = 0.013$). Other significant group of students focus on expert teachers and knowledge and online/mobile consultaions. The results may help to set up students' support in order to address current students' needs and expectations.

Keywords: university, assessment, education, student, curriculum, study support, web, impact

INTRODUCTION

Current knowledge and information society should offer broad conditions for the need of continuous learning, independent development, creativity, innovation and critical thinking, as stated i.e. by Arsenijević and Maljković (2016). Therefore this paper address and reveals preferences of students of case private Business University in teaching-learning process, students' expectations regarding study course, support and outputs: benefits in their curricula. All students

of selected university were questioned and thus results are representative for the case university. The paper brings a view into current preferences of students and the reasons why they study and what do they expect from their studies. The paper shows the main needs and expectations of current business students.

The society today predetermines also the increasing pressure on the level of educational processes at individual colleges and universities not only in the Czech Republic. Up to now the growing willingness of people to invest in their own high-quality education in order to gain a competitive advantage in the labour market brings about also constantly increasing students' demands on the organization of teaching, on staffing, the quality of educational process and on the learning outcomes themselves. It can be summarized in conformity with Sebardeen (2013) that every college and university can achieve higher efficiency of study support by identifying of students' preferences in teaching and factors of their motivation. According to the research of Shahjahan and Morgan (2016), Joksimović *et al.* (2015) or Cheng (2013), universities (both private and public) must form not only lucrative fields of study in today's highly competitive environment and the academic sphere, but also attract new potential students to high-quality education organized through seminars and lectures in various forms of study, provided by highly-qualified experts having many years of experience in the field. The organization of teaching itself should reflect the preferences of individual students, which they have on their educational process during their studies (Thatcher *et al.*, 2016; Deveci, 2015). This process is more important nowadays desplite the view of the fact demographic curve and subsequent reduction in the number of university students and increased competitiveness on the education market (Chui *et al.*, 2016). For higher education institutions it's important according to Hilali *et al.* (2015) to be able to respond to the preferences, needs and wishes of their students, study support by modern teaching methods using modern ICT and addressing preferences of students.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to identify preferable course of study and benefits of business higher education in case private business university. The paper shows how students perceive and evaluate study support by modern information and communication technologies and identifies most important areas of their preferences during studies.

The paper contains six sections. The first one is "Introduction", the second one "Theoretical Background", followed by a presentation of the methodological approach (in chapter "Materials and Methods"). Subsequently, there is an analysis (the "Results" chapter), and a discussion section (the "Discussion" chapter) contains recommendations. Finally, authors conclude the paper and summarize the contributions and limitations of the paper (the "Conclusion" chapter) and describe limitations and future research in this area.

Theoretical Background of the Work

According to Thatcher *et al.* (2016), Deveci (2015), García-Aracil (2008) and others, students' preferences at both private and public universities should be monitored so that univerisities can keep up the pace with the competition. Students' preferences show imaginary characteristics of the educational process, which the process should have in order to keep students satisfied. These characteristics of the educational process are important to students at a certain time and place. It is necessary to realize that the students' satisfaction with the organization of teaching, staffing (Kim *et al.*, 2014; Aregbeyan, 2010) and the quality of learning outcomes, etc. affects further formation of a college or university when adapting their study programmes for potential new students.

Evaluation of a teacher or lecturer is nowadays on the rise and its importance grows. It became an important process in higher education institutions with crucial impact on further teachning, lectures, teachers' evaluation and the whole proces of teaching-leanrning. It is also used for performance measurement and implementation of constructive feedback and revise strategies in order to benefit students in their learning process (Blau, Shamir-Inbal, 2017). The opinion and feedback given by students has become one of the most important determinants of consideration when evaluating lecturers or academicians (Esparza *et al.*, 2018). Collins *et al.* (2017) in their research identified benefits of undergraduate research participation for university students. The positive outcomes of participation are a robust positive predictor of 5 factors: gains in knowledge and skills, institutional support, overall satisfaction, grade point average, and student faculty interaction.

Rata (2017) argues that the connection between the way knowledge is structured and organised for student teaching-learning process supports instructional teaching as more efficient.

The instructional learning results in the mastery of acquired knowledge when students learn at the same time theoretical knowledge and its practical impliaction. Moreover, Rata (2017) states that facilitation teaching method is found to be weak as it is primarily focus on motivation of students and fails to develop knowledge related to academic subjects. The learning outcomes than depend upon the direct teaching of abstract epistemically structured knowledge to successive generations. These collective knowledge creates the moral cohesion of democratic pluralistic environment and society. According to Staiculescu, Dobrea (2017), students significantly benefit from complex psycho-pedagogy support and counseling and internships and practice.

There are several variables of demand for higher education, which include i.e. individual, social, economic, and other factors (Duong *et al.*, 2017 and Menon *et al.*, 2017; Fürstenberg *et al.*, 2017; Agbola, Cheng, 2017). For students, economic factors are broadly discussed as they drive their future social status and position. University graduates usually expect rates of return to higher education. But there are other additional determinates influencing the final income and social status after higher education and those are ability, gender, type of secondary school, area of residence and others. According to Menon *et al.* (2017) and Guerin *et al.* (2017) there is a significant link between the perceived rates of return and the intention of a student to start and finish tertiary education.

Universities should promote students by mechanisms for development of cognitive, social and affective attributes. According to Kember *et al.* (2017), subject-independent learning activities were the most effective mechanism for students and graduates, followed by exposure to a rich campus environment. Therefore, the curriculum of graduates have to be regarded holistically, because employability of graduates is a major concern for universities, organisations and domestic policy (Staiculescu and Dobrea, 2017). Accordingly, support of education reform should ensure professionalization of graduates, development of skills and knowledges as well as soft-skills and competences with focus on enhancing students and graduates potential. In this context, universities have to supplement their students not only with educational services but with rising importance with counselling, support and orientation services that identificate and develop students potential and its management and development together with definition of educational and career path.

ICT in higher education

The development of Information Technology brings changes and new possibilities in the ways of knowledge acquisition which takes place and is accpted by students and it starts to be a new norm, whether teachers or universities like it or not (Schindler *et al.*, 2017; Wang, 2017; Blau and Shamir-Inbal, 2017). Online and hybrid learning has increased significantly (Nollenberger, 2017). IT expansion influenced all areas of teaching-learning proces and brouhgt new methods (Quan *et al.*, 2017). All tools and methods of teaching-learning were or have to be modernized as well. Students are looking for greater practical cognizance, connection with practice and experiences gained during their studies. Development of IT and ICT resultes in simple information acquisition and education must react to it (Blau and Shamir-Inbal, 2017). Methods of use of IT and network are forcing new functional relations and interactions in universities (Luo *et al.*, 2017). The most efficient is problem-centered learning which consist of activation, demonstration, application, and integration (Wang, 2017).

Student on-line learning activities are dependent on learning design, which explain up to 69 % of the variability in students' time spent on the virtual learning. Morover, computer-based assessment in higher education impact assessment of students' engagement, and pass rates (Quan *et al.*, 2017). Wang (2017) also states that attractive and progressive design of lectures containing problem-solving activities is at the core of an efficient flipped classroom. This design creates a learning culture of self-reflection, self-assessment and helps trigger active engagements in other online learning activities.

Currenty, the process of gaining knowledge and skills is shifting from classrooms to different locations such as online systems, social networks and others. Students demand access to all study materials and digital resources through mobile devices (Koole *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, learning can take place anywhere, not just at university buildings (Fross *et al.*, 2018). Behaviour engagement can be measured by learning management systems (LMS).

Bower *et al.* (2017) describes efficient principles of constrained collaborative learning in a blended reality. Authors suggest that video and sound recording of activity in the classroom to be accessible online live into the virtual world so the remote participants could see and hear their teacher, students and peers and their (inter)

actions; the online activity should also be streamed on a projector screen in class for interaction of participants in classes. This environment was evaluated by participants as supportive, efficient and collaborative.

Nollenberger (2017) found that the majority of adult learners value the flexibility of (online) learning while still desiring on-campus courses or lessons for interaction with other students and lecturers. Those interactions are evaluated by students as supportive for achievement of learning outcomes. Moreover, according to Nollenberger (2017), students precieve the combination of on-campus and online classes as highering the value of their learning experience. According to Wang (2017), flipped classroom can promote engagement and achievement if a course design attract students. In this case it affect students' behaviour, emotional and cognitive engagements and thus could promote achievement.

Although computer-based technology has infiltrated all areas of human existence, yet the understanding of its influence on higher student engagement and attention in higher education is still discussed without final judgement. Use of IT is connected with a lot of positive academic outcomes (Schindler *et al.*, 2017). Basded on review of the literature from the past 5 years related to how web-conferencing software, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, and digital games influence student engagement, it was found that there are three types of engagement (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) that impact students. The findings of Schindler *et al.* (2017) suggest that electronic-based games provide the higher influence across different types of student engagement, followed by web-conferencing and Facebook. Wikis, blogs, and Twitter are less significant and also lack of studies were published in this area. Overall, the findings shows that computer-based technologies support and upgrade teaching-learning process. In universities, it is recommended to purposefully implement ICT to achieve the greatest gains in student engagement.

On the other hand, according to Thomson (2017), results of many studies shows a negative relationship between frequent use of ICT, such as text messaging and social networks on academic performance and also learning strategies and concentration. That is usually because students are facing many interruptions whes studying with frequent online social communication. Furthermore, students' perception of relatedness is key for success in any learning environment (Butz and Stupnisky, 2017). Moreover, web-based courses usually limit relationship development, by limited interaction or lack of on-campus factions.

Research Question and Hypotheses

According to current theory regarding the studied theme, the research question was formulated as the following: What is the benefit of higher education in business and how can modern ICT support students?

Based on the research question and theoretical background, the following hypotheses were stated (hypotheses were stated as null; i.e. non-existence of relationship or difference between variables).

- H1: There is no statistically significant difference between career shift as a benefit of a business higher education (a) financial remuneration; (b) non-financial remuneration; (c) better lifestyle; (d) better job position; (e) better position in society.
- H2: There is no statistically significant difference between use of mobile devices to study and expected career shift.
- H3: There is no statistically significant difference between use of mobile application as study support and (a) expected higher rewards; (b) expected connection with practice.
- H4: Students significantly more often use e-texts using their PC and laptops rather than on mobile devices.
- H5: Students who prefer flexibility of their study statistically significantly more often use mobile apps regarding study.
- H6: Mobile apps are preferred statistically significantly more often for consultations and interaction with academics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper was prepared using the method of analysing secondary and primary resources and knowledge synthesis. As regards secondary resources, scientific monographs and articles dealing with the topic were analyzed. Additionally, materials and methodic on higher education were searched and reviewed. Websites of institutions that actively deal with the analyzed issue were also used. In order to cover all relevant studies, a variety of keywords for education, quality, learning, management, development and similar other ones were used. The research is descriptive and empirical as to its nature because the primary data were collected using the survey method through the fact finding techniques.

Data Sample

The paper analyses and evaluates the results of the primary research. The data for the evaluation were collected in a primary quantitative survey by means of the questionnaire investigation collected by web survey (CAWI method) at one private business university in Prague, Czech Republic with almost 20 years on the market. The university offers bachelor and master studies in areas of management, economics, marketing and human resources. The survey was carried out in July 2017 among students in the academic year 2016/2017. The student data comprised a total of 1,432 students. This was the total number of students currently studying at the time of the research (the survey was mandatory for all students). The evaluated areas were preferences in study organisation, benefits of study, expected curriculum and use of study materials.

The respondents were structured as follows: Students' gender: 797 (55.66 %) women, 635 (44.34 %) men; bachelor students: 1061 (74.09 %), master students: 371 (25.91 %); full time: 573 (40.01 %) and part-time students: 859 (59.99 %).

Research Design

The research was designed to map preferences of students in three addressed areas. Those were conditions during study period, benefits of study and use of ICT for study support. The questions were designed based on theories (see the theoretical background) and similar research studies. Respondents' reactions to target statements and their attitudes to the given matter were restricted by offering a set of several statements. The statements were designed based on literature search and in some cases modified according to the specifics of the university to fit the conditions. The advantage is that the results will be broadly comparable in respect the usied methodology because of the same structure of the study and other international studes (i.e. Digital Education Strategy for 2020). The disadvantage is limited expression by used statements and scales. On the other hand, students could write their comments freely and the parts which they perceived as missing or overregulated could comment afterwards. The statements were firstly designed and tested on a few testing groups to make sure all statements are understandable and measure the exact subject of matter. The testing groups were given a specific "after pre-test" questionnaire emphasizing understands ability, focus and coherence of statements in questionnaire. Partial changes and rephrasing were made after the pilot survey.

Operationalization of Variables

The paper focuses on a more in-depth discussion of the preferences in higher education nowadays. The first stage of processing the questionnaire results focused on the preparation of a data matrix. The data was described and then it was coded and sorted according to the type of variables (qualitative, quantitative). During this phase, the data was also cleaned, and its quality was checked in order to uncover any extreme (eccentric) or deviating observations which could significantly influence the results of some analyses. There were no missing values because all questions were mandatory. The last part of the data matrix involved the transformation of the variables which was necessary for several reasons. When processing a multidimensional data file, the reason for this is usually the requirement for the fulfilment of the conditions of a certain statistical method. The process of calculation and interpretation of results was used according to Hebák *et al.* (2014). The basic conditions of attributes to enter the analysis were fulfilled according to Hendl (2006).

The processing of the results was based on analysis of the data focused on investigating the important properties and the typical features of the statistical file. The statistical evaluation of the data was undertaken firstly by a one-dimensional analysis based on the frequency distribution, the calculation of point and interval estimates and the testing of hypotheses about the frequency of the categories of individual variable values. Secondly, a two-dimensional analysis was used based on an investigation into the dependence of two selected variables. The goal of the comprehensive analysis of several variables was to uncover any relations between data structures and to find an interpretation for these structures. The retrieval of the information in the data file was realized using the classic hypothesis testing. Cramer's V and Spearman's correlation was applied. If the p–value calculated by means of the test was lower than the selected level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. The Chi-square test was also employed to find differences between tested variables.

Moreover, a factor analysis was used to evaluate the results. The factor analysis was conducted to

find groups of responses of students regarding their perception. The goal was to find groups of variables with significant appearance and consistent content and at the same time to reveal main orientation of coherent groups of students. The results may help to set up a personalized study program focused on the key expectations of students and, also, at the same time to maintain actual student learning outcomes. The results of analyses and formed factors may help to reveal the current desired areas of orientation of labour market and learning abilities and preferences of students. The higher level of generalization of results by factor analysis helps to focus on the most important and highly recommended areas with filtering out inconsistencies (which may be studied separately as outstanding values which in turn, may also be inspiring for development).

The analysis is often used in social sciences (Palát, 2012). Also in the area of learning and development research the method is used quite often and favoured by researchers (Anderson, 2009). The levels of correlation coefficients were sufficient according to Anderson (2009) and Hendl (2006) to enter factor analysis. Moreover, 84 % of correlations in the correlation Tab. were statistically significant. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test) value reached over 0.8 which is considered as meritorious and thus adequate for factor analysis.

The number of monitored variables (factors) was reduced using the Varimax method. For the selection of substantial factors the Kaiser-Guttman rule was applied (i.e. substantial factors having a value within the range higher than 1) and subsequently Sutin test was applied. The correlation coefficients are in the interval from < –1; 1 >. If the correlation coefficient is positive, it is a direct proportion (negative – indirect proportion). For the evaluation, the value of variable correlation higher than 0.3 (moderate correlation) according to Anderson (2009) was used. To evaluate the results, IBM SPSS statistics was used. All procedures were followed in accordance with the ethical standards and Czech law relating to the use of sensitive information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter presents results obtained by conducting a quantitative research for n = 1,432 current students of the selected schools. The results are used to modify services associated with the studies and in the longer term to modify the offered degree programmes and to change the profile of their graduates.

In the survey, the respondents were asked what benefits they expect from their studies. Most respondents emphasize the possibility of a move up on their career ladder thanks to their education (24 %), the possibility of a better position in the labour market (social status – 17 %) or better remuneration (16 %). More detailed results are summarized in Tab. I.

For most respondents, the benefits arising from the successful completion of their studies are related to improving their position, whether professional, personal or social.

Moreover, hypotheses were tested regarding perceived benefits of business university education. The results have shown statistically significant correlations between the career shift and better financial remuneration (Cramer's V and Spearman's correlation = 0.313; p = 0.000), better non-financial remuneration (Cramer's V and Spearman's correlation = 0.305; p = 0.000), between the career shift and better lifestyle (Cramer's V and Spearman's correlation = 0.283; p = 0.000) and career shift and better job position (Cramer's V and Spearman's correlation = 0.299; p = 0.000).

I: *Benefits of university education*

Statement	Ferequencies	Per cent
A career shift	344	24
A better job position with the degree obtained	243	17
Better financial remuneration	229	16
Better position in society	215	15
Better lifestyle	115	8
Better non-financial rewards	57	4
All of the above	158	11
None of the above	43	3
More knowledge in the field	29	2

Source: own survey

The results were confirmed by Chi-square test which indicated statistically significant differences between career shift and both better financial and non-financial remuneration (p = 0.000), career shift and better job position (p = 0.000) and both better position in society and better lifestyle (p = 0.000). According to students, career shift or better position is associated also with salary rise. Career shift and better job position in connection with financial and non-financial rewards are the main benefits of business higher education according to respondents.

On the other hand, students, who did not expected career shift also did not expected any other benefits of business higher education (Cramer's V and Spearman's correlation = 0.379; p = 0.000; Chi-square p = 0.000).

Concerning the question of what learning outcomes are important for them, the responses were more differentiated. Most respondents have stated that they expect their graduation to be related to deepening their knowledge in the studied field (26 %), broadening the general knowledge (21 %) and, last but not least, improving their ability to work with information (13 %). Only 2 % of respondents study only to obtain the university degree.

The competencies that graduates of a given study programme gain and competencies with which they enter the labour market or compete with the others in the labour market were further evaluated. The most important competencies for students are independence at work (13 %), winning recognition in the labour market or in current job (10 %), and time management that is associated with stress management (10 %). In teaching, students point out that to learn how to manage a team of people, for example, is difficult to achieve (only 2 % of students see their competencies as strong in this point). This is associated with the given teaching method (off-the-job methods), which can be eliminated only partially by including case studies and simulations, unfortunately without putting it into practice.

The respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with the educational process and setting their preferences in this process. The obtained data were tested by multidimensional statistics (the factor analysis by Materials and Methods). The results have identified 2 significant factors meeting the criteria laid down in the methodology.

The Factor 1 variance can be considered to be the most significant (41.522). In total, the two identified variables explain 55.085 % of the sample behaviour or of the possible resultant characteristics, with the specific values of factor analysis shown in Tab. II.

The first factor focuses on students' preferences concerning flexibility of exams (0.793), voluntary attendance at lectures and seminars or tutorials (0.761), having a free hand in compiling a study plan (0.548) and, last but not least, the availability of study materials (0.505). This group of respondents emphasizes the factor of independent decision-making when forming the educational process. They prefer to choose whether to attend lectures or exercises, with taking into account their workload (both students of combined study and full-time students who often work too, although they have part-time jobs). Students want to determine themselves their study plan by selecting courses and their follow-up courses, setting test dates, and in case of their preference for studying from home, the possibility to use quality study materials and have online or personal consultations. Therefore, the first factor can be called "Flexibility". Coefficients of the identified factors range from 0.505 to 0.793, which is a relatively high quality of the coefficients.

II: *Resultant factors by the Varimax method*

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2
Flexibility of exams	**0.793**	0.198
Flexibility of materials	**0.505**	0.440
Overlap with practice	0.118	**0.789**
Voluntary attendance	**0.761**	–0.037
Expert knowledge and skills of teachers	0.113	**0.810**
Possibilities of individual consultation	0.330	**0.595**
Freedom to compile a study plan	**0.548**	0.261
Total % of Variance	**41.522**	**13.563**
Name of factor	**Flexibility**	**Expert knowledge**

Source: own survey

The second factor includes 3 variables related to students' preferences for overlapping of teaching content with practice (0.789), for emphasising expert knowledge and teachers' skills (0.810) and possibilities of individual consultations with teachers (0.595). The second factor can be called "Expert knowledge". The coefficients range from 0.595 to 0.810, which also represents a relatively high quality of the coefficients. This group of respondents emphasizes the high quality of the educational process given by the quality staffing, i.e. ensuring the experts from practice and in case they need consultations also the possibility to consult individually.

The role of ICT in Business Education

With regard to the continuous improvement of the educational process and the development and use of ICT, one can summarize that the respondents most prefer the multiple choice of exam questions (77.6 %), the method of open questions (7.9 %), the presentation of individual seminar papers, team workshops or their combinations. Students also use ICT technologies interactively in classes. The statistical tests (Chi-square test) indicated statistically significant differences between use of ICT devices for study ($p = 0.002$). In most cases it is a laptop (70.8 %), a desktop computer (15.7 %), a mobile phone (8.7 %) and a tablet (4.8 %). However, there is a potential for improvement as the respondents, almost 79 % of them, preferred visiting the school's website and interactive study applications directly from their mobile devices ($p = 0.027$, Cramer's $V = 0.080$).

As mentioned above, the addressed group of respondents that in terms of responses can be grouped in the "Flexibility" factor prefer quality study materials. Teaching texts (39.1 %) and electronic study materials in the form of teachers' presentations and other study texts (20.1 %) are most preferred. More detailed preferences in the study materials are summarized in Tab. III.

Moreover, students who expect career shift as a benefit of business university education use statistically significantly more often computers and laptops for studying than mobile devices (tablet or smartphone) ($p = 0.046$). The same result was found between use of computers and laptops rather than mobile devices and connection with practice ($p = 0.019$), better financial rewards ($p = 0.008$), and better job position ($p = 0.001$). On the other hand, students prefer mobile application regarding information related to study (Cramer's $V = 0.314$, $p = 0.013$). Students also significantly more often use e-texts using their PC and laptops rather than mobile devices ($p = 0.014$).

Students who prefer flexibility of their study and on-line access to study materials also statistically significantly more often use mobile apps regarding study ($p = 0.011$). Mobile app is also preferred for consultations and interaction with academics ($p = 0.006$) and for individual study plan ($p = 0.002$).

The research results have shown that most of the students are satisfied with their choice of study field and organization of the educational process. These results correspond to the findings of Arsenijević and Maljković (2016), Sebardeen (2013) and Hilali *et al.*, (2015). Nevertheless, there are many ways to improve the educational process and to better fulfill students' preferences to address the needs of increasingly competitive education market, as stated by Chui, Ahmad, Bassim and Zaimi (2016).

To evaluate the stated hypotheses, the results of this paper shows, students prefer mobile apps to simplify communication and administration of studies (based on results of H5 and H6). Mobile applications make the communication faster and more efficient. All students currently expects online and personalised replies to their needs and questions and thus mobile apps are the most

III: *Study matherials*

Statements	Ferequencies	Per cent
Teaching texts	561	39.1
Electronic study materials (study texts, presentations)	290	20.1
VideoLearning, e-learning	140	9.8
E-books	136	9.5
Materials from the other students	129	9.0
Internet materials	115	8.0
AudioLearning	35	2.4

preferred way how to communicate. On the other hand, regarding learning students statistically significantly more often use PC and laptop in order to study and prepare themselves for education (stated by results of H4). The mobile devices are not suitable for learning activities. Students have to focus more in this process and PC or laptop give them the preferable conditions.

Education is considered to be a lifelong process in today's competitive environment, in which educational activities and their quality, or student satisfaction, play a very important role, as confirmed by Schindler *et al.* (2017); Wang (2017); Blau and Shamir-Inbal (2017). Given the fact that students themselves invest in their education, they require their investment return in the form of career advancement, better position in the labour market, etc., which is consistently confirmed by the research of Kontoghiorghes *et al.* (2005) or Johannessen and Olsen (2003). The same resuts were confirmed by this study (based on results of H1a to H1e). However, if students are to be satisfied with the educational activities and willing to invest in their education, it is necessary to set the conditions correctly, including the choice of suitable educational methods, which is confirmed by the research of Chatti *et al.* (2010); Gravill and Compeau (2008). Results of this paper show the main directions how to set such conditions (prefered bbenefits found by H1 and support by H4, H5 and H6). According to this study, students prefere simplicity such as mobile apps which helps them with studies, access to materials and to teachers and consultants (confirmed by H2 and H3).

To support the identified students 'needs, flipped classroom has to becom traditional teaching-learning method. Learning is based on watching videos and using information and improving skills presented by instructor to students using technological tools. Flipped classroom use the value of technology and digital tools and methods to support and activate individual and collective learning. Flipped learning also improves development of individual strategies in in-class and out-of-class (Blau and Shamir-Inbal, 2017). It is necessary to pay attention to independent learning, continuous dialogue and collective interactions among students and teacher. Also those results were confirmed by this paper. Morover, online engagement affects student learning outcomes in flipped classroom (Wang, 2017).

Nollenberger (2017) also, as the study presented in this paper by factor analysis, found that the majority of adult learners value the flexibility of courses with combination of presence learning and online courses and self-study. The interaction with colleagues and professors is valued by students in order to achieve learning outcomes.

In view of the continuous development of ICT, the development of knowledge economy, which is also supported in the framework of e.g. the international studies and reports "Digital Education Strategy for 2020" and the "Digital Literacy Strategy", today's university students are looking for online support, flexibility and use of technologies to support their course of study.

Students also have the opportunity to use or create online learning materials. These includes also, for example, materials from students that are stored and shared on the websites (Wikisofia, Wikiscripts) and allow students to combine study texts with other materials, complete them or use them commercially. However, it is important to realize that the information published in them may not always be relevant due to the additions of texts by any user.

It can be summarized that the in today's highly competitive environment it is very important to repeatedly build the reputation of an educational institution. It is crucial for its ability to attract future and retain current students. As found in this study and in line with the discussed papers i tis possible to suggest that use of technologies as study support leads to congruence with students' expectations and support benefits of study.

CONCLUSION

This paper focused on benefits of higher education in business and what are the preferred technologies to support students. The preferable course of study and benefits of business higher education in case of studied private business university are career shift and better financial and non-financial remuneration and better lifestyle. The paper shows how students perceive and evaluate study support by modern information and communication technologies and identifies the most important areas of their preferences during studies. Results found that students prefere mobile apps and devices for communication and PC or laptop for learning process at studied higher education institution ($p = 0.002$). This study support the statement that students who expects career shift or higher financial rewards as a benefit of business university education use statistically significantly

more often computers and laptops for studying than mobile devices (tablet or smartphone) ($p < 0.05$). Students prefer mobile application regarding information related to study (Cramer's $V = 0.314$, $p = 0.013$), for consultations and interaction with academics ($p = 0.006$) and for individual study plan ($p = 0.002$).

The research identified two factors thata matters to students regarding course of their study. Those are (1) flexibility in study design and (2) expert knowledge gained by the teachning-learning process. Those areas are important for respondents when evaluating the educational process and the learning outcome itself. The first factor emphasizes the possibility to choose study materials, draw up a study plan and to participate in lessons voluntary, including test dates. The second factor emphasizes practice and expert knowledge of teachers and possibility to gain those knowledge and skills during the teaching-learning process.

The results have confirmed a growing global focus on new forms of study using new technologies and methods, together with the increasing individualisation of study, where each student requires a different approach, and it is necessary to provide students with a choice of options, which allows study flexibility and the availability of study materials and methods using information communication technologies, networks and interactivity, which was supported by evaluated hypotheses and theory presented in discussion. At the same time, the modern study system requires interconnection with the practice and the use of expert knowledge together with cooperation and development with peers.

The practical contribution of the article is the applicability of obtained feedback from students within their personal preferences influencing their choice of studies and possibility of implementing corrective measures not only by individual teachers but also by using study support materials in accordance with modern approaches and use of information and communication technologies. The limit of the article is its focus on only one selected higher institution, but, on the other hand, it is a case study that can help other universities or colleges get feedback from their students.

It would be advisable to carry out similar research also among students at different institutions to examine the differences in motivation and their preferences on study support. This research could also focus on the relationship between course evaluation, study performance and variables concerning teaching quality, teaching style and the characteristics of the teacher.

The congruence with students' expectations and preferences in the course of study and study benefits including preferences of study support is necessary to keep the level of education in line with overal development of society, market, employers' needs and economy.

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