

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON UNIVERSITY'S ATTRACTIVENESS

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Abstract

This paper aims to determine the respondents' opinion regarding the extracurricular activities within their universities and to establish the influencing factors on the university's attractiveness. This study has been elaborated based on the quantitative research, through primary research and the data is gathered through the questionnaire method. The research has been developed within the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Politehnica University Timișoara, Babeș Bolyai University Cluj, Bucharest University of Economic Studies and Politehnica University Bucharest and 728 students have been questioned in the period June - September 2014. As a result of the analysis, an influence of the extracurricular activities on the attractiveness of a university has been observed.

Key words: *extracurricular activities, university's attractiveness, influencing factors*

1. Introduction

Often, favourable living conditions, lack of tuition fee, university's facilities, university's atmosphere or university's extracurricular activities offer represent an essential role in choosing a potential study location. [1] Also the university's reputation, the wide range of courses, excellent career opportunities and high quality teaching are factors which prove to be significant in choosing a university. [2]

Taking this in consideration, the importance of studying students' opinion regarding extracurricular activities offer is highlighted. The research goal of

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this study consists in the determination of the respondents' opinion regarding the extracurricular activities offer. Also the influencing factors on the university's attractiveness are surprised.

The study is based on the quantitative research, through primary sources. The data is gathered through the questionnaire method and analysed through univariate and bivariate analysis by means on SPSS statistical package.

In this research, 728 students from five Romanian universities are questioned, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Politehnica University Timișoara, Babeș Bolyai University Cluj, Bucharest University of Economic Studies and Politehnica University Bucharest. The first part of the paper includes the research methodology and the sample description. The following part analyses the respondents' opinion regarding the extracurricular activities' offer of their university. Also the influencing factors on the university's attractiveness are determined. The last part of the study includes the conclusions, personal opinions and recommendations.

2. Sample description

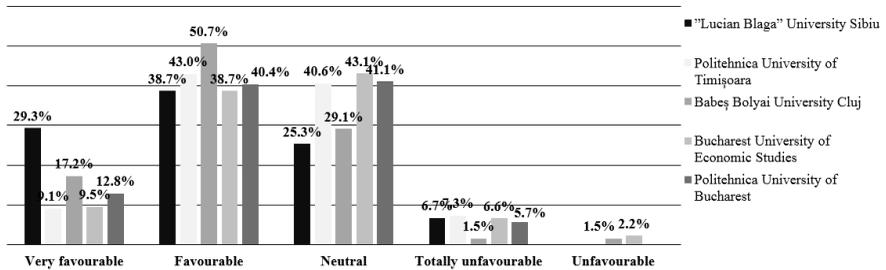
In this study, students of the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Politehnica University of Timișoara, Babeș Bolyai University Cluj, Bucharest University of Economic Studies and Politehnica University of Bucharest, are questioned. A total of 728 students were questioned, of which 151 from the University "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, 165 from the Politehnica University of Timișoara, 134 from the Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj, 137 from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies and 141 from the Politehnica University of Bucharest. 46% of the respondents are female and 54% male. The questionnaire has been developed by taking into consideration various studies in the field of marketing research. [3] [4]

3. Respondents' opinion regarding the extracurricular activities' offer of their university

Almost half of the questioned students expressed a favourable or very favourable opinion regarding the extracurricular activities' offer. More than one third of these expressed a neutral opinion. Most students who have shown a very favourable or favourable opinion are those from the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, followed by those from Babes Bolyai University Cluj, and those from the Politehnica University of Bucharest. Most respondents that

expressed a very favourable opinion regarding the extracurricular activities' offer are those from Sibiu (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Students' opinion regarding the extracurricular activities within their university



n "Lucian Blaga" University Sibiu= 151

n Politehnica University of Timișoara= 165

n Babeș Bolyai University Cluj= 134

n Bucharest University of Economic Studies = 137

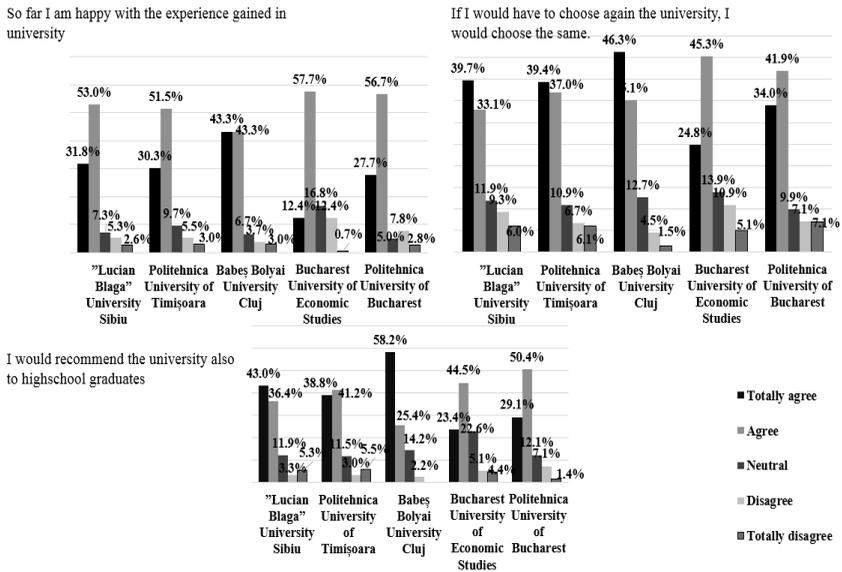
n Politehnica University of Bucharest= 141

Most of the respondents are satisfied in regards to their experiences gained at the university and would choose the same university again if they had the chance and would also recommend the university to high school graduates. Most respondents that are satisfied with the university where they study are those from Babeș Bolyai University Cluj, where more than 40% of respondents fully agreed with these statements. (See Figure 2)

Students of "Lucian Blaga" University Sibiu particularly recommend promoting extracurricular activities and extending their diversity, in order to increase students' interest for these types of activities. The ones from Timișoara consider the diversity of extracurricular activities a key factor in terms of student interest, while those from Cluj suggest among increasing the extracurricular activities' attractiveness also increasing their frequency of taking place and improving the university's facilities. The respondents of

Bucharest University of Economic Studies particularly recommend to improve the teacher-student communication, but also the teaching methods, with focus on practice. Those from the Politehnica University of Bucharest believe that promoting extracurricular activities and improving the teaching methods can increase students' interest for extracurricular activities.

Figure 2: Students' opinion regarding this affirmations



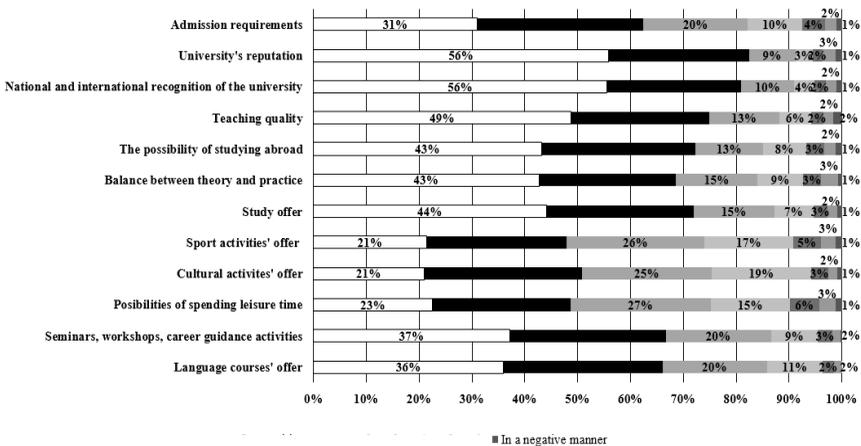
- "Lucian Blaga" University Sibiu= 151
- Politehnica University of Timișoara= 165
- Babeș Bolyai University Cluj= 134
- Bucharest University of Economic Studies = 137
- Politehnica University of Bucharest= 141

4. Influencing factors on the university's attractiveness

According to the opinion of the questioned students, the attractiveness of a university is especially influenced by the reputation of the university,

national and international recognition of the university, quality of teaching, study offer, balance between theory and practice, the possibility of exchanging experience abroad or admission requirements. The attractiveness of the university is also determined by the provision of sports and cultural leisure options. Thus, we observe that the attractiveness and importance of extracurricular activities affects the university image and attracts potential students. (See Figure 3)

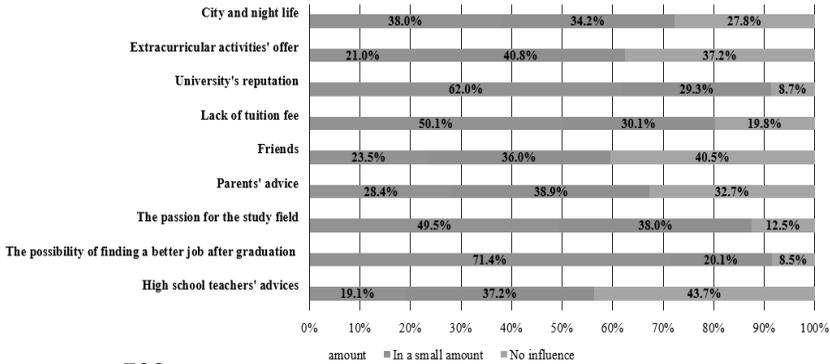
Figure 3: To what extent do you think the attractiveness of a university is influenced by the following?



Prof. Lucian Blaga University Sibiu = 728

In order to enrol at a university, students largely take into account the possibility of finding a better job after graduation, the reputation of the university / college, the possibility of studying without tuition fee and their passion for the field of study. When it comes to choosing a university issues like the city and night life, extracurricular activities' offer, friends, parents' advice or high school teachers' advice are also taken into account. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: To what extent did you consider the following issues when you decided to apply for the university where you study?



$n_{Total} = 728$

5. Conclusions

Taking students' opinion into consideration, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu is the most appreciated, followed by the one from Cluj, by Politehnica University of Bucharest, by the one from Timișoara and lastly by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies.

More than half of the respondents expressed a neutral or unfavourable opinion regarding the extracurricular activities offer, aspect that indicates the need to improve the attractiveness and diversity of the extracurricular activities offer, following a better promotion of such activities.

According to the respondents' opinion, the attractiveness of a university is especially influenced by the reputation of the university, quality of teaching, study offer, balance between theory and practice, the possibility of exchanging experience abroad, admission requirements, and lack of tuition fee but also by the extracurricular activities offered within the university.

In terms of competition between universities, universities' attractiveness proves to be a primary factor in attracting new students. In order to increase the ranking, to be able to compete with other universities, the university must increase its students' satisfaction, both on curricular and extracurricular level.

In order to increase the attractiveness of the university it is recommended to extend the diversity of extracurricular activities and to

promote these types of activities by means of flyers, internet site, panels or word of mouth.

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