

## **CONSUMERS' SATISFACTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES A PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The international evolutions show that in unavoidable manner, in any country, Romania inclusively, the overcome of rare difficulties, will necessity and will makes possible simultaneous, the enrolling of tertiary sector on a trajectory by an extensive development. No country can not allows the neglect a thus sector, with a developing role in the turning to account of human resources, materials and financials existing, in the economy modernize on the whole, in the solvable needs satisfy and in the population exigencies covering. The quickening of realize an ones extensive investments programs, the using of suitable materials and technical means, will be felt too in Romania. So as to assure the quality in education it is necessary to bring exchanges in structure, in content, in teaching-learning-valuation process etc. The education quality is affected by the specification of changes of education domain, specification given on the one side by the long history of school which generated a powerful and a bumper organizational culture, and on the other side, by the complexity schools organizations.*

**KEY WORDS:** *education; educational services; quality; satisfaction; students*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** *I21, I22, I23*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of research is to diminish the errors in decisions taking at the management level of one entity and to help with coaching and improvement those marketing decisions. The research plans are to two vast types: explorers and conclusive.(Plăiaș I coord., 2008) In this context, I resort to using one conclusive descriptive research based by the divided plans or transversal research how this is

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know in specialty literature (suppose collecting the information's by the representative pattern level, all of a sudden- Plăiaș I coord., 2008). The investigation represents the most acquaintance method of obtain primary dates necessities from the fundament of marketing decisions and not only. I resort to using a quantitative research realized in base investigation, what is a method of primaries dates collect through addressing questions included in a questioner at one representative pattern (168 students) by the mother population (students register of FSEGA-UBB, in the last year of studies, daily classes). Thus in study I use a structured investigation which supposes using one questioner with questions which was established to begin with and was arranged in a certain order which must respect. In same times the investigation was one not dissimulate, the fellow being informer about the purpose of research and he could identify him with rapidity in the base of questions of questioner. Much, I used the classic personal investigation which supposes a discussion face to face between the interview operator and fellow asked, which permit obtaining the necessities information's for research.

With the view to realize the research I extracted a pattern with 168 persons by population. Total population (investigate universe) have 1680 subjects. I used the proportionally stratification investigation in function with the students percent in mother population and in same times in rapport with repartitions of section. One advantage of stratification investigation in rapport with others probabilistic methods is the increase of precision estimations makes. Only the proportionally stratification investigation ("representative stratification") is which can be interpreted as a census (Chirouze, 1993). The interest of this investigation type is that number of persons asked having common characteristics is proportionally with layer population. The proportionally stratification investigation assures a investigation rate "n/N" in each layer equal with on the whole population "n/N".

## **2. THE THEORETICAL PROBLEMATIC OF CONSUMERS' SATISFACTION IN ECONOMIC HIGHER EDUCATION AND CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS**

A side which must had in view when the subject is educational marketing it is the satisfaction face to educational services. The subjects can be directly asked if they are or are not satisfied by the educational services offered. Theirs affirmations must report at the expectations level or theirs aspirations, but in the same time to formers experiences. If it knows what expect the public by educational process, thus can draw up marketing strategies which assure the maximum audience of educational offer.

Must make one analyze of the manner how is situated the offer in report with the public requests or with the rivals offer. The offer research bases by hers dimensions, by hers parts elements, the territorial distribution, the quality goods and services offered, the factors which influence the offer, the changes of offer volume and structure, the report between the reel offer and the potential offer, offer strategies, the rivals effects over offer structure.

The educational marketing policy must draw up through the motivations study and symbolic representations of consumers, through the define fundamentals options of

groups and of fellows. The realization of market strategy of educational marketing policy requests a complex activities focus on fundamentals elements: the product/the service, the price, and the promotion, the distribution, known as marketing mixture. That is, the combination of elements which compose the educational marketing policy.

The first step which must have in view in the framework of marketing process is to the education institutions realize one personal analyze of fact situation: what they undertaken in past, what they make in present, and what they propose for future. With the view to undertake of this objective is necessary a mission review and a history of education institutions, of tendencies which are registered in present in the framework of demographic environment, as well as the identification of strong and weak points of programs undertaken, as well as of following domains: academic, social, spiritual and vocational. Much more than must stated the fact that the actions undertaken by these institutions have repercussions over this image, over their ability to attract and to maintain the students satisfied by the services offered, over of loyalty construction, as well as over of one's own will givers attract. Taking into account institution mission, the individuals' needs of clients, as well as by the experience obtained by others education institutions the next step which must done it is as the institution to take a decision regarding the activities development, a restraint or a elimination of certain programs which represents elements sides of his educational offer. After these steps, follows one wording of action strategies.

Romania is supporter of Bologna Statement by 1999 and member of European Union beginning by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. This aspect involves, though others that the Romanian universities are in a powerful rival environment, total different by the hothouse climate offered by the governmental monopoly over the national system of education (Brătianu & Lefter, 2001). The statute by state universities will not help very much in the new market created though the realization of European Space of Higher Education. From this reason, is necessary as each university, redefine the vision, the mission and develop in future the capacity to be competitive in a powerful rival environment (Brătianu, 2005b; Brătianu, 2005c).

In the context of Bologna Treaty, referring at the harmonisation of higher education systems by European Union, the mobility and the possibility to be employed students, teachers and researchers will develop, fact for which the universities less competitive risk to lose a significant percent of students. For this reason, the study of students' satisfaction and theirs analyze in the context of higher education become fundamentals. The bigger and bigger competition by present stressed the strategic importance of satisfaction and of quality in the competition for to gain consumers and for to maintain certain substantially competitive advantages. Thus, the satisfaction is focused by consumers expectations and by theirs perception over services quality (Johnston & Lyth, 1991; Ekinci, 2004; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Christou & Sigala, 2002). Therefore, the universities must try understanding theirs target markets (students or externals partners by different types), value the needs of these markets and modify the offers for meet these needs, contributing thus to one development of consumers satisfaction through services with higher quality (Keegan & Davidson, 2004).

The students' satisfaction in generally is defined as an attitude on short term, which results by a valuation of educational experience (Athiyaman, 1997). The satisfaction appears than when the effective's realizations meet or surpass the students' expectations (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Browne, Kandelberg, Brown and Brown (1998) shown that the global satisfaction face a university is determined by a valuation of courses quality, as well as others factors associated with this university. As services purveyors, the universities must try satisfy the students' needs through the information offer, diplomas and the career orientation, all these instead of students time, of their effort, of fees and of „word-of-mouth” advertising (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

Grossman (1999) demonstrated that the satisfaction is influenced in big measure by confidence. The universities can construct this confidence through the assurance of one fair and equitable treatment for all students, through these expectations meeting or through their dissatisfactions solving. Mentioning Drucker, we learn the marketing aim is the so much profound consumer knowledge, so that the product or the service becomes him so good so that it sells by oneself.

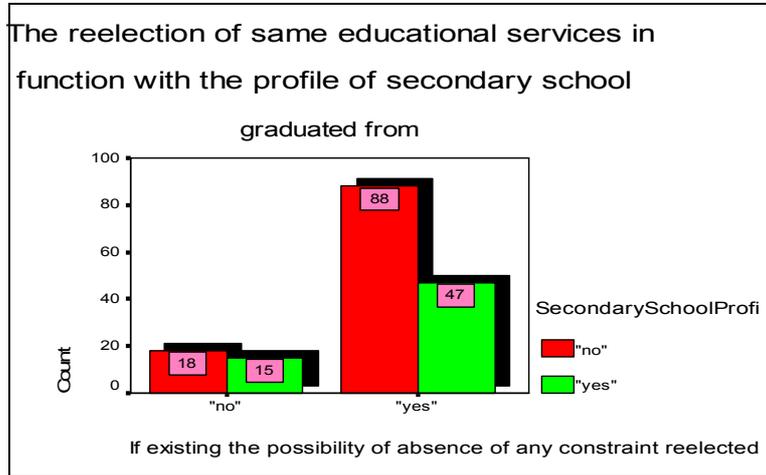
A study has been realized at Iași and it tried identifying the perceptions regarding the Romanian higher education through five public categories: the secondary school pupils, the ex-students, the academics teachers, the employers, and not in the last place the students. Corresponding of study results, the teachers have the bigger confidence in universities promises, the students manifest only a medium level of confidence, while the ex-students and the employers have a confidence level significant more reduced. The study shown in the same time that no partner's categories are not clear expectations as concern the educational system, in generally, situation recognized even teachers (which indicate an insufficient communication by universities part), and by the ex-students, who are disappointed in present by higher education followed in past. Comparing the results with the results of other similarly study realized in 2002, the researcher could observe a confidence diminution of students in Romanian higher education quality.

### **3. VALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES IN CLUJ-NAPOCA BY THE STUDENTS SATISFACTION POINT OF VIEW**

The education is a system by educational goods and as totality of institutions and activities involved in her promotion and broadcasting. The education regards values which refer to humans needs. The goods and services request by this domain depend by the motivation intensity of consumer. With others words, educational marketing involves a human activity or an activities system, orientated one towards to satisfy the requests of presents and potentials consumers. The most important reasons which stay on the base of studies continuation are the advantage obtained in the view of finding a job and knowledge's looked into, only a very small percent are not prepared to confront with the work market.

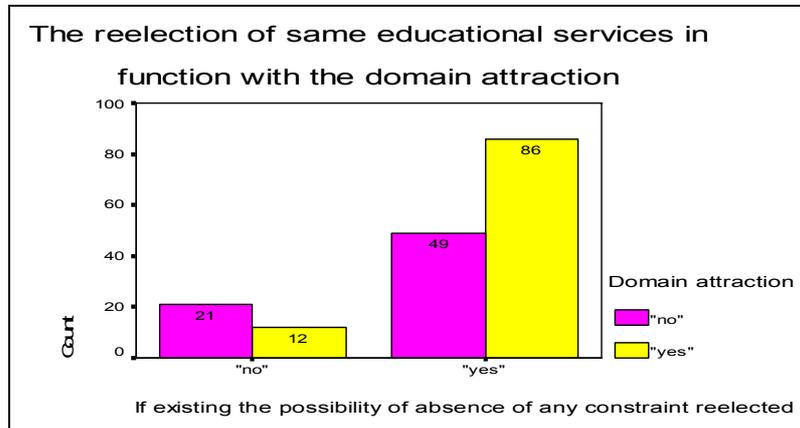
Between 62 persons graduated from of a secondary school with economic profile, 15 do not study again in FSEGA, those wishing to make other choice in a big percent than the students for which this domain do not be known in period of

secondary school (approximate 25% between the graduates of economic secondary school compare with 17% between the others).



**Figure 1. The reelection of some educational services in function with the profile of secondary school graduated from**

Between 98 students which chosen to study to FSEGA because of fact that they are been attracted by domain, 12.25% do not manifest the same prefer if they have the possibility to choose again the faculty in absence of any constraint. Between the 70 persons which chosen from other reason this faculty 21 would not repeat this fact.



**Figure 2. The reelection of some educational services in function with the domain attraction**

8.93% between the examinations opted from FSEGA with the hope that therefore when they will graduate from they will find easily a job, but if would must choose again, then they should opt for other faculty, while 10.71% between the

students which are based the choice by another reason declare that they should not make same choice. Approximate 20% by the population studied would choose other option for the faculty which they should follow if they should not be supposed of any type of constraint. Generally, the futures graduates consider that the prepare which they accumulated corresponds with the work market requests (82.74%), being reduced the percent of persons which say the contrary (5.36%) and much more these frame principally among the students with mediocre means at learning, while a quite important number (11.90%) they have the persons which believe that the prepare which they have help them more and less. Between the persons which answered and which they expect that the knowledge's posed be by the work market request the majority have means 7-8 (46 between 168 asked, that is 27.38% by the population studied) follow by the students with means 8-9 (23.81%) and by the students which obtained means 9-10 (17.26%).

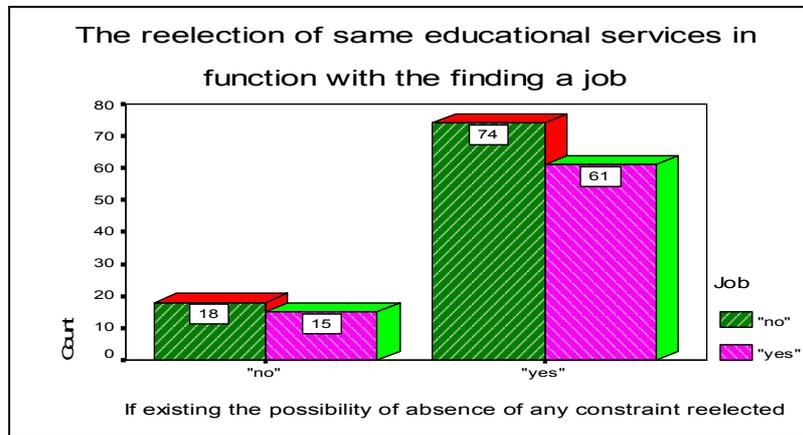


Figure 3. The reelection of same educational services in function with the finding a job

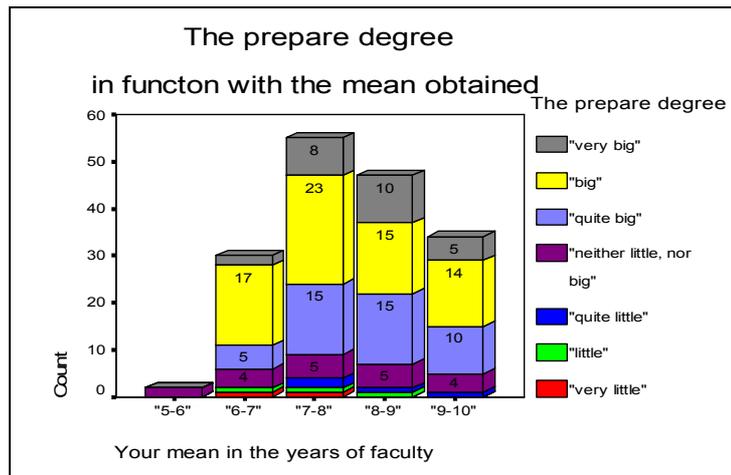


Figure 4. The degree prepare in function with the mean obtained

Half between students wish as after the faculty finish have the possibility to work, but in same time follow too the master courses, thus the percent of persons which would opt from a master touching 82.14%, between these 45.83% considering that the higher education is very important, and 26.79% say that it is important.

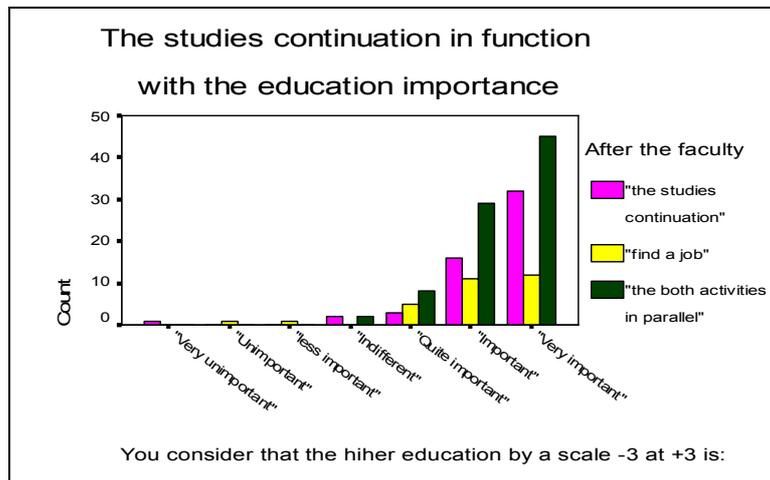


Figure 5. The studies continuation in function with the education importance

It is a direct correlation between the theoretic knowledge's which the students accumulated and the degree prepare of teachers which they guided, 102 persons between 168 considering that they obtained a big or a very big luggage by theoretic notions grace to good or very good prepare of teachers which guided they.

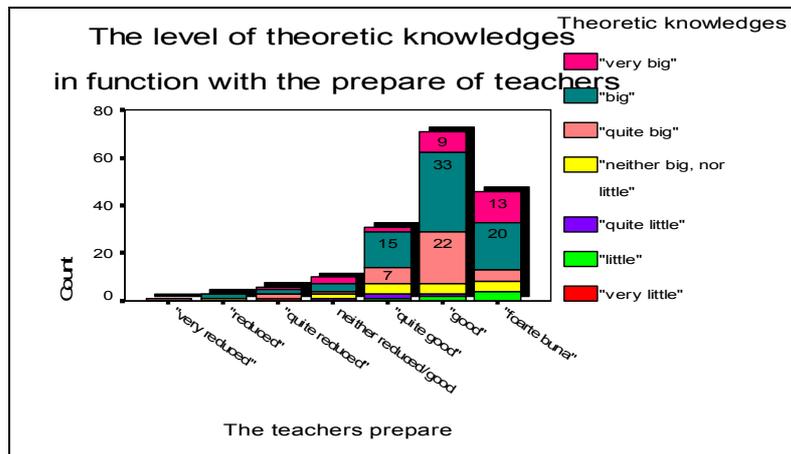


Figure 6. The level of theoretic knowledge in function with the prepare of teachers

Although a number of 117 persons between the asked say that the teachers prepare with which they entered in contact is big or very big, 44 between these are not

prepared practical point of view that is 26.19% by studied population. 70 between the persons asked say that they are satisfy so much by the their general degree of prepare, as much as by those which they educate, 14 say that they are not satisfy by theirs prepare, but they consider adequate the teachers prepare, 33 between they assert that they have a quite big degree of prepare, while theirs teachers are good or very good prepared, 15 are dissatisfied so much by theirs generals knowledge's, as much as of these which they prepare, and 36 even if they feel prepared, are not satisfied by the teachers prepare.

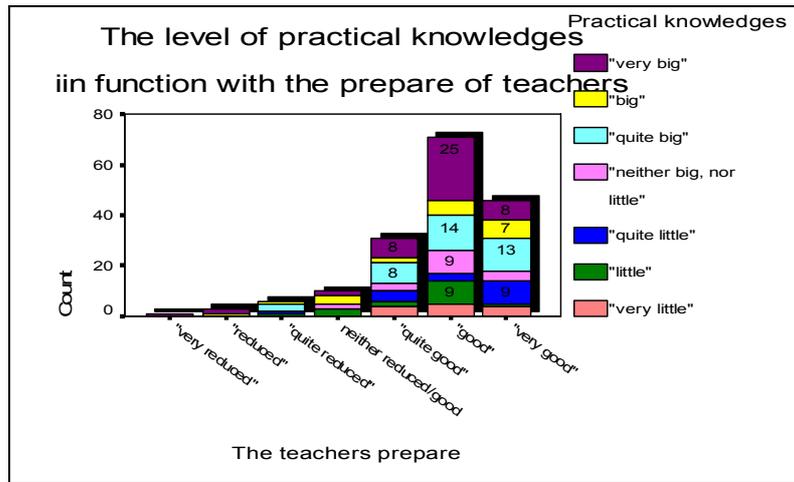


Figure 7. The level of practical knowledges in function with the prepare of teachers

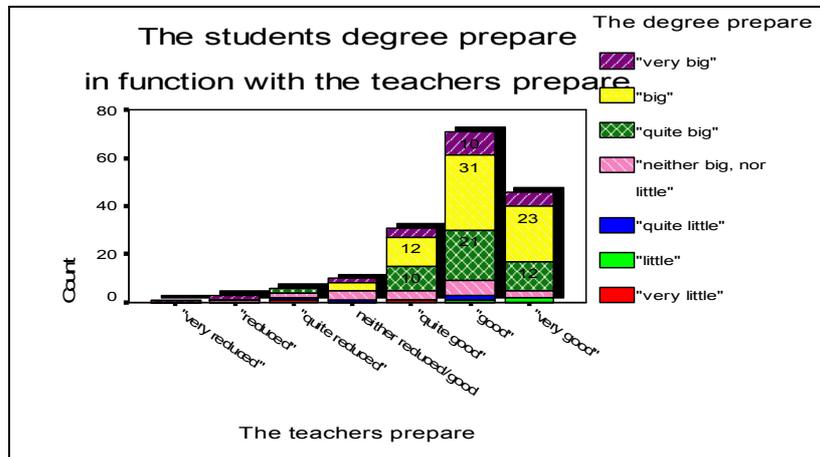


Figure 8. The students degree prepare in function with the teachers prepare

Although the number the persons which wish to follow a master is very big, only 18.51% between they which want to continue only the studies and 11.90% between the students which want simultaneous to study and to work know good or



very good the master offer proposed for them. 25.93% between the persons which wish to continue the studies are quite good acquainted with this offer, but 12.96% assert that they know not this offer neigh much, not little. The students which would opt for the realization of both activities in parallel are less informed about the master offer than the students which opt only for the studies continuation in present, 23.81% between them knowing quite well the proposals for master, and 9.52% knowing neither much, nor little. The persons who wish to find a job after the finish of higher education, contrary, they affirm that they possess quite much information's, as regard masters, and 23.33% declare tat they know not neither much, nor little things with referring at this subject. Approximate half by the number of asked declare that they know not or know in a very little measure the master offer, between these 26.74% being between the students which want the studies continuation, 53.49% between the persons which have in view the realization of both activities in parallel and 19.77% between the people which are not interested by studies after faculty.

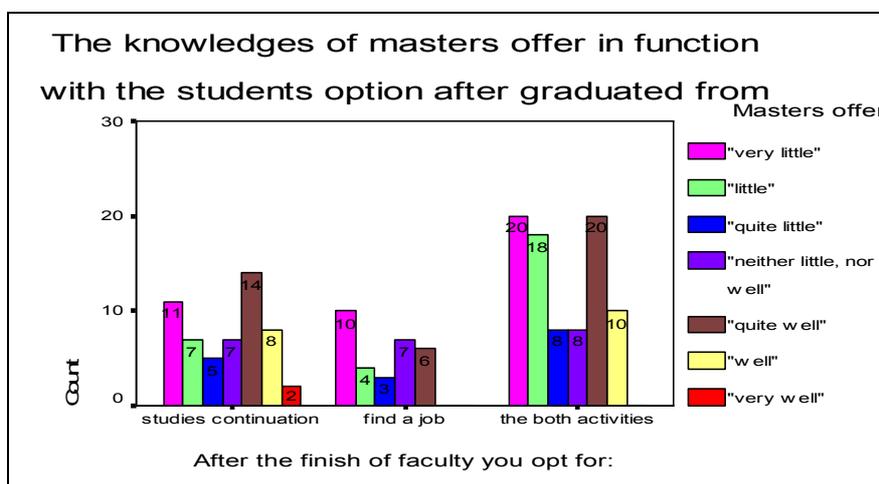


Figure 9. The knowledges of masters offer in function with the students option after graduated from

From the results interpretation regarding the relation student-teacher, correlated with specialization emerge the fact that the students of MK and FB established most good relation with teachers (65% between the MK students declare that they are satisfied or very satisfied 10% and 57.14%, respectively 7.14% between FB students are in agreement with this fact). As regards of dissatisfied persons or partial satisfied by the relation developed between students and teachers are the students of MG section, 57.14% between the students of this specialization opting for one of this variants, being followed by the ECTS students with an percent by 55.55% and REI students with 44.44%.

As concern of reasons which could determine renounce at the studies continuation among students which wish the studies continuation with masters

programs are very big fees (48.15%), wish to work (29.63%), reduced number of budget places (12.96%) and others reasons (9.26%).

The persons which opt for the finding a job have as reasons the wish to work (46.67%), the big fees (30%), others reasons (13.33%) and the small number of budget places financed by state (10%).

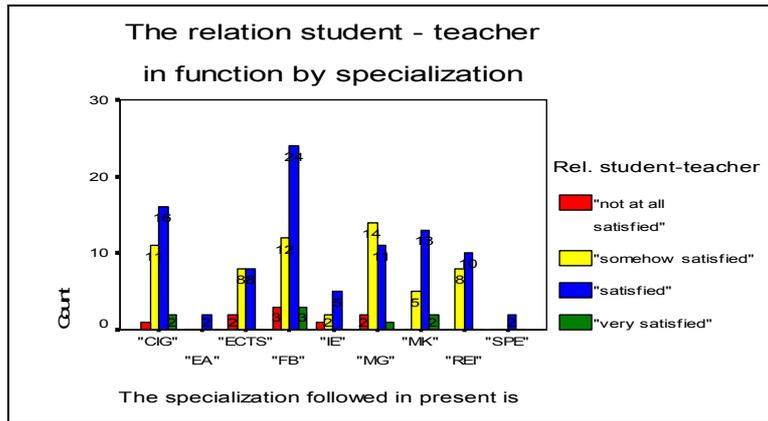


Figure 10. The relation student – teacher in function by specialization

For the students which want realization the both activities in parallel the principal obstacle is the quantum which they would to pay for school in the case when should not obtain a budget place (54.76%), followed by the wish to have a job (30.95%), for 11.90% between they representing a constraint the reduced budget places number compare with the graduates number which wish to complete the higher education and only 2.38% between they invoking others reasons.

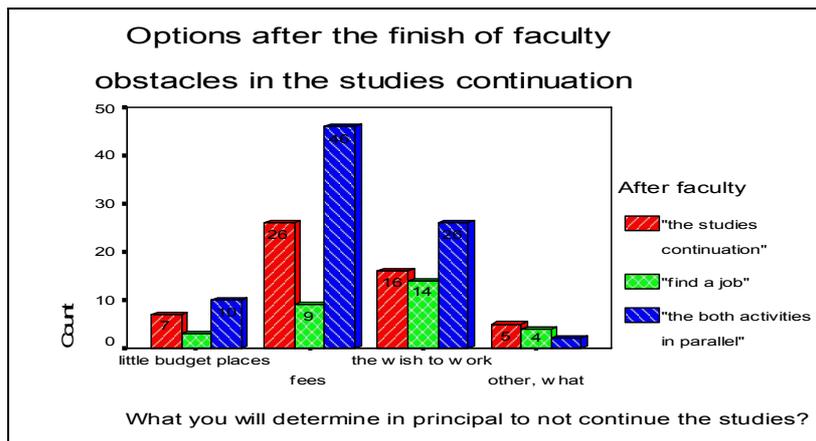


Figure 11. Options after the finish of faculty obstacles in the studies continuation

The majority which considers that the educational services followed in the framework of FSEGA are very good quality compare with others similarly institutions by our country wish to continue their professional form through the masters following in the framework of this (63.16%), while 7.89% between they want remain in same higher education centre, and 10.53% opt for other centre. The persons who affirm that the educational services offered by the faculty of which they study compare with the educational services offered by similarly faculties and they would wish to follow a master here are in percentage 69.16%, while 9.35% wish change the faculty, and 8.41% too the higher education centre. The students who consider that they have similarly conditions of educational point of view choose same principal variant to studies continuation as the persons who are very satisfied, 62.50% between they wishing can follow a master of faculty which they graduate, an more big percent opting for the change of higher education centre (18.75%).

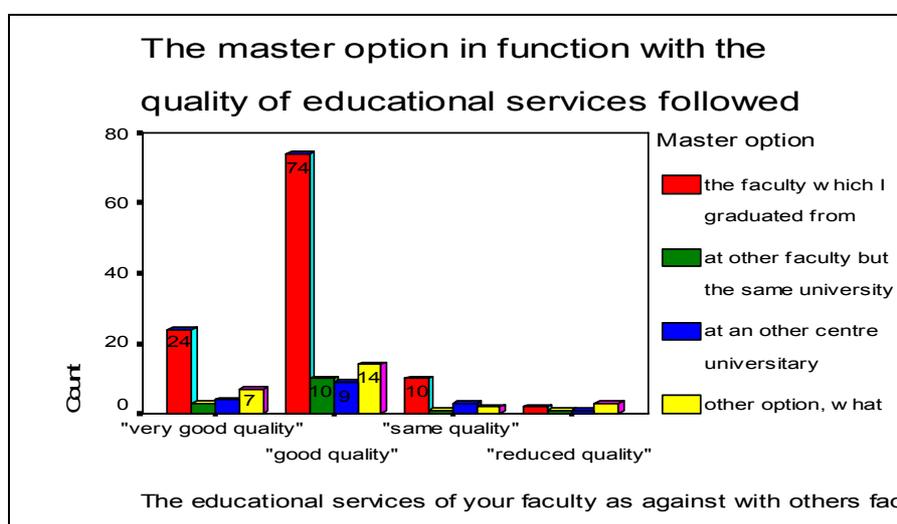


Figure 12. The master option in function with the quality of educational services followed

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In a society in change all the time what pass through a transition period makes very rapid for the modern world, educational domain must not neglect, especially thanks to the importance obvious and obvious which that has for the behaviour and the fellows personality by contemporary period.

Studying the population direct implicated in process of professionally formed within the framework of university centre of Cluj-Napoca with economic profile emerge the following conclusions:

- the education need represents one between the important aspects taken in consideration by students included in the pattern studied, thus remarking easily that the students of the framework of FSEGA (52,98 %), who consider the higher

- education very important declare that they wish in big measure continue the studies (82,14%);
- as concern the principals reasons which motivated then when they chosen the study domain, the FSEGA choice been due in big measure of economic domain attraction;
  - the knowledge's represent a factor which has a special importance in the purchase decision influence of consumers, on the base of study realized seeing that the FSEGA students know in a little measure the master offer of their university (39,88 %), but too the persons who consider that they know she they appreciate that the knowledge level is very little;
  - the attitudes represent an expression of internal feelings which reflect if a person is favourable or not favourable with a bent at certain "objects", thus the educational services of FSEGA proved to be appreciate as having one much better quality than of others faculties with the same profile by country and the prepare obtained comes near much by the consumers expectations;
  - the expectations, the perform, the comparison, the (not)confirm, the discrepancy, the prices/ the action benefits, the personals characteristics are elements which contribute to satisfy or dissatisfy attraction of client which can lead at a new purchase decision.

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