

# **THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT CONTRIBUTING TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A HIGHER SCHOOL: WHAT MATTERS TO STUDENTS?**

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There are various factors that can determine the educational environment effectiveness; among other things having their impact on the educational environment efficiency, is to what extent it motivates students for further studies. Having highly motivated students is one of the key issues for developing the educational environment contributing to language teaching and learning. Student feedback is widely used by educational organizations. By analyzing the factors, which shape student experience, education managers will be able to avoid the gap between students' expectations and the educational institution's actual offering; they will be able to outline what educational environment aspects have the biggest impact on student satisfaction and, as a result, on student motivation. The overall goal of the study carried out in Transport and Telecommunication Institute was to identify the basic determinants of student satisfaction, which are assumed to influence student motivation for further studies. In order to generate data to address the research objectives, a wide-range questionnaire was developed that included items for evaluating students' perceptions in relation to language teaching and learning in non-linguistic institute. 210 TTI students participated in the survey. Survey data were processed using SPSS 16 statistical software package.

**Keywords:** educational environment evaluation, student satisfaction, student motivation

## **1. Introduction**

This research was inspired by the necessity to create the educational environment conducive to language teaching and learning in the context of language learning and teaching intensification in the European Union countries. The language-friendly environment in European higher education institutions is vital for preparing Europeans for the challenges of increased international mobility and collaboration, for promoting mutual understanding and open-mindedness, respect for both identities and cultural diversity in the context of multilingual and multicultural Europe [1]. Linguistic diversity is said to be one of the pillars upon which the European Union has been built [2]. Language learning also contributes much to the full development of the human personality and constant self-development, lifelong learning being crucial for competitiveness, employability, economic prosperity, social inclusion, active citizenship and self-realization of people who live and work in the knowledge-based economy [3].

Among other things having their impact on the educational environment efficiency, is to what extent it motivates students for further studies. Having highly motivated students is the main prerequisite for developing the environment contributing to language teaching and learning. The efficacy of the educational environment depends on how well it is assessed by the learning process participants. Today, student feedback is broadly used by educational organizations [4]. By analyzing the factors, which shape student experience in education educators will be able to outline what educational environment aspects have the biggest impact on student satisfaction and as a result, on student motivation.

The overall goal of the study carried out in Transport and Telecommunication Institute was to identify the basic determinants of student satisfaction and student motivation in the context of language learning. In order to generate data to address the research objectives, a wide-range questionnaire was developed that included items for evaluating students' perceptions in relation to language teaching and learning in non-linguistic institute. 210 TTI students participated in the survey. Survey data were processed using SPSS 16 statistical software package. A wide range of statistical methods were used to test the mentioned above hypothesis. The results indicate that the basic aspects associated with the educational environment significantly affect student motivation for studying languages in a non-linguistic institute.

## **2. Methodology**

The educational environment complex evaluation was carried out at the end of the 2008 summer term with 210 students enrolled in the ESP course in the form of a student survey. According to Denzin [5], a student survey is a perceptive methodological technique that presupposes "the systematic collection of data from populations or samples through the use of the interview or the self-administrated questionnaire", the

major mode of data collection interviewing and/or questionnaires. We applied the qualitative research model that focuses on students’ direct experience in education, “a non-experimental design in a real life setting, involving collection of verbal reports describing respondents’ construction of the situation in question, and content based analysis of these reports” [6].

The survey was conducted as an anonymous post course evaluation of the educational environment in relation to language learning. Its key focus was to evaluate the whole complex of educational environment aspects related to particular evaluation indicators, which are supposed to have the biggest impact on supporting foreign languages acquisition in a non-linguistic institute, and motivating students for further studies.

The type of sampling was clustered according to the Faculty of Management and Economics and the Faculty of Electronics and Computer Science such that the students selected were distributed representatively from both faculties. The rationale for selecting students was to obtain a constituent and comprehensive perspective from within the Institute. The research population in the sample included 220 respondents (from 1008 Day Department students taking their ESP course). We received responses from 210 respondents. In all, from 210 students voluntary participated in the survey, 140 were students of the Faculty of Management and Economics, and 70 were students of the Faculty Electronics and Computer Science. The mean age of the students was 19 years.

The survey wide-ranging evaluation questionnaire contained four parts; each part was associated with a particular educational environment evaluation aspect, which in turn included 10 evaluation indicators:

1. Quality and availability of information
2. Quality of acquired skills and competences
3. Quality of conducted lessons
4. Laboratory equipment facilities
5. Library services
6. Study course content
7. Teaching materials quality and availability
8. Environment safety and comfort
9. Collaboration with other students (teamwork)
10. Support from managers, teachers and attending staff.

The questionnaire complex included a specific set of items (evaluation statements); the total number of evaluation statements was 73 (Table 1). Students were asked to rate the educational environment of Transport and telecommunication Institute on a five-point scale, as follows: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *partly agree or disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

**Table 1.** Evaluation Sheet Statements

***Part I Executive Environment***

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The information was presented in a logical and well-organized manner</li><li>2. The information was effective in supporting the learning process</li><li>3. I found the information interesting</li><li>4. I found the information useful in this course</li><li>5. The information was easily available</li><li>6. Using the information aroused my curiosity</li><li>7. I was satisfied with the obtained information</li><li>8. The acquired information has stimulated my motivation for further studies</li></ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>9. The ESP course met my professional needs</li><li>10. The ESP course enhanced my language skills</li><li>11. The ESP course enhanced my teamwork skills</li><li>12. The ESP course enhanced my problem-solving skills</li><li>13. The ESP course enhanced my presentation skills</li><li>14. I was able to use what I had learned in class</li><li>15. I am satisfied with the quality of acquired skills</li><li>16. The acquired skills have stimulated my motivation for further studies</li></ol>

17. The ESP lessons held my interest
18. The ESP lessons provided the appropriate level of interactivity
19. The ESP lessons were well planned and organized
20. The ESP lessons enabled free communication
21. The ESP lessons were enjoyable
22. The ESP lessons aroused my curiosity
23. I am satisfied with the quality of the ESP lessons
24. The ESP lessons have increased my motivation for continuing this course and improving my skills

#### **Part II Physical and Technological Environment**

25. The language laboratory equipment was easy to use
26. The feedback from the laboratory instructor was useful
27. The ESP linguaphone course material was useful
28. The ESP linguaphone course material was enjoyable to use
29. ***I was satisfied with the ESP linguaphone course***
30. ***Using the laboratory facilities has stimulated my motivation for developing language skills***

31. The library facilities assist the learning process
32. The feedback from the librarians was useful
33. The library resources (including electronic materials) are fully available
34. The library is equipped with the devices providing access to external information sources
35. ***I am satisfied with the library services***
36. ***Using the library services has stimulated my desire to study***

#### **Part III Instructional Environment**

37. The ESP course met my requirements and expectations
38. The ESP course held my interest
39. The ESP course was useful and helpful
40. I found this course enjoyable
41. The ESP course aroused my curiosity
42. The ESP course enhanced my language skills
43. ***I am satisfied with the ESP course***
44. ***The ESP course has increased my motivation for further studies***

45. Teaching materials met my professional needs
46. Teaching materials held my interest
47. Teaching materials were useful and helpful
48. Teaching materials (including intranet instructional resources) were easily available
49. Teaching materials were enjoyable to use
50. Teaching materials were enjoyable to use
51. ***I am satisfied with the teaching materials, which I have at my disposal***
52. ***Using the instructional materials has enhanced my motivation for further studies***

#### **Part IV Psychological Environment**

53. The environment in the institute is student-friendly
54. The environment in the institute is safe
55. The institute provides students with all necessary conveniences
56. I can always find a place for relaxation
57. The institute's environment enables free communication
58. ***I am satisfied with the institute's environment amenities***
59. ***The educational environment conditions motivate my desire to study***



Reliability is an important characteristic of the test. By the reliability of the test scientists understand two things: 1. Test-retest reliability 2. Self-consistent reliability

The first one could not be applied to this research because we need to retest students. To check self-consistent reliability two statistical methods were applied:

- Cronbach's Alpha
- Split-half reliability.

Cronbach's Alpha is 0.976; the correlation between forms is 0.867 (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Reliability of the Test

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	,953
		N of Items	37 <sup>a</sup>
	Part 2	Value	,959
		N of Items	36 <sup>b</sup>
	Total N of Items		73
Correlation Between Forms			,867
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		,929
	Unequal Length		,929
	Guttman Split-Half Coefficient		,929

  

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.976	.976	73

The statistics based on the educational environment evaluation in relation to student satisfaction and student motivation is presented in Table 4; it gives the percentage of students who agree (4) or strongly agree (5) that various aspects related to the educational environment in the Institute had a positive impact on their satisfaction and their motivation.

**Table 4.** Percentage of Students versus Ratings

Questions	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Q7 I was satisfied with the obtained information	50,0	21,4	71,4
Q8 The acquired information has stimulated my motivation for further studies	53,3	19,0	72,3
Q15 I am satisfied with the quality of acquired skills	49,0	22,4	71,4
Q16 The acquired skills have stimulated my motivation for further studies	51,0	22,4	73,4
Q23 I am satisfied with the quality of the ESP lessons	48,1	23,8	71,9
Q24 The ESP lessons have increased my motivation for continuing this course and improving my skills	55,2	17,1	72,3
Q29 I was satisfied with the ESP linguaphone course	41,4	11,4	52,8
Q30 Using the laboratory facilities has stimulated my motivation for developing language skills	40,5	10,5	51
Q35 I am satisfied with the library services	41,0	19,5	60,5

Questions	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Q36 Using the library services has stimulated my desire to study	35,7	12,4	<b>48,1</b>
Q43 I am satisfied with the ESP course	53,2	20,0	<b>73,2</b>
Q44 The ESP course has increased my motivation for further studies	49,0	20,5	<b>69,5</b>
Q51 I am satisfied with the teaching materials, which I have at my disposal	47,6	20,0	<b>67,6</b>
Q52 Using the instructional materials has enhanced my motivation for further studies	49,5	15,2	<b>64,7</b>
Q58 I am satisfied with the institute’s environment amenities	52,4	19,0	<b>71,4</b>
Q59 The educational environment conditions motivate my desire to study	44,8	22,4	<b>67,2</b>
Q65 I liked working on a certain project in a team	38,1	33,3	<b>71,4</b>
Q66 Working on a project (in a team) has increased my motivation for further studies	40,0	27,6	<b>67,6</b>
Q72 I am satisfied with the level of instructional and emotional support from the institute’s workers	49,0	16,7	<b>65,7</b>
Q73 Support from the institute’s workers has increased my motivation for further studies	48,1	18,6	<b>64,7</b>

### 3. Findings and Conclusions

The main findings of this study are as follows:

1. In general, the students assess the educational environment aspects identified in the survey as having a significant impact on learning a foreign language in a non-linguistic institute. Generally we can conclude that most students “agree”, and the results seek to answer “agree”. As you can see from the results presented in Table 4, there are no questions to which a standard answer is lower than “partly agree” or “partly disagree”.
2. The results show that student satisfaction is positively or negatively affected by several pedagogical dimensions associated with the basic educational environment aspects: the executive environment, physical and technological environment, instructional environment, psychological environment. The results applicable to this supposition are shown in Fig. 3. The results of the study clearly indicate that on the whole the four basic aspects of the educational environment and the associated indicators are positively perceived by the respondents.
3. The results indicate that there is a positive relationship between student satisfaction and student motivation; student satisfaction is the precursor of student motivation. This was true for all educational environment aspects. The statistics show that the number of students, who are satisfied with the educational environment provided in the Institute, is correlated with the number of students who have been motivated by the institutional environment for further studies.
4. Student motivation is expressed in terms of students’ aspiration for further studies and self-development. Overall, this supposition seems to be supported. The majority of students have expressed a desire to continue their studies.
5. The results also indicate that the basic determinants of student satisfaction having the biggest impact on their motivation are the following:
  - The information quality and availability (71,4% and 72,3% correspondingly)
  - The quality of acquired skills and competences (71,4% and 73,3% correspondingly)

- The quality of conducted lessons (79,4% and 72,3% correspondingly)
  - The study course content (73,2% and 69,5% correspondingly)
  - The teaching materials quality and availability (67,6% and 64,7% correspondingly)
  - The environment safety and comfort (71,4,6% and 67,2% correspondingly)
  - Possibility to work in a collaborative environment (71,4,6% and 67,6% correspondingly)
  - Support from teaching staff, attending staff, managers (65,7,6% and 64,7% correspondingly)
6. Concerning students' attitudes and perceptions of various educational environment aspects, the results basically would imply that the factors students regard as the most significant for supporting their studies in relation to language teaching and learning in a non-linguistic institute are those which they directly associate with learning a foreign language.

## References

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## Stukalina, J., Savrasovs, M. LABVĒLĪGA MĀCĪBU VIDE SVEŠVALODU APGUEVI AUGSTSKOLĀ: KĀDI FAKTORI IETEKMĒ STUDENTU MOTIVĀCIJU?

Eksistē daži faktori, kuri ietekmē mācību vides efektivitāti, ieskaitot to, kā mācību vide nodrošina studentu apmierinātību ar studiju procesu un studentu mācību motivāciju. Mācību vidi regulāri analizējot un novērtējot, dod studentiem iespēju piedalīties vides pilnveidē un lēmumu pieņemšanā, rast apmierinājumu mācību procesā, un līdz ar to pilnveidot mācību motivāciju. Mācību vides regulāra novērtēšana ir viens no svarīgākajiem mācību vides vadības pilnveides aspektiem kvalitātes vadības kontekstā. Lai noteiktu studentu apmierinātības pamatindikatorus, mēs piedāvājam studentiem novērtēt mācību vides aspektus, kurus studenti uzskata par svarīgākajiem svešvalodu mācīšanās kontekstā pamatojoties uz viņu pieredzi (svešvalodas apguves kontekstā). Aptauja tika veikta 2007.-2008. mācību gada 2. semestrī Transporta un sakaru institūtā. Aptaujas anketas tika izdalītas TSI studentiem, atpakaļ tika saņemtas 210 izpildītas anketas. Aptaujas rezultāti tika apstrādāti ar SPSS 16 programmatūras pakotni.

**Atslēgvārdi:** mācību vide, novērtēšana, studentu apmierinātība ar studiju procesu, studentu mācību motivācija

## Стукалина, Ю., Саврасов, М. ОБУЧЕНИЕ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ В ВУЗЕ: КАКИЕ ФАКТОРЫ ВЛИЯЮТ НА МОТИВАЦИЮ СТУДЕНТОВ?

Существуют различные факторы, которые воздействуют на эффективность образовательной среды, в том числе, как образовательная среда влияет на отношение студентов к учебному процессу и мотивацию студентов к учёбе. Обратная связь со студентами широко используется в различных учебных заведениях. Используя обратную связь, мы можем определить, какие аспекты образовательной среды оказывают наибольшее влияние на отношение студентов к учебному процессу и, как результат, их мотивацию к учёбе. Целью исследования, проведённого в Институте Транспорта и связи, было определить основные факторы, воздействующие на отношение студентов к учебному процессу и мотивацию студентов к учёбе (в контексте обучения иностранному языку). В анкетировании приняли участие 210 студентов ИТС. Полученные результаты были обработаны с помощью статистического пакета SPSS 16.

**Ключевые слова:** образовательная среда, отношение студентов к учебному процессу, мотивация студентов к учёбе