

Analysis of problems and further measures for improving statistical education for e-business students at the Faculty of Economics in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

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The idea of the paper is to analyse the results from the survey performed at the end of the 2009 semester on the population of 72 students on e-business department concerning their experience for different topics related to statistics module in order to improve the overall experience while teaching/learning statistics. The new department of e-business was established in 2003/2004 as an outcome of a Tempus project and the average number of enrolled students per year is around 80.

The questionnaire was simple, consisting of 27 questions, most of them in relation with attitudes towards statistics for business. Until now, we processed only the basics statistics but still some results are indicative in direction of further changes in order to improve students' perception and knowledge of statistics. In order to get the final mark, statistics students have to pass three tests and 20% of them did fail, so they were obliged to come to retake these tests. When asked, which parts seemed to be the most difficult for them, almost 50% of the students said that probability theory and random variables' distributions, together with regression analysis are the most abstract. Most of the students (78%) said that since the start they were aware of the importance to be present on the lectures so they attended more than 80% of the lectures. Even though 75% answered that they think that 6 hours per week are enough, 30% of them needed extra paid lectures.

The policy of the department is to support project oriented learning, so constant contacts with the students are encouraged. Therefore, one professor taught all lectures and exercises so that the students got more attention and opportunity to take active role in the classes. More than 80% of them responded that they needed more exercises in computer lab, a task that is a priority for the coming generation of students. Almost 70% of the students answered that they would not mind if the subject would be taught in English (16 e-business subjects have been already taught that way in the past) with the recommended text book in English and more than 80% said that they feel prepared to have all subjects in English. Further analysis of those answers showed that they think that with proper English they can easily continue their education abroad. For almost 5 years now, our department has experience in usage of the open source communication and learning platform Zephyr, developed by the University of Gent and 100% of the students said that having all available materials and information online is very useful. The students were asked to evaluate themselves, and the average mark after the self-evaluation was 8,56, which after receiving all final marks will be tested to prove whether they are aware of the level of their knowledge. In the further analysis in the paper we plan to analyze cross-tabulations and to discuss some relationships between

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attitudes and students' educational or regional background, as well as comparative analysis.

Keywords: statistics, education, e-business