

---

The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences (EPESS), 2017

Volume 7, Pages 52-62

**ICRES 2017: International Conference on Research in Education and Science**

**SHOULD THE STUDENTS BE ENGAGED IN THE HIGHER  
EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE?  
(PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE  
DEPARTMENT)**

Neli Merabishvili  
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Mzia Tsereteli  
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Eva Maria Espineira Bellon  
University of Coruna

**Abstract:** Almost all higher educational institutions create their own education quality management systems throughout the world. Higher educational institutions need to respond to the international standards and criteria of quality development. The education quality management is the internal and external assessment procedure; which implementation contribute to the quality increase of an institute. In our case, the quality assessment provides the education quality improvement at a higher educational institution. In the regulation of the European universities, the student's role is clearly defined and highlighted in the above-mentioned process. With the student's engagement, we mean the interaction of students and other resources of a university for the increase of educational result and the development of educational activities in order to improve the reputation of higher educational institution. Since the European country joins the Bologna Process, the country has obligation to share the European countries' experience and satisfy all the demands stated towards the country. Thus, it is important to study and implement the world's best practices of student's engagement in the education quality management process. During the research, we have learned the students' attitudes towards the education quality management department and its activities, how students are engaged in the quality management process, whether the mentioned department gives feedback to students, what students think about their role in the described process. The research was conducted in two Georgian and one Spanish universities. The interviews were done with students and representatives of education quality management department. The research showed that the most of respondents have the wish to increase the students' engagement level. However, there were defined the different obstructions and challenges; the students name the less feedback from university, and the representatives of the Education Quality Assurance Department highlight the problem of students' less knowledge and awareness.

**Keywords:** Education quality management, student's engagement, higher educational institution, Georgian education.

## Introduction

In the modern world, the issue of education field and educational institutions has been becoming more and more actual. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is unimaginable without education and modern educational system; the latter needs the permanent changes, reforms and quick development in the competitive market conditions. Georgia is a developing country, which follows the global achievement and tries to implement them in the Georgian practice as the reforms. The Georgian higher educational system is one of the most important and permanently developing fields for the country. In the recent years, many interesting changes and reforms have been implemented in the higher educational system. In 2004, the higher educational system and legislative regulations

---

- This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

\*Corresponding author: Neli Merabishvili- E-mail: likamerabishvili@yahoo.com

were greatly changed; and in 2005, Georgia joined the Bologna Process at the Bergen Summit, where the country took some responsibilities and duties (Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, 2005). The Bologna Process is the harmonization process of European countries' education systems that aims at working out the methods and instruments for creating the united European space of higher education. Nowadays, 49 countries and some international organizations are the members of Bologna Process. (Bologna Declaration, 1999)

In the United States of America and the leading European countries, the role of the students in the educational process and higher education quality assurance is very important. Since Georgia joined the Bologna Process, the country is responsible for considering and sharing the best practice of European countries in order to comply the Georgian education system with the standards of the European education system and to satisfy the demands stated towards the country. Thus, it is important to study and implement the successful experiences of students' engagement in the higher education quality assurance process of the world's best universities.

According to the document "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)", which is prepared in Belgium in 2015, a high educational institution is obliged to engage students in the education quality management process and consider their ideas. The mentioned is substantiated with the following quote: "Students' opinions and their ideas are often very relevant and effective". Georgian education system is also obliged to implement the document in practice in order to make the Georgian education system, and the country in general, harmonized with the European Union's standards. (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015)

The quality assurance includes the evaluation and assessment of the higher education standards and quality in compliance with the educational expectations. In the regulations of the European universities, the role of students is clearly highlighted in the above-mentioned process. The higher educational institutions are obliged to collaborate with the students in the quality assurance in order to proceed the educational process in an effective way. Besides the mentioned responsibilities of European countries towards the European Union, according to the Georgian Law "the collaboration between the quality assurance department of a Legal Person of Public Law – higher educational institution and the quality assurance of the main educational unit is regulated with the regulation of a higher educational institutions", which means that based on the Georgian Law, a Georgian educational institutions has the complete authority in own educational activities. The same legislation describes the obligation of an educational institution to contribute to the Students' Self-Government organizations to fulfil their duty and engage each student in the evaluation process of academic staff. In addition, according to the Georgian Law on Higher Education, a student has the right to participate in the educational management process, furthermore, a higher educational institution and its Students' Self-Government have the responsibility to consider all the students' opinions and engage them in the decision-making process. (Georgian Law on Higher Education, 2014)

### **What is the Students' Engagement?**

Students' engagement in the quality management process has the key role in the effective education quality assurance. The term "students' engagement" was established in the scientific educational literature in 1990s, which means the interaction of students and other departments of an educational institution to increase the academic results and to develop the educational activities, which aim at increasing the students' experience and higher educational institution's reputation (Trowler V., 2010). The engagement in the education quality management process is more than a simple participation; for the engagement, the personal motivation is very important in order to receive the targeted and analyzed participation in the processes. The engagement is the process, where an educational institution gives the possibility to the students to take participation in the educational activities. There are three types of students' engagement:

- Behavioral engagement – students, who are behaviorally engaged in the management process, mainly satisfy the institutional behavior norms related to the management, such as attendance and participation in the management process;
- Emotional engagement – students, who are emotionally engaged, have their own identity with the process, and therefore, they have the internal interest towards the work, identity and positive attitude to the activity;
- Cognitive engagement - students, who are cognitively engaged, try to acquire with more information about the process and deeply analyze it. They pay attention to the educational process, additional requirements and take any challenges with great pleasure. (Bloom, 1956)

Each type of above-mentioned engagement has the positive and negative sides. With the terms "positive" and "negative", the students' evaluation, attitude and expectation level is meant, which is expressed in their

productive performance. The engagement is the process, where an educational institution gives students the possibilities to create and participate in the educational activities.

### **Why is the Students' Engagement Important?**

Students' engagement in the process of higher education management is one of the most important parts of the Bologna Process. The main topic of the Oslo Conference 2010 was the students' participation in the higher education quality management. In addition, according to the communique of the conference in Prague, the Ministers of the participant countries affirmed that "Students should participate in and influence the organization and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions", and "Students are the full members of education system". This idea was supported by the Ministers of Education of the European countries, among them is the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, as a participant country of the Bologna Process. (Prague Communique, 2001)

The document "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)", which is prepared in Brussel, Belgium in 2015, is oriented on the education quality management that is related to the learning and teaching factors in the higher education, such as educational environment, research and innovations. One of the main demands of the mentioned document is the students' engagement in the quality management process, their active participation and consideration of students' ideas. (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015)

The document "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)" is based on the following four principles for the education quality assurance of higher educational institution:

1. Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
2. Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programs and students;
3. Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture;
4. Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society. (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015)

Students engagement in the higher education quality assurance process has many benefits; many books and articles underline its benefits. For example, the Practice Guide for Higher Education Providers and Students' Unions explain the positive impact of students' engagement: "It was clear that decisions at every level of an institution impact on the students' learning experience, be it module/unit level, program, department, faculty/school or institution wide policy and strategy. Institutions reported that involving students at all levels provided a different perspective and ensured students were engaged more closely to inform how learning experiences could be better aligned to student learning needs". (Velden G. M. 2013)

Moreover, the 'student voice' provides valuable insight to auditors and reviewers about the student experience. "Audit teams recognize the value and importance of student's involvement in the audit process". (Annual QAA Report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2006)

According to the experience and best-practice of developed countries, we can say that the students' engagement in the higher education quality assurance process is very important. For this reason, "many countries have made some progress in involving students in quality assurance. However, a small number of countries have not yet begun to involve students at any level in quality assurance". (Bologna Stocktaking Report Bologna Follow-Up Group, 2005)

### **Research Methods**

The research goal was to study the students' engagement in the education quality management and organizational development process of higher educational institutions, and the openness level towards the mentioned process from an institution.

The research objectives were the following:

- To define the students' engagement level in the higher education quality management and quality organizational development process at the state and private higher educational institutions;

- To study the students' awareness on the education quality assurance department;
- To work out the recommendations aiming at the students' engagement and active involvement in the organizational development of education quality.

The research was conducted with the qualitative method, in particular the semi-structured interview. For this reason, the special question matrix was worked out. For the research, three European universities were selected: two Georgian universities – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (state) and Tbilisi Open Teaching University (private), and one Spanish university – University of Coruna (state). The interviews were conducted with the central and faculty representatives of education quality assurance department; as well as the Bachelor's Degree students of different faculties and courses. In total, interviews were done with 7 university quality department representatives and 30 students.

Among the Georgian respondent students, there were the students' self-government representatives; but the system of students' self-government does not exist at the University of Coruna. In case of desire, the students can become a member of Erasmus Student Network (ESN) if they used as the Erasmus Exchange Program before. The Erasmus Student Network members are obliged to plan the different kinds of extracurricular and entertaining activities for students, which is not related to the education quality management at all.

## Results and Findings

### Interviews – Quality Assurance Department

It is worth to mention that almost all units of an educational institution are involved in the education quality assurance, such as deans, quality assurance and strategic development department, representative and academic senate that makes the final decisions and rector that issues a statement. All the units have own function, which are defined with the regulation. The state universities (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and University of Coruna) have the central and faculty representatives of quality assurance department; the latter is accountable to the central one. The private university (Tbilisi Open Teaching University) has one quality assurance department that fulfills own duty in collaboration with the dean.

As a result, there is found that the representatives of quality assurance department see their responsibilities broadly, simultaneously they consider that the quality assurance department should work on the development of university by strategic planning, researching, educational program creating/improving, etc.

*“Our main function is to work out the recommendations to improve the education quality. Quality is not the one that I have today and that is all. We should be oriented on the permanent development and progress”. (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

*“Our obligation is to participate in the strategic plan creation of a faculty and its monitoring, to work out the quality assurance mechanisms and researches, to plan/develop the educational program/syllabuses, to recognize credits, to study the labor market and its demands, to monitor the students' academic performance, to prepare the staff schedule, to participate in the methodology of defining the scientific and invited staff capacity”. (Faculty Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

*“We are using the evidence-based researches, data, quality measurement with the specific indicators in order to provide better service. We are doing all these by using the special guide for higher education quality assurance of our university”. (Central Quality Assurance Department, University of Coruna, State)*

The Georgian universities, as the most of European universities, have two directions, where the students' engagement is very important. They are: internal quality assurance and extracurricular activities. In the internal quality assurance process, all the students have the right to get engaged; but this engagement should be in an organized way. Moreover, the universities have the Board (in case of state universities, faculty has own Board), which makes decision aiming at the development of faculty/university. Some of the Board members are students/students' self-government members, who are involved in the different educational program planning, modifying and other education quality assurance issues. In the process of the creation of faculty, the faculty board is created that makes decision with the purpose of the faculty development.

According to the quality assurance department representatives, the students' engagement is assessed in the following way:

*“One quarter of the board members is students, who are engaged in the educational program planning and modification issues. For example, in the process of educational program creation, the working group includes the academic staff, students, graduates and employers. The program prepared with the students’ engagement passes the expertise in compliance with the legislation, then the program goes to the quality management and strategic development department, and finally, the dean presents it at the academic and representative senate, where the head of students’ self-government and graduated are involved. Then, the board makes the final decision on the program implementation”.* (Quality Assurance Department, Tbilisi Open Teaching University, State)

*“Article 6, Item 45 of the Georgian Law on Higher Education is about the students’ self-government; the members of the students’ self-government are authorized to participate in the university development process, to work out any suggestions, etc. The faculty board members include the representatives from the students’ self-government, which quantity is defined with the board regulation. However, the law indicates that their number must not be less than a quarter. But, the other students’ engagement is a little limited.”* (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)

*“The representatives of the students’ self-government, who present other students, actively participate in the meetings organized by the faculty board. For example, the representatives of faculty self-government were against to increase the number of literature in English language, and their demand was satisfied.”* (Faculty Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)

We should mention that during the illustration of the specific examples of students’ engagement, the respondents talk about the official, legally binding and regulated procedures of students’ engagement; there are less cases or almost none of specific cases of students’ initiatives, suggestions or other kind of their engagement in the quality development process. Thus, as the result of interviews, there is found out that the system of students’ self-government engagement is mainly organized, but the other students are less involved in the education quality management. According to the quality assurance department, this fact is conditioned with the less interest from students, as nowadays students can find any kind of information, even about their rights and engagement possibilities in case of their interest.

It is worth to say that the evaluation questionnaire of lecturers and educational process, which are prepared by the education quality assurance department, are quiet actively used by the same department. However, almost all respondents (representatives of Quality Assurance Department) say that most of the students do not fill in the questionnaire, or they fill in it because they have to do, as they cannot go their profile page in the university online base if they do not complete the questionnaire; as a result, we receive the irrelevant results from the evaluation process. Thus, the only instrument of feedback, such as the evaluation questionnaire, is considered as “non-formal” or unreliable by the Quality Assurance Department.

Simultaneously, due the respondents, there is some kinds of incredibility and disappointment among the students towards questionnaire:

*“During filling in the questionnaire by a student, the main problems are arisen. I want to say sincerely that when I was a student and had to complete the evaluation paper, even I was not very frank, because I had a very little hope of any changes at university.”* (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)

The author of the above-mentioned quotation is an ex-student, who currently works at the education Quality Assurance Department. The attitude towards the evaluation questionnaires is clearly visible that even the respondents do not have any expectation of changes during filling in the questionnaires. The same reply is received from the representative of the central Quality Assurance Department at University of Coruna, who is also ex-student of the same university. From the mentioned interviews, we can see clearly that the respondents do not have any real expectation of the students’ sincerity (because of their own experience). However, besides that fact that they know the real reason of little level of students’ activeness and sincerity, none of them mentions any kind of strategy or approach to the mentioned problem-solving prepared by the university, in particular by the Quality Assurance Department.

Moreover, in the opinion of the representatives of Quality Assurance Department, the less engagement of students is provoked by the low level of motivation. Two reasons of low level of motivation were mentioned: the first – the low knowledge of not only education quality, but in general students’ responsibilities and activities or other university issues, and the second – the big number of students. According to the Georgian respondents, recently, most of the Georgian schoolchildren become students with as low grades (in case of passing the minimum limit), as high grades. Due to the representatives of Quality Assurance Department, low grade students have the low motivation to study or to get involved in any activity.

As the reason of students' inertness, there are also named the national character and mentality by the representatives of all three universities. It is interesting that the replies of Georgian and Spanish universities around the mentioned reason of students' inertness are coincided with each other.

It is worth to say that during the interviews all the representatives of Quality Assurance Department of three universities express their will to increase the students' engagement, as in their opinion, in case of more engaged students, the performance quality of Quality Assurance Department will be increased.

*"If students are more engaged, and demand more from me, I will work and do more. The society receives whatever they demand." (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

The interview results show that the representatives of the Quality Assurance Department consider the students' engagement as very important. They think that not only the members of students' self-government should be engaged, which somehow creates the border and "close" space. They think that it is important to make the systematic changes in this direction at the government level, to plan the communication between high school pupils, students and university in a better way. It is important to strengthen the engagement at the faculty by using the information boards and organizing the meetings.

*"In England, universities have a very good practice, they organize the open meetings not only during one day, but it continues for a long time. The meetings are held with future students. It is important to have the strong communication with schools; the Ministry should provide high school pupils with the information meeting, they can attend the lecturers as free listeners. Children become students, and then they realize that they do not wish it. In England, schoolchildren get acquired with the theoretical knowledge about university at schools, they visit universities and learn the university system in practice, and they know where to pass and what they desire." (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

*"When I was a student, I did not know the university system and university life. The term "credit" was associated with the bank credit. That is why it is important to give the information about university life to students or high school children." (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

*"Our department meets the first year students on the first days of academic year, we explain the importance of their engagement and involvement. However, students are not interested in the university issues very much at the second and third year, and at the fourth year it is too late." (Faculty Quality Assurance Department, University of Coruna, Private)*

As the result of interviews, there are defined the advantages and disadvantages of students' (future) engagement due to the opinions of representatives of Quality Assurance Department. As the positive side of students' engagement, there are considered the following: defining problem and showing the necessity of development, which will contribute the Department to improve their performance and results.

*"Students often give the fair demands, for example, systematically missing a lecture or being late by a lecturer. Those problems are solvable." (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

*"Students' engagement is very important not only because we are obliged to involve them, but it is necessary to hear their ideas, complaints and to have the relevant feedback to the problems." (Faculty Quality Assurance Department, University of Coruna, Private)*

However, we should mention that a respondent receives the above-mentioned information from own students during lecturing, and not as a representative of the Quality Assurance Department.

As the only negative result of students' engagement, there is defined the students' young spirit.

*"The negative result is probably the fact that they are young and "their boiling blood", so they may demand what they desire at wrong time in a wrong way. I cannot see any other negative factor of students' engagement, vice versa it is very beneficial when students involve in any activity." (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

Thus, the representatives of Quality Assurance Department think that the students' engagement has the function of monitoring on the education quality; however, it is necessary to implement the clear regulations/instructions in order to make students' activities objective and to use their involvement for the improvement of a university.

During the research, the motivation of students' engagement is studied in the opinion of the representatives of Quality Assurance Department. They think that the students' main motivation is self-development, collaboration and education process and teaching quality improvement. However, they also mention that they have not received any kind of complaints or suggestions of collaboration from students. They have made their conclusion due to their personal talks. In the Georgian universities, the "influence from outside" is also named as the motivation of students' engagement.

*"Unfortunately, sometimes students' motivation is not always pure. Sometimes, some people use students for their own purposes." (Central Quality Assurance Department, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)*

In case of extracurricular activities, the students and members of students' self-government are more active. Their activities are independent from the university administration. In addition, the students' extracurricular and entertaining activities are implemented with the budget defined by the university.

*"The students' self-government organizes the entertaining activities, excursions and sport events with the support of university; in this case, students have their own system, and we, the administration, do not interfere in their choices and regulations. We only support their activities." (Quality Assurance Department, Tbilisi Open Teaching University, State)*

It is worth to say that the representatives of Education Quality Assurance Department of all three universities think that the students' engagement have the positive impact on students' academic performance and the satisfaction level with university.

In conclusion, we can say that:

1. In the education quality management process, there are mainly involved the members of students' self-government, and less the other students;
2. The engagement of students' self-government in education quality management process is regulated with the university regulation, therefore, their involvement is well-organized; but the other students' engagement scheme is very formal, and in fact, such kind of engagement does not exist at all.
3. The level of students' activities in the education quality management process is very low. They do not present their opinions, advices or recommendations for the education quality development. The mentioned can be explained, on one side, with the less trust or expectation of any changes, and on the other hand, their information level is very low, the big number of students, inert character, lack of interests and motivation.
4. The representatives of Education Quality Assurance Department consider the students' engagement very crucial. However, there is no relevant strategy or plans to provide their involvement in the process.

In the research process, during the interviews, the representatives of Education Quality Assurance Department of all three universities highlight the very important problem. In their opinion, students are not ready for the students' life at the beginning stage, for example, sometimes the lack of knowledge of credit system and educational program. According to the representatives of Education Quality Assurance Department, the mentioned problem hinders the students' engagement in the education quality management process. Due to the mentioned problem, the following recommendation is worked out – to implement a small course or training for the high school children, which will make students prepared and contribute to their future choice and development, moreover, it would be better if Education Quality Assurance Department are involved in such kind of training preparation process.

## **Interviews – Students**

Within the quantitative research, during the interviews, we have tried to define whether students have any connection with the Education Quality Assurance Department at university, whether they are engaged in the education quality management process, and if they are satisfied with students' involvement and participation in the management activities in general. In addition, during the interview, we have defined what kind of information students have about the Education Quality Assurance Department at university and its responsibilities. As we mentioned above, the interviews have been conducted at three universities – Ivane

Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia), Tbilisi Open Teaching University (Georgia) and University of Coruna (Spain), Bachelor's Degree students are from different faculties and different courses.

The students say that in case of any problem, they go to the Dean's office to a lecturer. However, it is worth to say that the students have very little expectation that their problem will be considered, that is why they are less involved in the university issues. This factor is stronger at the big state universities. Due to their experience, the students often do not even try to express a problem or work to solve it. For example, one Georgian active student, who is a member of students' union "European Law Students Association (ELSA)", said that her passiveness is conditioned with the low expectation of sharing a student's problem by the university.

*"I think that, in many cases, syllabuses have problems sometimes they are old and need to be renewed. However, I was not active in this direction, because I know a lecturer will refuse my suggestion."* (Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)

*"They (university administration) do not receive students' problems and complaints seriously."* (Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)

Thus, the most of students explain their less involvement with the universities' attitudes towards them. They mention that the university administration does not pay attention to the problems stated by students. Therefore, students do not express their opinions and problems.

The students mention that they only participated in the questionnaire survey in the point of education quality management, as the participation of the questionnaire survey is required by the Education Quality Assurance Department during the academic year. The questionnaire survey aims at evaluating the subject, educational process and professors. However, as students say, filling in the survey is not compulsory, therefore, some part of students are not interested in the survey and do not complete the questionnaire.

We think it is very interesting and important for our research to define the students' awareness level about the activities and duties of Education Quality Assurance Department of a university. Within the research, students have been asked to list the obligations and responsibilities that they think Education Quality Assurance Department has. As a result of research, there is found out that only half of the list is relevant to the real activities of Education Quality Assurance Department. Students give the following activities as the part of Education Quality Assurance Department's responsibilities:

- Solving students' problems
- Controlling the quality of syllabuses
- Searching for the books for syllabuses
- Monitoring of teaching quality, educational process and lecturers
- Monitoring exam center
- Working out the evaluation system
- Preparing questionnaires and feedback
- Displaying new on the web-page of a university
- Controlling the students' academic performance
- Organizing conferences
- Searching for the exchange programs for students
- Collecting the statistical data of students' employment.

We also consider important to study the students' attitudes towards the education quality management process, and the area of students' possibilities in their opinion; to define what students think about their rights and duties in the quality assurance. The respondents have list the different kinds of activities that students can perform for the education quality development at university. Below there is given the list of the activities that in the students' opinion they can perform:

- To reach students' problems and opinions to the administration through the article, students' magazine or social network;
- To prepare the researches, reviews and present them with the problem-solving methods;
- To indicate the interesting issues for students, which can be solved with the joint work of students and Education Quality Assurance Department.

In the research process, we also wanted to study the students' opinion whether they are satisfied with the students' engagement and participation in the decision making process of education quality management. The research showed that the most of respondents are not satisfied with the students' engagement, and they want to

have more information about the involvement possibilities in the quality management process in order to have the chance to participate in the quality creation process. However, they say that there is very little interest from university, and this has the negative influence on students' motivation. Some of the respondents say that they do not have any information about the students' engagement.

The students are also asked about their motivation, when they get involved in the different kinds of activities and in the decision-making process of some issues at universities. The students, who have the experience of involvement in any activity name their motivation, and who do not have any experience describe the possible motivation. The following motivators were defined:

- Self-demonstration
- Receiving education/improving knowledge
- Acquiring experience to get a good job in the future
- Developing a university
- Improving the education quality
- Protecting students' rights/being a students' representative
- Making changes, for example, in the subject selecting system
- Offering good projects to students.

We also investigate the students' opinions on whether the students should be involved in the education quality management process or not, in addition to the students' self-government members. Most of the respondents say that all the students should have the possibility to participate in the decision-making and working process. Because as one student says, there are 140 students at the faculty, and only 30 of them are involved in the student processes, and it is not enough. The same respondent says that a student may not have the wish to become a member of students' self-government, but have own opinion about the specific issue that can be contributive to the university and education quality. It is worth to say that almost nobody agrees to the idea that the self-government is enough. In addition, the interviews show that most of students do not have any communication with students' self-government, therefore, students' problems and opinions do not reach to the self-government, and then to the relevant university department. Thus, if a university wants to learn the opinions of each student and their engagement, which obligation they have due to the international regulations, they should provide the involvement of all students.

The students have been asked about what kind of changes they would make in the communication and working process between the students and Education Quality Department of university; they think that, at first, the mentioned department should have the wish to collaborate with students and to make the joint decisions with students. This can be implemented through the meetings, mutual discussion of problems, even with the minimum involvement of students, as in this case "*students would have the obligation and responsibility to think about the new and innovative ideas*" (Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State). In the respondents' opinion, it is also very important to provide students with information about the Education Quality Department and its rights and duties in order to increase the students' awareness around the department. However, students receive the online questionnaire at the beginning or end of a semester, but they do not fill in it, because there are many questions and it is boring for them; also, students say that nobody really wants to know their opinion, they do not see any feedback from university, therefore, they have very low motivation to spend time on the evaluation questions, and in fact, very little number of students complete it.

There is learnt the influence of the students' more engagement in the education quality management process on the students' satisfaction with university, and what students think how they can be more involved in the mention process. It is worth to say that students see the direct connection between their involvement in the decision-making process and their satisfaction with university; however, very few students say that there is no correlation between their participation and satisfaction with university.

Most of students see the engagement of even one student as a very important activity in the education quality management process, as this can be grown into the group engagement. They say that any negative issue has the influence on students, for example, such as a defect in syllabus. Therefore, they should have the possibility to express their ideas, that can be discussed and in case of approval to participate in practice. There is one more very important factor that the students may have the different ideas and opinions that should be analyzed and then to choose the best one.

This idea is formed by one of the students in the following way:

*“We do not know all the students’ education range, consciousness; they may have the necessary resources and their contribution may become very important to implement any innovation at university”.* (Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)

The students have been asked to list the professional and personal life aspects that may be influenced by the increase of education quality. The respondents think that the improvement of the education quality at university will have the positive impact on the following:

- Future career (*Today, people think that if you do not have the foreign experience, you are not relevant for a job; I think in case of increase of quality, this problem will be solved”.* (Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, State)
- Increase of learning quality
- More opportunities of personal self-development
- Increase of experience and qualification
- Increase of self-evaluation and self-estimation.

*“For me, the success of university is very important, because the success of university is my success, and vice versa, my success is the university’s success”.* (Student, Tbilisi Open Teaching University, Private)

*“Probably, if a university is improved and becomes more known, me, as a future graduate of my university, will become more desired for employers”.* (Student, University of Coruna, State)

The students have been assessed whether they know the university goal and objectives, what is university for them. how often they receive information about the education quality management process of university, and news. These questions aimed at studying the students’ attitudes towards the university. The research showed that the students’ interest towards the university processes and news is quite high. They get acquired with the information via social network. This can be considered as the expression of students’ identity towards university.

It is worth to mention some of the Georgian students are active in the extracurricular activities and events, and the Georgian universities support them in the organization process. However, this does not have any connection with the education quality management. The university administration (here, the Education Quality Assurance Department is not meant, as we already mentioned above, the most of students do not have any idea about the Education Quality Assurance Department) often supports the students’ ideas and extracurricular activities, such as intellectual game: “What? Where? When?”, inviting the actors and famous people, arranging excursions, etc. The same can be said about the students’ experience of University of Coruna. For example, one student says:

*“I am a member of students’ association, and participate in some activities. However, this is not related to the education quality. I only try to help other students and provide them with the information about the university”.* (Students, University of Coruna, State)

As the conclusion, we can say that students are less or almost not at all in the communication with the Education Quality Assurance Department. Therefore, they have never been involved in any specific issue, problem or any other decision making process related to the education quality management. Moreover, during the research, the following tendency is defined – students do not have any information about this kind of department at university, and their thoughts about the department is not relevant to the reality.

The students think that their engagement is very important in the academic life of university; they consider that by this way their identity and satisfaction will be increased. The students explained their passive performance with the low expectations and low feedback from university. It is worth to say that in this point of view, the opinions of students and representatives of Education Quality Assurance Department are coincided with each other; and this approves the reliability of the research findings once more.

It was very interesting that, on the contrary of the opinions of the representatives of the Education Quality Assurance Department, students think that in case of will of this department, it is possible to provide the students’ engagement. The research revealed as the academic (related to learning), as achievement (related to the social success) basis of students’ engagement motivation, and the specific forms of their engagement, which will be acceptable for the students.

## Conclusion

The research shows that the most of respondents as the representatives of the Education Quality Assurance Department, as students have the wish to increase the students' engagement level. However, there were defined the different obstructions and challenges; the students name the less feedback from university about any issue, and the representatives of the Education Quality Assurance Department highlight the problem of students' less knowledge and awareness. In fact, students do not really have not only complete information, but they have no idea about the Education Quality Assurance Department and their opportunities and rights of their engagement in the education quality management.

Due to the above-mentioned, it is important to provide students with full information, and give them feedback. There is recommended to give the information about university, its department, academic performance, student's life and their rights and obligation to last year schoolchildren or first year students. It will contribute to the communication development between students and universities. University should have the quick, timely and exhaustive feedback to the students' ideas, recommendations or problems. Simultaneously, it is important to have more communication between students and the Education Quality Assurance Department, and to discuss the collaboration types suggested by students.

## References

- Bloom (1956). *Bloom's Taxonomy*
- Doherty D. G. (1994). *Developing Quality Systems in Education*. Routledge. London, Great Britain
- European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education. (1999). *Bologna Declaration*. Retrieved October 20, 2016 from [https://www.eurashe.eu/library/modernising-phe/Bologna\\_1999\\_Bologna-Declaration.pdf](https://www.eurashe.eu/library/modernising-phe/Bologna_1999_Bologna-Declaration.pdf)
- European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education. (2005). *Bologna Process Stocktaking*. Bergen.
- European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education. (2005). *Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education*. Bergen. Retrieved October 20, 2016 from <https://www.ehea.info/pid34363/ministerial-declarations-and-communicues.html>
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). (2015). *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Retrieved November 15, 2016 from [http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG\\_2015.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)
- Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C. and Paris, A.H. (2004) *School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence*. Review of Educational Research.
- Georgian Government. (2014). *Georgian Law on High Education*. Retrieved August 5, 2016 from <http://mes.gov.ge/publicInfo/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9B%E1%83%90%E1%83%A6%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%A1%E1%83%98-%E1%83%92%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%90%E1%83%97%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%A8%E1%83%94%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%AE%E1%83%94%E1%83%91-%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%A5%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%97%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%99%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%9D%E1%83%9C%E1%83%98..pdf>
- European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education. (2001). *Prague Communiqué*. Retrieved November 20, 2016 from [https://media.ehea.info/file/2001\\_Prague/44/2/2001\\_Prague\\_Communique\\_English\\_553442.pdf](https://media.ehea.info/file/2001_Prague/44/2/2001_Prague_Communique_English_553442.pdf)
- Merabishvili N., Tsereteli M. (2017). *The International Demands of Students' Engagement in the Higher Education Quality Management and the Georgian Situation*. Tbilisi, Georgia. International Scientific Journal "Intellect".
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA). (2009). *Annual Report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England*. Retrieved May 20, 2017 from [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14608/1/HEFCE\\_Annual\\_Report\\_07-08.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14608/1/HEFCE_Annual_Report_07-08.pdf)
- Trowler V. (2010). *Student Engagement Literature Review*. Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University.
- Vanapriya B., Dodhiya J. (2015). *Total Quality Management in Global Education System: Concept, Application and Implementation*.
- Velden G. M. (2013). *Student Voice*. Student Engagement in a Research Intensive University. University of Bath. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/cqsd/Student\\_engagement\\_in\\_a\\_research\\_intensive\\_university.pdf](https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/cqsd/Student_engagement_in_a_research_intensive_university.pdf)