



# **TSU COMPETITIVENESS ASSESSMENT BASED ON THE RESEARCH OF UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS' ATTITUDE**

**(ACCORDING TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE  
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The scientific work was performed by the members of the Department of Management and Administration of the Faculty of Economics and Business at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University within the framework of the University faculty grant.

**The aim of the research** is to identify the determinants of program/university selection by university entrants. In particular, to determine the criteria according to which they choose the program/university and to develop practical recommendations for Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

Based on this purpose, we have studied educational traditions abroad and in Georgia; The main trends in the development of the world market for higher education and innovative approaches in the context of globalization are analyzed; Studies on the competitiveness of educational institutions made by international organizations, research institutes and the world's leading universities are presented; Priorities of educational services are outlined;

In the research process, by the statistical survey methodology, based on a questionnaire survey, we have studied the main factors determining the competitiveness of universities operating in Georgia. The qualitative analysis has allowed us to identify key trends in the sector, formulate hypotheses based on the research objectives, and accurately describe the quantitative research elements. The anonymous questionnaire survey method was used. A questionnaire was developed based on the established hypotheses. 580 university entrants were interviewed in the capital of Georgia - Tbilisi and in 7 regions. The main questions of the questionnaire were of the closed type. The survey allowed us to determine the entrants' attitudes, the level of their involvement and interest.

As a result of the study, some recommendations have been developed and submitted to TSU Faculty of Economics and Business Management and academic community.

**Keywords:** University Competitiveness Assessment, University Entrants' Attitude; determinants of program/university selection

## **INTRODUCTION**

The educational function is the most important social function of any civilized society. Clearly, those countries and nations have a future that will be able to excel others in acquiring new knowledge, in scientific advances, and in their practical application. The level and quality of education determine not only the well-being of the society in general, but also the possibility of scientific-technical progress and development of the socio-cultural field. The most important role in the realization of the educational function is played by such a complex social institution as the education system.

The process of globalization has significantly accelerated the development of higher education. The challenges posed by globalization to the economy also affect the education system. Graduates of educational institutions are already competing on the global market. Consequently, in the current socio-economic situation of Georgia, due to the current changes in the education system and the challenges in the global environment, the attitude of entrants to higher education institutions is constantly changing: entrants want to select the educational institution that best meets their needs. For their part, higher education institutions also try to create such conditions to attract the entrants with the best results.

The work was performed by the members of the Department of Management and Administration of the Faculty of Economics and Business at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University within the framework of the University faculty grant. The grant also provided student involvement in a research project.

The aim of the research is to identify the determinants of program/university selection by university entrants. In particular, to determine the criteria according to which they choose the program/university and to develop practical recommendations for Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. Based on this purpose, we have studied educational traditions abroad and in Georgia; The main trends in the development of the world market for higher education and innovative approaches in the context of globalization are analyzed; Studies on the competitiveness of educational institutions made by international organizations, research institutes and the world's leading universities are presented; Priorities of

educational services are outlined; In the research process, by the statistical survey methodology, based on a questionnaire survey, we have studied the main factors determining the competitiveness of universities operating in Georgia. Methods of induction and deduction, qualitative and quantitative research were used. The qualitative analysis has allowed us to identify key trends in the sector, formulate hypotheses based on the research objectives, and accurately describe the quantitative research elements. In order to fulfill the main purpose of the grant paper, we studied the attitude of consumers of the higher education sector-entrants towards the universities operating in Georgia, the main determinants of their choice. The anonymous questionnaire survey method was used. A questionnaire was developed based on the established hypotheses. 580 university entrants were interviewed in the capital of Georgia - Tbilisi and in 7 regions. The main questions of the questionnaire were of the closed type. The survey allowed us to determine the entrants' attitudes, the level of their involvement and interest. The collected data was processed by SPSS Statistics program, performing both general frequency analysis and cross-tabulation analysis, as well as the reliability of the data and the level of relationships between the variables were determined based on the Chi-Square, Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson Correlation tests and Linear Regression.

As a result of the study, some recommendations have been developed and submitted to TSU Faculty of Economics and Business Management and academic community.

## **THE MAIN TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD MARKET OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION**

Globalization implies the free movement of goods and services between countries which causes an integrated world economy. It is a market-oriented process and follows from the realization of the view that markets play a more important role in the development of the world than states. Knowledge-based manufacturing has become a key feature of a globalized economy. The intellectual capital generated by universities and research institutes plays a crucial role in a globalized economy. Technological development, especially information technology, has changed the way the world economy is organized, including the delivery of higher education. As a result of the globalization process the openness of states is gradually widening, the movement of capital and labor between countries is simplified. "Openness" has become a source of innovation in the global digital economy, increasingly embraced by governments, international agencies and multinational corporations, also leading educational institutions as well as facilitators of scientific research and international cooperation. (Popklwitz, T; Rizvi, F., 2009).

The process of globalization has significantly accelerated the development of higher education. The challenges posed by globalization to the economy are also reflected on the education system. Graduates of educational institutions are already competing in the global market. Therefore, it is crucial for universities to be successful in their activities, they must be able to raise citizens who will become worthy members of both the local and international community. Acquiring higher education is not related only to mastering the specialty, it is considered as the main tool in the field of upbringing. Changing educational programs, developing joint programs, conducting joint research, mobility of students and academic staff, etc. are becoming more and more important for higher education institutions.

There are four different approaches to the issue of internationalization of universities:

- Business Approach. The business approach is the most common approach, it represents the internationalization of higher education

as a set of international activities. Here we can combine both academic and non-academic, ancillary activities, such as: curriculum development, exchange of researchers, students and academic staff, teaching specific fields technical assistance, intercultural training, etc.

- Approach with Competencies. This approach emphasizes skills development, knowledge acquisition, and the development of attitudes and values in students, faculty, and administrative staff. According to this approach, the development of internationalized curricula is not a purpose in itself, but rather a means of developing relevant competencies in students, staff and faculty.

- Process Approach. This approach involves integrating elements of internationalization into the functioning of the university. Part of this process is the academic process, organizational rules, procedures, and strategies.

- Organizational approach. This approach involves creating such a culture and ethos that value and support international and intercultural perspectives or initiatives. (Qiang, Z, 2003).

The process of globalization requires carrying out works for the education system in different directions. In terms of working with students, it is important to organize exchange programs, admit foreign students, manage an individual mobility, arrange summer schools. Student mobility is not just an educational process, it provides an opportunity for cultural and career development, hence, universities strive to promote students' professional and personal development through mobility, exchange programs and research. Participating in exchange programs shapes a student's personal qualities, helping to appreciate their own culture and share other cultures.

The process of globalization involves doing some work in terms of academic staff, learning process, research administration and international cooperation. The mobility of professors ensures the expansion and enrichment of their knowledge, gives them the opportunity, on the one hand, to share their research and discoveries with the scientific community, and, on the other hand, to get acquainted with the works of colleagues. Special schemes for

international training and teaching of young teachers and researchers have been developed in many countries which are a great help in the mobility process.

In the context of globalization, the participation of higher education institutions in international networks is significantly increasing. The international network includes various types of organizations, such as, for example, associations and unions, which can operate both worldwide and within a specific region. Joining such a network helps universities to connect with other universities, develop joint programs, exchange study materials and practices. The international network for the advancement of qualifications and experience gives universities the opportunity to participate in the exchange of professors, administrative staff and students and to ensure the generation of new knowledge.

One of the trends that contributes to the globalization of higher education is the opening of campuses abroad. There are several ways to set up a campus. A university may independently establish a branch abroad that will be wholly owned by it, it may establish a joint venture with private partners or a strategic alliance with local governments and other entities that will provide financial assistance but will not participate in the management process. The level of integration depends on the goals of the educational institution and the requirements of the local government.

One of the growing forms of internationalization of universities in the modern world is the implementation of collaborative programs. A dual degree program implies two independent and recognized programs. Upon completion of the study, the candidate will receive one degree recognized and approved by two different universities. As for joint programs, the joint program is jointly agreed by two institutions, for which two diplomas are issued, one - by each institution. Practice shows that the employment rate of students participating in such projects is relatively higher. In addition, students are given the opportunity to work with people of other nationalities and cultures, to gain a variety of experiences that will facilitate the process of adapting to a different cultural environment and help them in a career advancement.

In response to the above demands of the globalization, several major trends have been observed on the world market of higher education recently: the number of students traveling to other countries for education has increased significantly, the number of branches and representations of leading universities in different countries has increased, there is an intensive exchange of programs, projects and professors between higher education institutions, online courses and programs have acquired a great importance.

As a result of the globalization the demand for highly qualified, educated staff has become the main feature of the modern economy. In many cases, higher education is the minimum requirement to enter the job market. In Canada, for example, higher education is in demand for 70% of all new jobs. (Varghese, N, 2003). In the context of globalization, the increase in qualification requirements for jobs worldwide causes in itself the global increase in demand for higher education.

Globalization has caused the shift of direct foreign investments and international corporations from developed to developing countries. In order for these companies to produce the same quality products and services in new locations as they did in developed countries, there arises a demand for highly qualified employees. Especially there is a great demand for theoretical knowledge in the field of design, technological knowledge for the development of production, knowledge of production processes, introduction of information technologies and more. The need for relevant staff motivates the youth of this country to receive a proper higher education. In many cases, local higher education institutions do not provide the level of knowledge that is sufficient to perform highly qualified work. Consequently, there is a growing demand for acquiring knowledge in the leading universities of the West. At the same time, the motivation of local universities and other higher education institutions for quality development is increasing. In different countries, universities in different socio-economic space try to maximize the learning programs, curricula, learning management schemes in order to become competitive on the world market of higher education. In this context, the "Bologna Process" is noteworthy. It is a process of rapprochement and harmonization of the education systems of European countries which aims to create



a single European space for higher education. The process should enhance the employment and mobility of European citizens and increase the international competitiveness of European higher education. The Bologna Process began with the Grand Charter of Universities. It was a program document of the process adopted in the city of Bologna, on the 900th anniversary of the world's oldest university in Bologna. Georgia joined the Bologna Process in May 2005. Naturally, adhering to the principles developed on the basis of the experience and modern challenges of leading universities in Europe and in the world, helps to provide quality higher education for students in different countries. Nevertheless, a large mobility of students can be considered to be the main feature of today's world higher education.

85% of foreign students study at universities in the United States, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. (<https://mosgorsait.ru>). Most of these students- 37% study abroad in the US and 28% - in the UK. Recently, there has been an increase in demand for universities in China, South Korea and Japan.

The growing demand for higher education has also led to an increase in investors' interest in this market which has helped to expand the geography of education hubs.

Branches, franchises and representations of the world's leading universities have been growing dramatically in developing countries since the beginning of the 21st century. Branches offer students in their home country almost the same quality of education as they would receive abroad. Teaching is conducted through identical programs at the parent university and, in many cases, with the involvement of professors from those universities. In case of a franchise, any local university is allowed to conduct educational activities on behalf of the parent university, and in this case the parent university controls the quality of the services provided. University campuses in developing countries have been built up in compliant with modern requirements to open branches and franchises. In many cases, branches are located in free economic zones.

Many countries offer special discounts to universities in developed western countries in case of opening branches. The governments of



the respective countries also pay significant attention to the establishment of educational centers. Centers have been set up in many countries bringing together branches of several leading universities, making their work even more successful. Such centers are gradually becoming hubs of attraction for international students as well and are in serious competition with Western universities. Good examples of this trend are Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Doha, Qatar, Mauritius, etc. In Abu Dhabi, for example, there are the campuses of the Sorbonne (France) and New York Universities.

- In 2003, as part of a long-term economic government strategy, the Knowledge Village of Dubai was established to ensure a knowledge-based economy. Today there are several international universities in this village from Australia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland and Canada.
- Qatar has established an educational hub that attracted academic programs from U.S. universities. The goal of the state was to reduce the outflow of Qatari students. However, in order to attract foreign students to Qatar, the Qatar Fund gives loans to many foreign students and writes off these loans if they stay in Qatar for work after graduation. There are branches of six international universities in Qatar.
- Singapore's Global School House is also noteworthy, an initiative launched in 2002 that includes 16 leading foreign schools. It aims to make the country a center of global education. The center has already attracted more than 100,000 international students.
- Hong Kong launched program "Hong Kong - Regional Education Center". Bhutan plans to build a \$1 billion educational city to facilitate the establishment of subsidiaries of prestigious universities and colleges. Mauritius cooperates with prestigious universities of the USA, Great Britain, France, India, South Africa. Many other countries are expected to take the similar steps in the future.
- An example of this trend is the opening of a branch of San Diego State University of the USA in Tbilisi. The University received several streams of students. However, unfortunately, due to the

relevant request or inappropriate support from the state, it stopped accepting students and reduces its activities.

- The cooperation between Tbilisi State Medical University and Atlanta Emory University is a good example of the development of higher education in the context of globalization. It is noteworthy that the program is in high demand and its implementation is successful.

As mentioned, the process of globalization has had a significant impact on the education system as well. Since the graduates of educational institutions are already competing in the global market, universities are making every effort to conduct their activities successfully and to occupy the desired positions on the global market. As a result, changes in educational programs, joint programs, joint research, mobility of students and academic staff are becoming more and more important.

## **EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS ABROAD AND IN GEORGIA**

Significant changes took place in the education system in the twentieth century. The goals of education have changed, the number of people with higher education and scientific knowledge has increased. Current economic trends in recent years indicate the beginning of a new era, which can be called the knowledge economy. The main driving force of the modern era has become the man who is the subject of the accumulation of knowledge expressed in capital. Man himself has become the basis for his own success. The determinant of this success has become the competitive knowledge that a person accumulates throughout life. It is the transmission of this accumulated knowledge from generation to generation that is the most important function of society. And education, science, and culture serve this function. Education, in its turn, is one of the fundamental human rights that plays an important role in the sustainable development of the country.

According to the Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, "Education is a combination of systemic knowledge, skills, views and beliefs, cognitive powers and a level of practical training. Education can be obtained in educational institutions or through self-education, cultural-educational work and participation in public labor activities, depending on how a person is prepared for life work, what kind of knowledge he has, there is general or special education, and according to the level and volume of preparation - elementary, secondary (general and special) and higher " (Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, 1977).

The views of the great Georgian writer, poet, publicist, political and public figure, Ilia Chavchavadze, on education are important: "We forget that knowledge, learning and education are an inexhaustible source, both for being a man and for earning a living, property and livelihood. What a knowledgeable man gains in an hour, an ignorant man will gain in four or five hours. Maybe a man has wealth in front of his eyes and does not see it with ignorance or he sees it and does not know how and by what means to take it and bring it home, but a knowledgeable man squeezes water out of a stone, digs out the source of wealth there where the ignorant can't even see it in a dream. Such a power of knowledge, learning and education we may

see before our own eyes. How many examples we have that a foreigner, who knows from where he came and took shelter in our country, not only he earns a living, gets rich among us, and we, in our own home and country, in our own ancestral home, miss our livelihood and sustenance of life. We always complain and cry that we are poor, we have nowhere to go for bread, and we no longer remember, we no longer understand - where and in what is the origin and cause of our poverty ". (Chavchavadze, Ilia;, 1886).

According to Wikipedia, education is a process of systemic actions that is consciously directed towards the development of a person's physical, intellectual and moral skills. Education also implies an outcome. The main way to get an education is through educational institutions, which are closely related to upbringing. In the process of education a great importance is attached to self-education, cultural-educational institutions, participation in public-labor activities.

A higher education and research institution is a university where graduates are awarded academic degrees. It is based on the Latin word "*universitas*", which means corporation (originally in the Middle Ages universities were only a union of scholars and teachers).

It is historically known that the world's oldest universities were founded in Europe. However, educational institutions originated much earlier in the countries such as China, Egypt and India. But in the higher education institutions of these countries there was no award of an academic degree for higher education. The award of academic degrees for higher education has historically been characteristic of European universities, so the medieval European universities are considered to be the oldest educational institutions.

The oldest European universities are Bologna (Italy), Oxford (UK), Cambridge (UK), Salamanca (Spain), Padua (Italy), Naples (Italy), Toulouse (France), Siena (Italy), Valladolid (Spain), Universities of Montpellier (France), Macerata (Italy), Coimbra (Portugal). The University of Bologna holds the title of the oldest university in the world despite the fact that some European (e.g., University of Paris) and non-European universities (e.g. Nalanda University, founded in India in the 5th century BC, Nanjing University, founded in China

in 258, and Al-Azhar University, founded in Egypt in 988) by date of establishment are ahead of the University of Bologna.

Even among European universities, there are various opinions as to which was really "first": Bologna or Paris? The University of Bologna was founded by students and the University of Paris was founded by teachers. In most cases, the University of Bologna is recognized as the oldest university in Europe. In the 11th century, the University of Oxford was founded in the United Kingdom by Henry II. Oxford University alumni include 26 former UK ministers, 20 bishops, 12 saints, 29 Nobel laureates and 47 Nobel Prize winners. The exact date of the founding of the University of Oxford is unknown, although there is evidence that teaching at the University in 1096 was already underway. Teaching at the University was already underway in 1096. The number of students at the University of Oxford is about 22,000. It is one of the highest ranked universities in the world. The University of Salamanca is also one of the oldest universities in Spain. In terms of antiquity it is among the four European universities along with the Universities of Bologna, Oxford and Sobron. It was the first educational institution to be granted a status of university. This status was granted to it by King Alfonso X of Spain in 1254. There are currently 30,000 students studying here and 9 campuses operating. The University of Cambridge was founded in 1209 in Great Britain. The University of Cambridge was founded by a group of researchers from the University of Oxford who left the University of Oxford due to political conflicts. The University of Cambridge is one of the most desirable universities in the United Kingdom. There are 81 Nobel Prize winners among the university graduates. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have many common traditions. The number of students at the University of Cambridge exceeds 18,000.

The ancient Greeks argued that the process of upbringing is time-bound but a person does not stop getting education until the end of life. The concept of upbringing in ancient Greece meant raising a person physically and spiritually perfect. Athenian education was divided into two parts: the training of the mind and the training of the body. In 387 BC, the Greek philosopher Plato taught philosophy, mathematics, and gymnastics to students at the Academy near Athens. Important educational institutions existed in Greek cities.

For example, the Museum and Library of Alexandria was the classical university.

Famous training centers in the East were the ancient cities of Nalanda, Vikramshila, Kanchipuram and Takshashila. Here students came from all over Asia. Nalanda was a center of Buddhist education.

Georgian educational traditions have their origins in the distant past. As early as in the III-VI centuries, there was a higher education institution near Phasis (present-day Poti) in Georgia, where the Greek philosopher Themistius' father, Eugenius, and Themistius himself received a rhetorical education. In the XI-XII centuries there was a higher education institution in Georgia - Ikalto Academy, the first rector of which was Arsen Ikaltoeli. The academy taught theology, rhetoric, astronomy, philosophy, geography, geometry, chanting, blacksmithing, pottery and viticulture-winemaking. In 1106, by the initiative of David the Builder, the Gelati Academy was established, where educated Georgians gathered, including Ioane Petritsi and Arsen Ikaltoeli. Arsen Ikaltoeli wrote the Extensive Canon Law at Gelati Academy.

In 1755 a theological seminary was established in Tbilisi and in 1782 in Telavi, where lectures and public debates were held, and specialists were trained. The idea of establishing a university in Georgia originated in the early 19th century. A great Georgian public figure, Ilia Chavchavadze, believed that the spiritual and cultural revival of the Georgian nation was necessary. This function was to be performed by the Georgian University. The "Tergdaleuli" generation fought to "awaken" the national interests. Ivane Javakhishvili, a graduate of St. Petersburg University, took the initiative to establish the university at the beginning of the 20th century. And the first Georgian university was solemnly opened on January 26, 1918 (in a new style, on February 8), on the day of commemoration of David the Builder. Petre Melikishvili became the first Rector of the University. Ivane Javakhishvili took charge of the Faculty of Philosophy.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Georgia's independence, a new stage began in the life of the university. The University has been entrusted with the historic mission of caring for

the spirituality of the nation and enhancing national self-awareness. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University is traditionally one of the leading scientific-research institutions in Georgia where the cooperation with foreign educational-scientific centers continues successfully. It has been a member of the Association of European Universities since 1998. Currently, the university is implementing more than 200 research projects. Scientists are involved in important international scientific projects. These include: CERN and ATLAS experiments of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, COSY accelerator of the Jülich Research Center (Germany); JEDI and Comet experiments at the Japan Proton Accelerator Complex (J-PARC), KM3Net experiment in the Mediterranean, FAIR (Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research) project (Germany). TSU is in the top 1.5% of the world's top universities. TSU takes 322nd Place in the ranking by the U.S. News & World Report 2020 (Best Global University Ranking). research institutes and up to 85 teaching laboratories in the university serve scientists and students. These include: Fablab, SMART|Lab, SMART|AtmoSim-Lab, Bloomberg Lab, Laboratories of Modernized Physics and Chemistry of San Diego University; High-Precision Modern Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectrometer (400 MHz), the Center for the Transmission of Knowledge and Innovation; Multimedia Center, Archaeological Field Base, Fine Arts Studio, etc.

The mission of the University is to promote national and universal values and to promote community development; Generating and disseminating knowledge; Development of scientific research; Protection of academic freedom; Caring for students and university staff; Dignified membership of the free world university society. (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, 2011). The values of the University are based on the ethical ideals of freedom and independence, critical, creative and progressive thinking, open and transparent relations defined by the Charter of European Universities.

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University still retains the name of the leading educational and scientific institution of Georgia. The Georgian people call it the Holy Temple of Science.

In recent years, Georgia has made a significant progress in reforming



its education and science systems. Reforms were carried out aimed at transforming the post-Soviet education system and creating a new system that had to be in line with rapidly changing world demands. Despite the implemented reforms, the establishment of the market for educational services has posed numerous organizational-methodological problems to higher education institutions, which required adaptation to strictly competitive conditions. New Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Government of Georgia "Georgia 2020" (Government of Georgia, 2013) gives a priority to education, which should ensure the development of human capital and its effective involvement in the development of the country.

In the new unified strategy of education and science developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia for 2017-2021 (Government of Georgia, 2017), which is based on the ongoing reforms in the country, analysis of achievements and challenges in the field of education, science and training, strategic priorities for education are defined. In particular, the following issues are put in the foreground: the compliance of education programs with the requirements of the labor market, access to pre-school education, improving the quality and accessibility of education at all levels, the development of vocational training which is tied to employment, the connection of higher education, science, technology and innovation with sustainable economic development of the country. In the four-point plan of the government a priority is given to the importance of educational programs which are aimed at strengthening national, social and cultural characteristics.

The system of educational institutions has been created to meet the needs of teaching the adolescent generation, transferring scientific and practical knowledge, values, ideology, social norms, professional knowledge and skills. This system includes primary and secondary schools, colleges, institutes, academies and universities that coordinate human activities.

In the age of knowledge economy, higher education is the driving force of the world development. It is seen as the "engine of the economy", which through research and innovation promotes the creation of new knowledge and the continuous development of workforce competences. (Sursock , A; Smidt, H, 2012).



Education benefits individuals and society both economically (increasing income and employment rates, developing human capital) and socially (promoting social mobility, increasing social stability and well-being) (Machin, S; McNally, S;, 2007).

Globalization and technological change have created new opportunities in the field of education and employment. The digital transformation has completely changed the labor market and created the need to develop new skills. It is clear that the education system of our country should promote the development of young people with relevant knowledge and skills.

The Georgian education system needs to take serious steps to internationalize the education system, enhance research and knowledge, create international academic staff and students mobility to meet international standards and create quality educational programs to meet local and international labor market demands.

Strengthening European cooperation in this area is important for improving the quality of higher education, in particular by deepening cooperation with the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Obtaining the status of a full member of ENQA will be an important step for Georgia's integration into the Common European Higher Education Area, which will significantly help increase the awareness and confidence of our educational space.

Studies made in European countries show that the employment rates of people with relatively low qualifications (full general education) are significantly lower than the employment rates of people with higher education. At the same time, over the last 30 years, the employment rate of individuals with low qualifications has been steadily declining. (McIntosh, S;, 2004).

Despite the implemented reforms, the Georgian education system still faces serious challenges. It is clear that education and science are of strategic importance for Georgia's sustainable economic development and prosperity. Getting a high quality education is a prerequisite for a personal, social and professional development that will help increase well-being. Therefore, it is

important to improve the teaching process in educational institutions, which requires simplifying the content and quality of the educational process and at the same time raising the quality of education.

## **THE STUDY-ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND WORLD LEADING UNIVERSITIES**

Creating a strong higher education system implies the existence of competitive higher education institutions, which are forced by the intensified competition in the XIX century due to globalization, increased costs, lack of financial resources, complex nature of higher education quality and growing technological demands to constantly strive for competitive advantages on both local and international educational markets. According to Porter, a firm's competitive advantage is due to its ability to produce and sell goods and services at a lower cost than its competitors and to offer the consumers products with better consumer properties. (Porter, Michael; 1980) Consequently, in modern conditions, HEIs face great challenges; In particular, they must achieve high efficiency in all areas of activity - education, research, innovation and at the same time ensure an active participation in the process of economic development of the country. The main goal of ensuring the competitiveness of any education system is to ensure participation in the process of increasing the competitiveness of the country, although there are different ways to achieve this goal. In the given conditions, the main task facing HEIs is to gain a competitive advantage, which, in turn, depends on factors such as cost structure, quality of products/services to be delivered, form of customer relations, etc. (Competition Agency of Georgia, 2019).

HEIs have long been implementing organizational changes that will enable them to meet existing challenges and meet the demand for higher education under the conditions of limited resources (The State of Higher Education, 2014). The Lisbon Convention of the European University Association **(1997)** defines the four main pillars of achieving the institutional autonomy of HEIs: academic, financial, organizational and personnel autonomy, which ensures that higher education meets the existing requirements as well as the needs of science development (Lisbon Declaration, 2007). The competitiveness of HEIs is significantly influenced by the structure of their expenditure on higher education which actually determines the characteristics of the business model chosen by HEIs. The

structure of expenditures on higher education by HEIs varies by country and depends on various factors, therefore, the degree of autonomy of HEIs is largely determined by the amount of expenditures, which in turn determines the amount of potential income from HEIs and adjusts the necessary investment volumes as well (The State of Higher Education, 2014). Consequently, the development vector of any country is based on the existence of a competitive system of higher education and Georgia is no exception. According to the Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia (2020), one of the priorities for the country's development is to create a strong higher education system, which should provide education in line with European standards, constantly develop its quality, gain international trust, prepare the competitive youth for local and international labor market. (Government of Georgia, 2013).

There are many studies on the competitiveness of higher education institutions that complement each other and form a certain system that explains the complex nature of competitiveness of HEIs well. Researchers at the Technical University of Riga note that the competitiveness of higher education institutions is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors are formed in the internal environment of the HEI and include human, intellectual, material, financial and infrastructural resources, while external factors are represented by micro (students, stakeholders) and macro external factors (social, political, economic, legal, technological). (Supe, L; Zeps, A; Jungelane, I; Ribickis, L, 2018).

The quality of higher education has traditionally been closely linked to the competitiveness of HEIs which naturally has an objective basis. According to the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, "Quality, whilst not easy to define, is mainly a result of the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment. Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of programs, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose". (ESG, 2015). Degree in higher education, as a dynamically changing multidimensional category, is related to both the content of the country's educational model and specific standards of different levels; Consequently, quality can acquire different meanings under the influence of the

different interests of those interested in higher education, the workforce, the demands of the labor market, the specifics of the academic processes and the development phase of higher education. (Vlăsceanu, L., Grünberg, L., Pârlea, D. , 2007)

The World University Ranking System conducts annual surveys to determine the effectiveness of HEIs using indicators such as: teaching (learning environment), research (cost, incomes and reputation), citation (research impact), international vision (staff, students and research), sector income (knowledge transfer). (The World University Rankings, 2020). According to the 2020 study, the top ten universities in the world are American and British universities, the top three universities are: Oxford University (UK); California Institute of Technology (USA) and Cambridge University (UK). And the well-known agency while compiling the world ranking of universities relies on the following criteria: The academic reputation of the university; Reputation among employees; Student-lecturer ratio; Number of foreign professors and students; Number of effective internet resources and published articles in correlation with the number of professors. (Quacquarelli, Symonds, 2020). Correspondingly, according to this ranking system, the top three universities in the world are: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA); Stanford University (USA) and Harvard University (USA). It should be noted that the University of Oxford is fourth in this ranking.

Based on the above, it is clear that the competitiveness of HEIs is a complex phenomenon and it can be determined by many factors, such as: the status of HEIs, the quality of education received, the price of service, the reputation of the institution, the level of internationalization, the structure of expenditures and funding, employment rates of graduates with awarded qualification, learning environment, scales of research and citations, etc.

## **A STUDY OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELECTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS**

Education plays an important role in the development of any country. A high quality of education ensures the advancement of society, the welfare of the people, the self-realization of the people, personal and social development, the growth of employment and the competitiveness of the country.

Georgia's education system, in the wake of ongoing changes in the global environment, is constantly taking steps to ensure that the level of education development meets international standards and creates opportunities for receiving higher quality education in the country. It aims to create the conditions under which it will be possible to raise a competitive citizen on the global market. Against the background of such an approach, higher education institutions face many challenges.

At the present stage, against the background of the current socio-economic situation in Georgia and the ongoing changes in the education system, the attitude of entrants, wishing to receive higher education, towards higher education institutions is changing.

At present, there are 56 authorized higher education institutions in Georgia, including 31 universities from which 19 are state universities, it shows that the competition between educational institutions is quite high. Higher education institutions differ in their historical past, ranking, reputation, quality of teaching, financial strength, infrastructure, modern programs, level of internationalization, etc.

University entrants want to select the educational institution that will best meet their needs and provide an education that will ensure their competitiveness in both the local and international labor market. Accordingly, students' attitudes towards the selection of higher education institutions are different.

An important factor in the selection of higher education institutions is usually modern and quality educational programs. Compliance of educational programs with the requirements of the labor market in order to ensure the competitiveness of graduates is one of the main

requirements for entrants when receiving higher education. The use of modern teaching and learning methods, together with qualified academic staff which determines the quality of teaching, increases the aspiration of entrants to this or that institution.

The competitiveness of a higher education institution is also significantly determined by the level of its internationalization. Participation of students into exchange programs and projects, international mobility of academic personnel and staff are one of the most effective ways to develop higher education institutions. It ensures the establishment in a global competitive environment, attracting and retaining students and qualified staff. (Chokheli, 2012); (Chokheli, Eka; Alphenidze, Onise;, 2015).

At the modern stage, information technologies, with appropriate information systems and software, are important for any organization to improve working quality and be more successful. (Chokheli, Eka; narmania, Davit;, 2015)

Introduction of modern information technologies in educational-scientific and managerial activities and its constant improvement is a challenge for higher education institutions. The introduction of the latest information systems, both in educational and administrative activities, significantly increases the quality of student services and therefore their level of satisfaction. (Chokheli, Eka; Narmania, Davit;, 2015)

Higher education infrastructure, learning environment (auditoriums, laboratories, libraries, etc.) equipped with modern technologies and arranged student spaces are one of the important factors in the selection of higher education institutions by entrants.

Offering appropriate conditions for student life, the existence of related activities, meeting personal development and social needs, developing and introducing measures to promote democratic values, civic self-awareness are positively perceived by entrants and increase their attitude towards this or that higher education institution.

Based on the above, a survey of university entrants was conducted throughout Georgia, about 580 entrants from Tbilisi and various

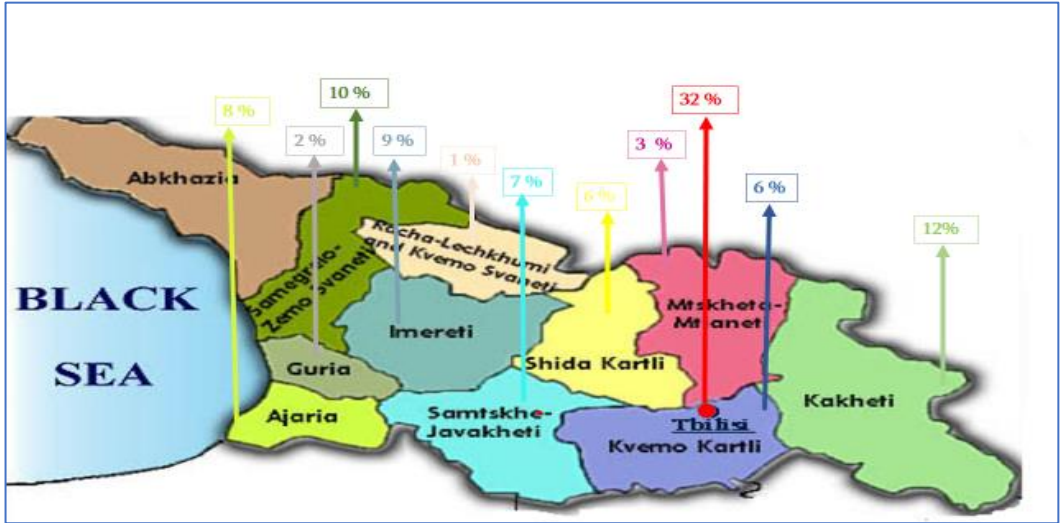
regions were interviewed electronically, using an anonymous questionnaire survey method. 12 questionnaires were used in the survey of respondents. The obtained data were processed by the method of general frequency analysis, also on the basis of the program "SPSS Statistics" cross-tabulation analysis was made, the reliability of the data and the level of relationships between variables on the basis of Chi-Square tests, Pearson Correlation test and Cronbach's Alfa were assessed.

## **Research Results**

**General frequency analysis.** Figure 1 and Table 1 show the frequency of respondent distribution by regions. 556 (96%) out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question: "In which region did you graduate (are you graduating) from school?". Tbilisi had the highest frequency value – 184 respondents (32%); the other regions were named with the following frequency: Kakheti – 12%, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Imereti, indicated with the same frequency (9%), they were followed by Achara (8%); as for Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, they were also named with the same frequency of 7%; Shida Kartli – 6%; all the other regions were mentioned by a very small percentage of the respondents.



**Chart 1. Distribution of respondents - university entrants, participating in the survey by regions**

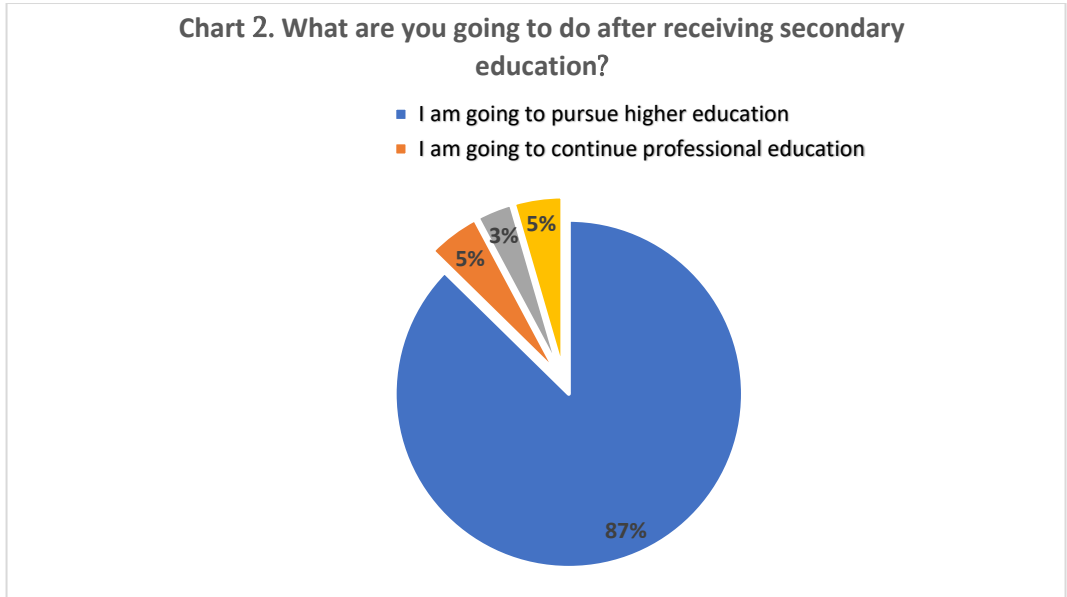


**Table 1. Frequency distribution for the variable - In which region did you graduate (are you graduating) from school? (A1)**

All Region					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Tbilisi	184	32	32	32
	2 Mtskheta-Mtianeti	15	3	3	35
	3 Imereti	50	9	9	44
	4 Guria	14	2	2	46
	5 Kakheti	69	12	12	60
	6 Achara	46	8	8	68
	7 Ra.g.ha.-Lgchldtumi and Kvemp Syaneti	8	1	1	69
	8 Samegrelo and Zemo Syaneti	54	9	10	79
	9 S.amts.kb.e-Jayaklie.ti	42	7	7	87
	10 Kvemp Kartli	39	7	7	94
	11 Shida Kartli	35	6	6	100
	Total	556	96	100	
Missed		21	4		
total		577	100		

Chart 2 and Table 2 show that 551 out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “What are you going to do after receiving secondary education?”, where 504 (87%) respondents planned to continue higher education.

### Chart 2. Decisions for the after receiving secondary education



**Table 2. Frequency distribution for the variable - What are you going to do after receiving secondary education? (A2)**

A2 What are you going to do after receiving secondary education?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 I am going to pursue higher education	504	87	87	87
	2 I am going to continue professional education	28	5	5	92
	3 I have not decided yet	19	3	8	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>	
Missed		23	4		
	Systemic	3	1		



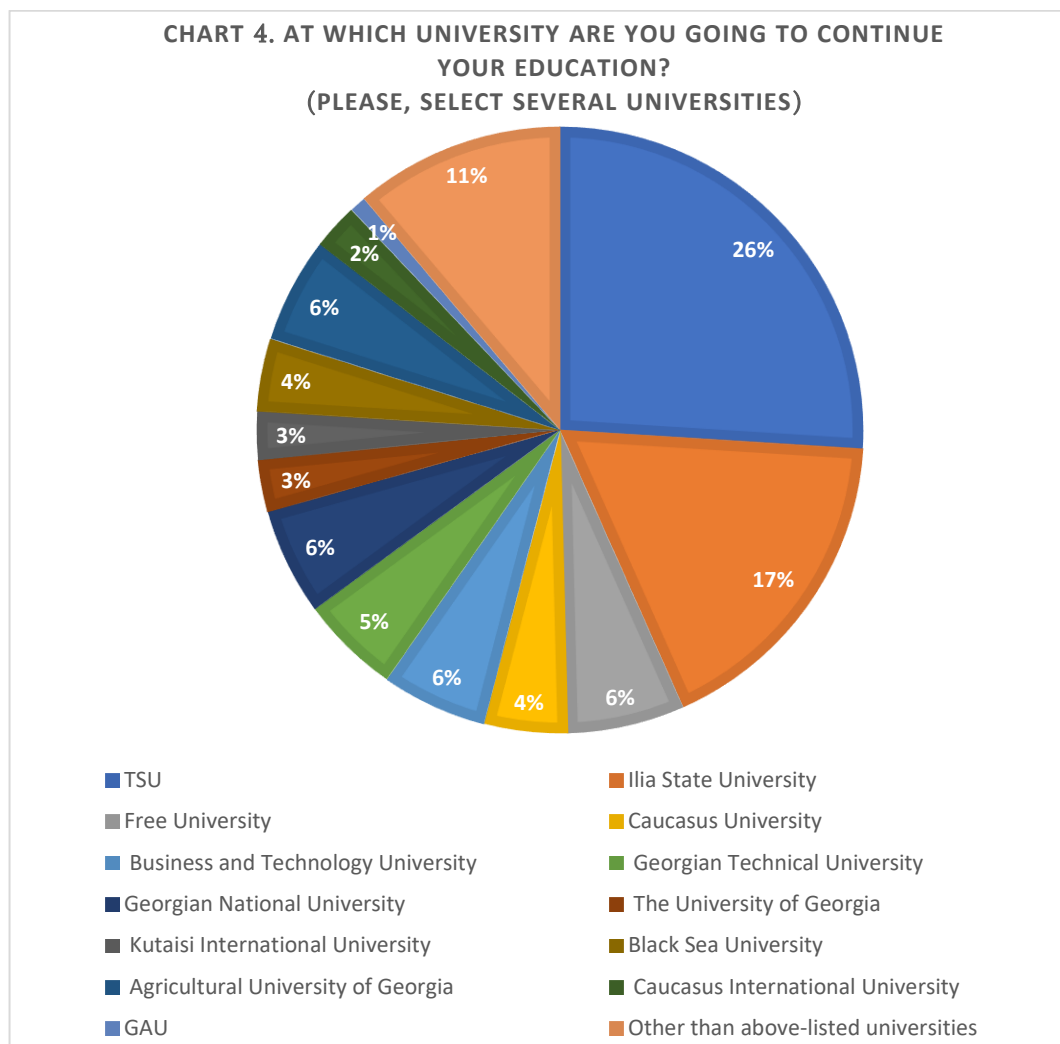
**Table 3. Frequency distribution for the variable – Which university do you prefer? (A3)**

<b>A3 Which university do you prefer?</b>					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 TSU – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University	217	38	39	39
	2 Business and Technology University	17	3	3	42
	3 Kutaisi International University	12	2	2	44
	4 Ilia State University	68	12	12	56
	5 Agricultural University of Georgia	10	2	2	58
	6 Georgian Technical University	16	3	3	61
	7 Free University	37	6	6	67
	8 The University of Georgia	13	2	2	69
	9 Georgian-American University	2	0	0	70
	10 Georgian National University (SEU)	15	3	3	73
	11 Caucasus International University	3	1	1	74
	12 Caucasus University	19	3	3	77
	13 Black Sea University	12	1	1	80
	14 Other universities	117	20	20	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	
Missed		Categories	Categories		
<b>Total</b>		<b>577</b>	<b>100</b>		

Chart 4 and Table 4 show the frequency distribution of the universities, selected by the respondents. 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “At which university are you going to continue your education? (Please, select

several universities). TSU had the highest frequency value – 328 respondents (26%), it was followed by Ilia State University – 219 respondents (17%), other universities, not listed below – 141 (11%), Free University – 79 (6%), Georgian National University – 71 (6%), Business and Technology University – 71 (6%), Agricultural University of Georgia – 71 (6%), Georgian Technical University – 67 (5%), etc.

**Chart 4. Choice of University (Several Choice)**

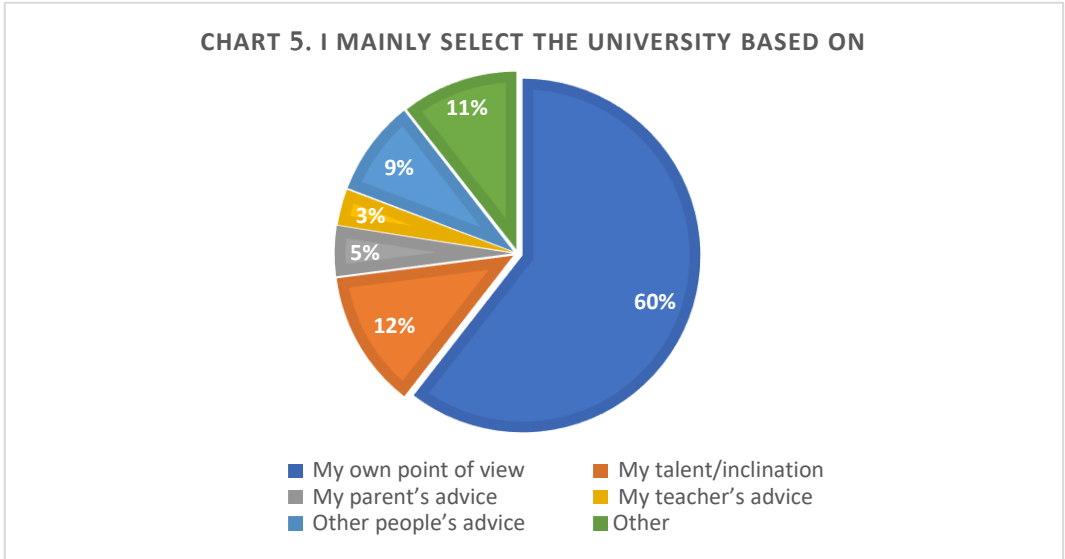


**Table 4. Frequency distribution for the variable – At which university are you going to continue your education? (Please, select several universities) (A4)**

<b>A4 – Frequency Distribution</b>			
		Answers	
		N	Percentage
A4 At which university are you going to continue your education?	A4_1 TSU	<b>328</b>	26%
	A4_2 Business and Technology University	71	6%
	A4_3 Kutaisi International University	31	2%
	A4_4 Ilia State University	<b>219</b>	17%
	A4_5 Agricultural University of Georgia	71	6%
	A4_6 Georgian Technical University	67	5%
	A4_7 Free University	<b>79</b>	6%
	A4_8 The University of Georgia	34	3%
	A4_9 Georgian-American University	11	1%
	A4_10 Georgian National University	72	6%
	A4_11 Caucasus International University	31	2%
	A4_12 Caucasus University	56	4%
	A4_13 Black Sea University	49	4%
	A4_14 Other universities, not listed above	141	11%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1260</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to Chart 5 and Table 5, 553 out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “I mainly select the university based on...”, where the answer “My own point of view” had the highest frequency value – 60%, followed by “My talent/inclination” – 12%, “My parent’s advice” – 5%, etc.

**Chart 5. Factors affecting choice**

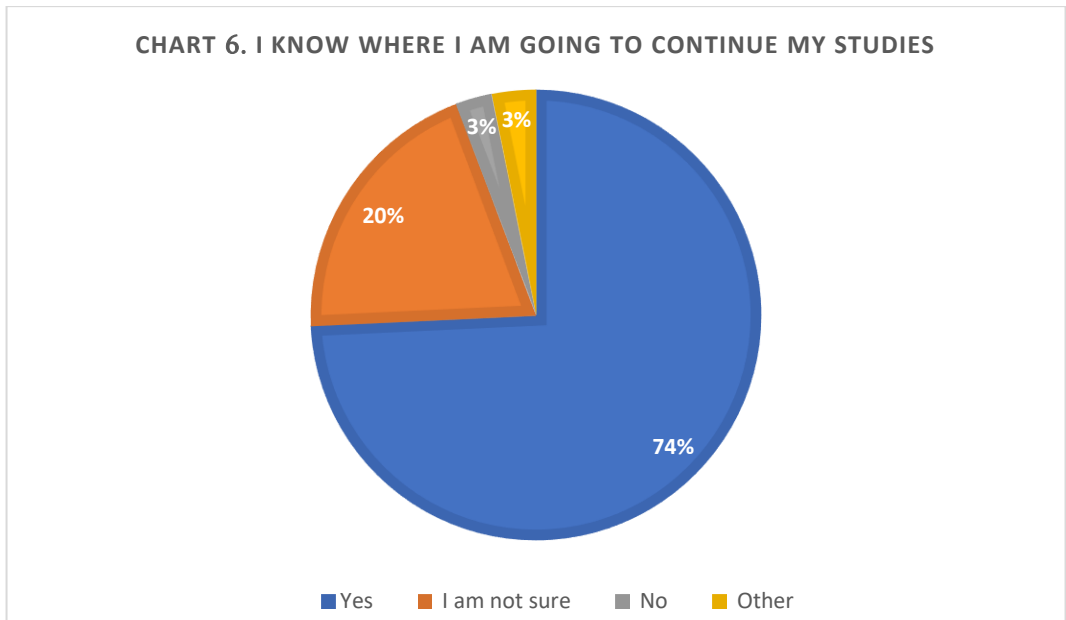


**Table 5. Frequency distribution for the variable - I mainly select the university based on (A5)**

A5 I mainly select the university based on...					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 My own point of view	349	60	60	60
	2 My talent/inclination	72	12	12	72
	3 My parent's advice	26	5	5	77
	4 My teacher's advice	19	3	3	80
	5 Other people's advice	26	5	5	85
	6 Other	61	15	15	100
	Total	553	96	100	
Missed	999	19	3		
	Systemic	5	1		
	Total	24	4		
Total		577	100		

Chart 6 and Table 6 show that 557 (97%) out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “I know where I am going to continue my studies”, and 427 (74%) of them knew exactly where they were planning to continue their education, 115 respondents (20%) did not have an exact answer to the question, and 15 (6%) – were not sure about it.

**Chart 6. Understanding the choice**



**Table 6. Frequency distribution for the variable – “I know where I am going to continue my studies” (A6)**

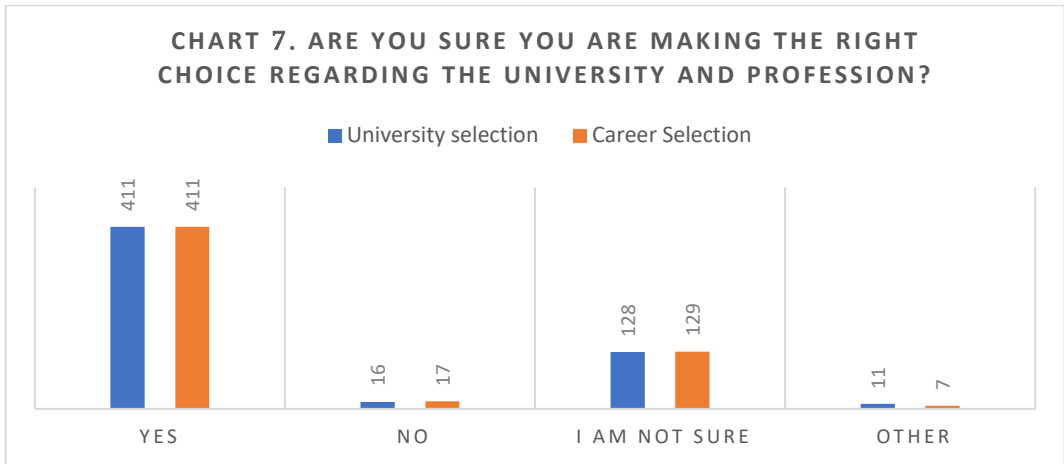
A6 I know where I am going to continue my studies					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Yes	427	74	74	77
	2 I am not sure	115	20	20	94
	3 No	15	6	6	100
	Total	557	97	100	
Missed	999	18	3		



	Systemic	2	0		
	Total	20	3		
Total		577	100		

Chart 7 and Table 7 show that 557 (97%) out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “Are you sure you are making the right choice regarding the university?”, and 411 of them (74%) were sure about their decision.

**Chart 7. Persuasion in choosing a university and profession**



**Table 7. Frequency distribution for the variable – I am sure I am making the right choice regarding my profession (A7)**

A7 I am sure I am making the right choice regarding my profession					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	1 Yes	411	71	74	74
	2 I am not sure	129	23	23	97
	3 No	17	3	3	100
	Total	557	97	100	

Missed	999	18	3		
	Systemic	2	0		
	Total	20	3		
Total		577	100		

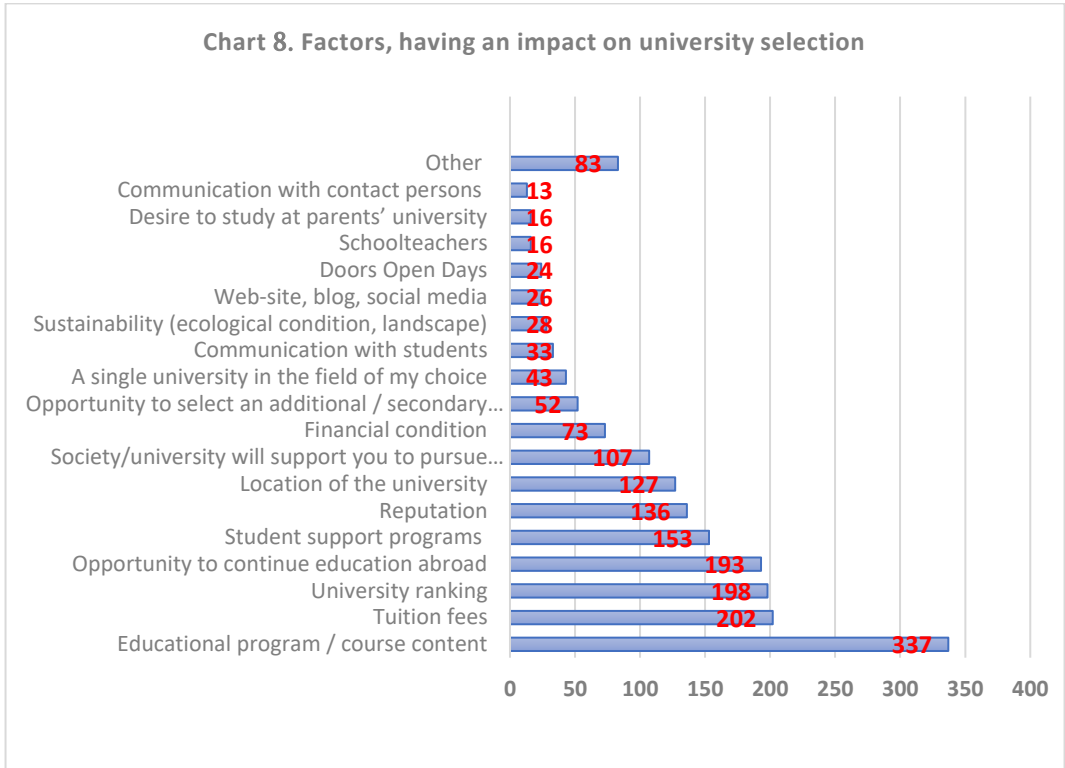
Chart 7 and Table 8 show that 557 (97%) out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “Are you sure you are making the right choice regarding the university?”, and 411 (74%) of them were sure they were choosing the proper career path.

**Table 8. Frequency distribution for the variable – I am sure I am making the right choice regarding the university (A8)**

A8 I am sure I am making the right choice regarding the university					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Yes	411	71	74	74
	2 I am not sure	128	22	23	97
	3 No	16	3	3	100
	Total	555	96	100	
Missed	999	19	3		
	Systemic	3	1		
	Total	22	4		
Total		577	100		

Chart 8 and Table 9 show the frequency analysis of the factors, having an impact on university selection. The factor – “Programs/course content” is characterized by the highest frequency value - 337 (18%), tuition fees - 202 (12%), university ranking - 198 (11%), opportunity to continue education abroad - 193 (10%), student support programs - 153 (9%), reputation - 136 (8%), location of the university - 127 (7%), etc.

**Chart 8. Factors, having an impact on university selection**



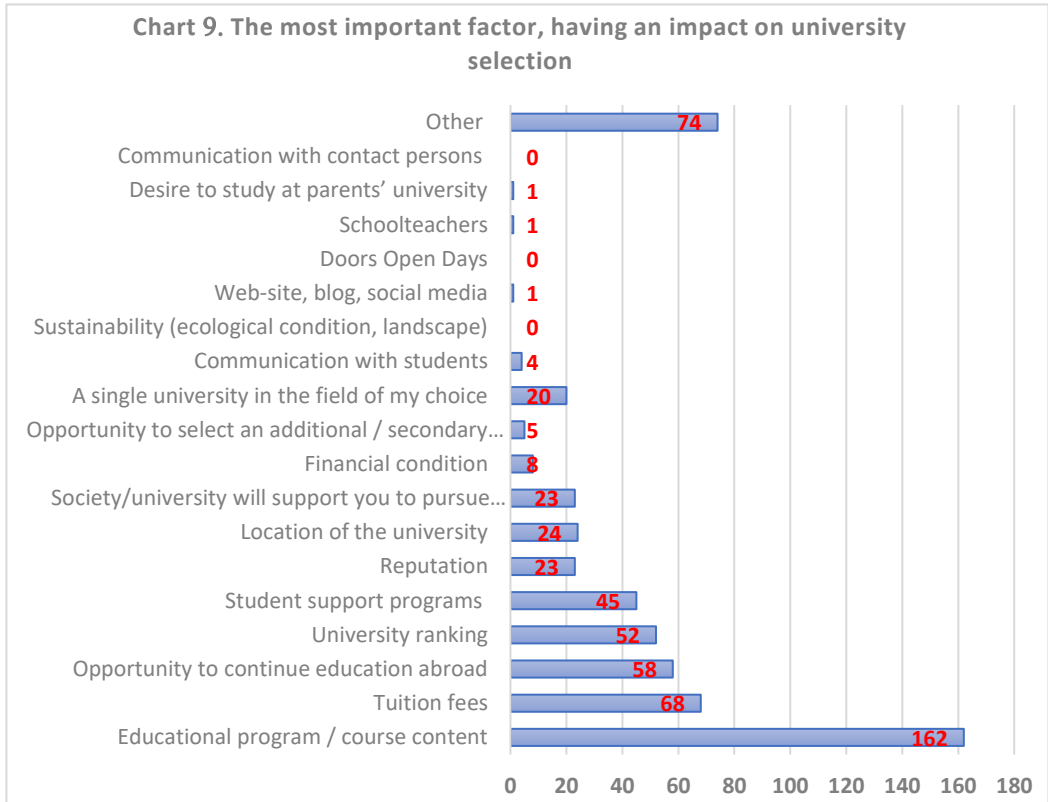
**Table 9. Frequency distribution for the variable – Factors having an impact on university selection (Please, mark several answers) (A9)**

A9 Which factors do you consider significant while selecting the university? (Please, mark several answers)			
		Responses	
		N	Percentage
Factors	A9_1 Location	127	7%
	A9_2 Educational program / course content	337	18%
	A9_3 Possibility of pursuing a hobby (sport, culture	106	6%
	A9_4 Student support programs	153	8%
	A9_5 Sustainability	29	2%
	A9_6 Tuition fees	202	11%

	A9_7 Doors Open Days	24	1%
	A9_8 Communication with students	32	2%
	A9_9 Communication with contact persons	13	1%
	A9_10 Web-site, blog, social media	26	1%
	A9_11 Advice of schoolteachers	15	1%
	A9_12 University ranking	<b>198</b>	11%
	A9_13 Reputation	136	7%
	A9_14 Financial condition	72	4%
	A9_15 Desire to study at parents' university	16	1%
	A9_16 Factor of being a single university in the selected field	42	2%
	A9_17 Opportunity to continue education abroad	193	10%
	A9_18 Opportunity to select an additional / secondary profession	51	3%
	A9_19 Other factors?	83	4%
Total		1855	100%

Chart 9 and Table 10 show that 535 out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “The most important factor, having an impact on university selection, is”. The factor – educational programs / course content – has the highest frequency value - 162 respondents (30%), tuition fees - 68 (13%), opportunity to continue education abroad - 58 (11%), university ranking - 52 (10%), student support programs - 23 (4%), reputation - 23 (4 %), location of the university - 24 (4%), etc.

**Chart 9. The most important factor, having an impact on university selection**



**Table 10. Frequency distribution for the variable – Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university? (A10)**

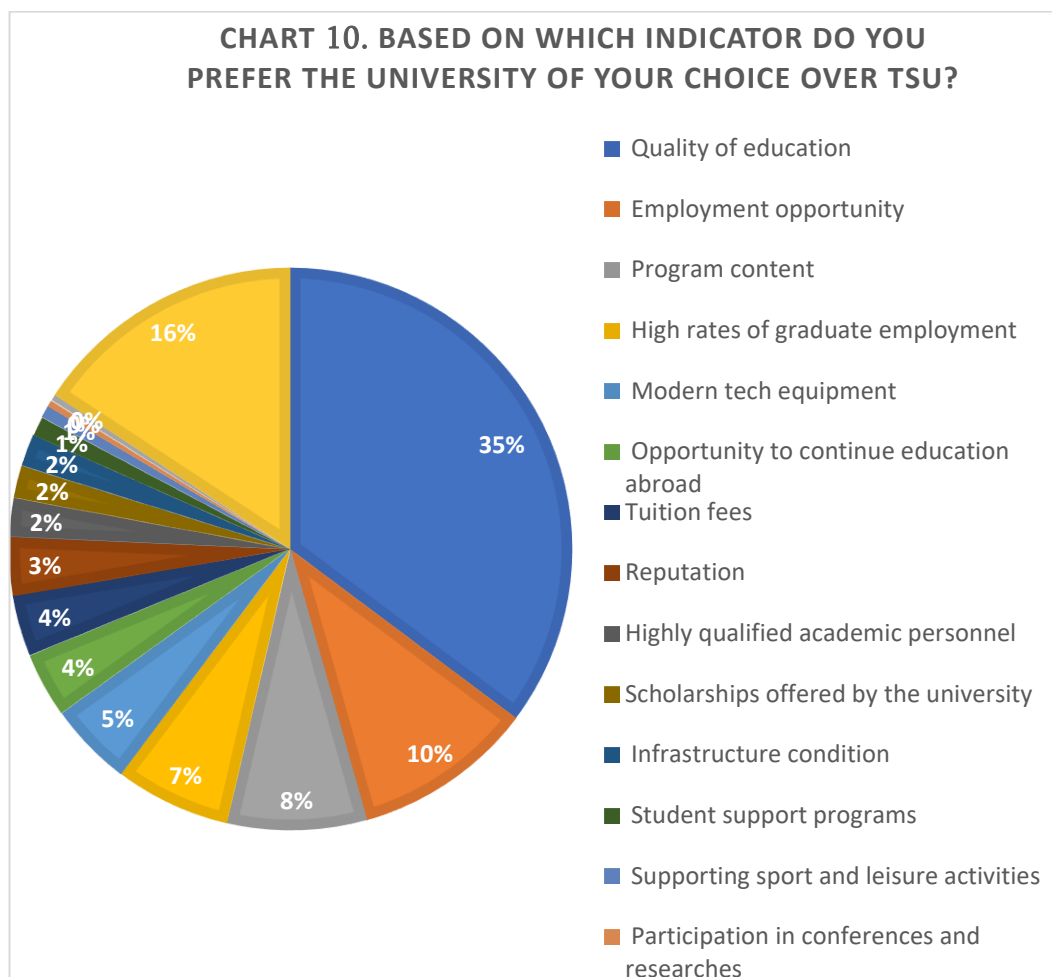
A10 Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Location of the university	24	4	4	4
	2 Educational program / course content	162	30	30	34

	3 Society / university support to pursue your hobby (sport, culture)	23	4	4	38
	4 Student support programs (available educational materials, insurance, support for persons with disabilities)	45	8	8	46
	6 Tuition fees	68	12	13	59
	8 Communication with students	4	1	1	60
	10 Web-site, blog, social media	1	0	0	60
	11 Schoolteachers	1	0	0	60
	12 University ranking	48	8	9	69
	13 Possibility to select an additional / secondary profession	5	1	1	70
	14 Reputation	23	4	4	74
	15 Financial condition	8	1	1	77
	16 Parents' university	2	0	0	77
	17 Being a single university in the selected field	20	3	4	81
	18 Opportunity to continue education abroad	58	10	11	92
	19 Other	43	7	8	100
	Total	535	93	100	
Missed	999	22	4		
	Systemic	20	3		
	Total	42	7		
Total		577	100		

Chart 10 and Table 11 show that 525 (91%) out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question – “Based on

which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?"; the indicator – "Quality of education" had the highest frequency value – 187 (33%), it was followed by "Employment opportunity" - 133 (26%), "Educational program content" - 43 (8%), "High rate of graduate employment" - 36 (7%), "Modern technological equipment" - 26 (5%), "Opportunity to continue education abroad" - 20 (3%), etc.

**Chart 10. Indicators that determine the choice of university**



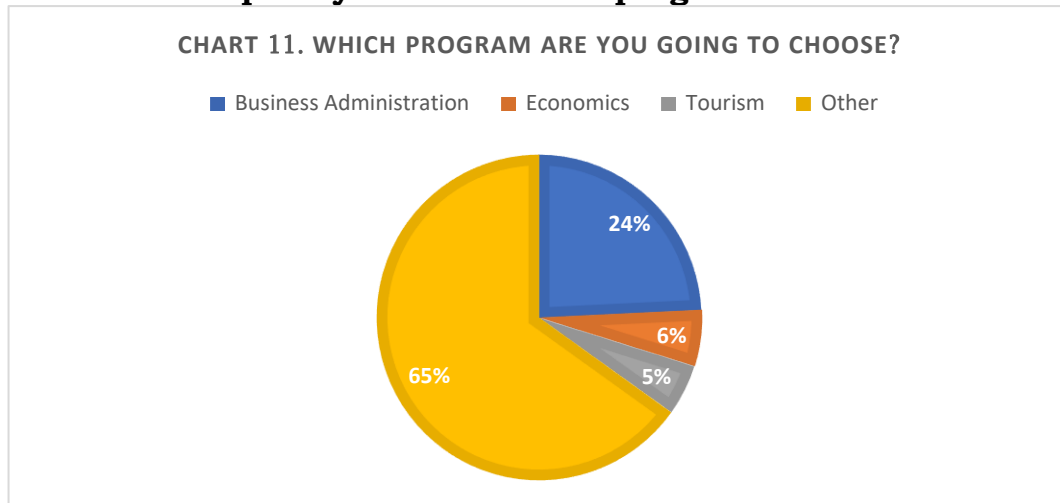
**Table 11. Frequency distribution for the variable – Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU (A11)**

A11 Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Program content	43	8	8	8
	2 Quality of education	187	36	36	44
	3 Scholarships offered by the university	10	2	2	46
	4 High rates of graduate employment	35	7	7	53
	5 Highly qualified academic personnel	12	2	2	55
	6 University, equipped with modern technologies	26	5	5	60
	8 Accommodation in student dormitory	2	0	0	60
	9 Supporting sport and leisure activities	4	1	1	61
	10 Infrastructure condition	10	2	2	63
	11 Tuition fees	19	4	4	67
	12 Reputation	18	3	3	70
	13 Opportunity to continue education abroad	20	3	3	73
	14 Student support programs	6	1	1	74
	15 Employment opportunity	133	26	26	100
	Total	525	91	100	
Missed	999	52	9		
Total		577	100		

Chart 10 and Table 12 show the frequency distribution of university entrants by programs. 553 out of 577 respondents, participating in the survey, answered the question. The Business Administration Program was chosen by 134 respondents, the Economics Program – by 31 respondents, the Tourism Program – by 28 respondents, other programs - by 360 respondents.



**Chart 11. Frequency distribution of program choice**



**Table 12. Frequency distribution for the variable – Which program are you going to choose? (A12)**

A12 Which program are you going to choose?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Business Administration	134	24	24	24
	2 Economics	31	6	6	30
	3 Tourism	28	5	5	35
	4 Other	360	65	65	100
	Total	553	100	100	
Missed	999	21	4		
	Systemic	3	1		
	Total	24	4		
Total		577	100		

## DEEP ANALYSIS BASED ON SPSS STATISTICS PROGRAM

### 1. Identification of the relationship between the variables – “Region” and “Which university do you prefer?” – using cross tabulation analysis. Hypothesis 1: A region has an impact on university selection.

To evaluate the above-mentioned hypothesis, we used cross tabulation analysis. We placed the variable A3 – Which university do you prefer? - in the columns, and A1 – A region has an impact on university selection – in the rows of cross tabulations. A percentage shows the proportion of each category within a region.

By integrating **Chi-Square** test with the statistical section of cross tabulation analysis, we received two tables: Table 13, which shows frequency value and percent proportion of the variable A3 by regions, and Table 14, which shows the Chi-Square test result.

**Table 13. University selection by regions**

A1 Region * A3 Which university do you prefer? Cross-tabulation																
A3 Which university do you prefer?																
Regions		TSU	Business and Technology University	Kutaisi International University	Ilia State University	Agricultural University of Georgia	Georgian Technical University	Free University	The University of Georgia	GAU	SEU	Caucasus International University	Caucasus University	Black Sea University	Other universities	Total
1 Tbilisi	Frequency	53	7	3	24	3	7	18	2	2	4	2	14	5	40	184
	% Region	29%	4%	2%	13%	2%	4%	10%	1%	1%	2%	1%	8%	3%	22%	100%
2 Mtskh	Frequency	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	15

*TSU Competitiveness Assessment Based on the Research of  
University Entrants' Attitude*

	en cy															
	% Re gio n	<b>53%</b>	7%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	7%	7%	100%
<b>3 Inereti</b>	Fre qu en cy	21	2	3	7	4	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	1	6	49
	% Re gio n	<b>43%</b>	4%	6%	14%	8%	0%	2%	4%	0%	4%	0%	0%	2%	12%	100%
<b>4 Guria</b>	Fre qu en cy	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	14
	% Re gio n	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>43%</b>	100%
<b>5 Kakheti</b>	Fre qu en cy	31	1	0	8	2	3	5	3	0	4	0	2	2	8	69
	% Re gio n	<b>45%</b>	1%	0%	12%	3%	4%	7%	4%	0%	6%	0%	3%	3%	12%	100%
<b>6 Achara</b>	Fre qu en cy	10	1	2	3	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	1	23	46
	% Re gio n	22%	2%	4%	7%	0%	0%	7%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%	2%	<b>50%</b>	100%
<b>7 Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti</b>	Fre qu en cy	4	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
	% Re gio n	<b>50%</b>	0%	38%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<b>8 Samegrelo</b>	Fre qu en cy	23	2	1	12	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	7	54

	% Re gio n	<b>43%</b>	4%	2%	22%	0%	7%	6%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	13%	100%
9 Samtskhe-Javakheti	Fre qu en cy	23	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	11	42
	% Re gio n	<b>55%</b>	5%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%	26%	100%
10 Kvemo Kartli	Fre qu en cy	25	0	0	5	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	38
	% Re gio n	<b>66%</b>	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	5%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	11%	100%
11 Shida Kartli	Fre qu en cy	13	1	0	5	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	35
	% Re gio n	<b>37%</b>	3%	0%	14%	3%	0%	14%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	23%	100%
Total	Fre qu en cy	216	17	12	68	10	16	37	13	2	15	3	19	12	114	<b>554</b>
	% Re gio n	<b>39%</b>	3%	2%	12%	2%	3%	7%	2%	0%	3%	1%	3%	2%	21%	100%

Table 13 clearly demonstrates which universities are prioritized in different regions; TSU is characterized by the highest frequency value (39%), followed by other universities (21%), Ilia State University (12%), and Georgian Technical University (7%). TSU has the highest percent proportion in Kvemo Kartli (66% of respondents), as well as Samtskhe-Javakheti (55% of respondents), Mtskheta-Mtianeti (53% of respondents), Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti (50% of respondents); then in Kakheti (45% of respondents), Imereti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (43% of respondents); Shida Kartli (37% of respondents), Tbilisi (29% of respondents). The

category – “Other universities” showed a high percentage rate only in Achara and Guria, with a frequency value of 50 % and 43%, accordingly.

By integrating Chi-Square test with cross tabulation analysis, we find out that there is a statistically significant correlation between the variables “Region” and “Which university do you prefer?”. Table 14 demonstrates the level of statistical importance – Asymptotic Significance (2-sided), or p-value, and based on the following table, it is less than 0.01.

**Table 14. Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	228.821 <sup>a</sup>	130	.000
Likelihood Ratio	202.951	130	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.012	1	.008
N of Valid Cases	554		

So, we see that it is a null hypothesis; our hypothesis - **“A region has an impact on university selection”** has been approved by cross tabulation analysis.

## **2. Identification of the relationship between the variables – “Region” A1 and “Which is the most significant factor while selecting a university?” (A10) – using cross tabulation analysis.**

**Hypothesis 2. Respondent-entrants from each region are affected by different factors for university selection.**

We used cross tabulation analysis to test this hypothesis. We are stating that there is a correlation between the variables A1 (Region) and A10 (Which is the most significant factor while selecting a university?). By integrating Chi-Square test with cross tabulation analysis, we receive the following tables:

Table 15 demonstrates the summary data, frequency rate and percent proportion of respondent participation in this survey;

**Table 15. Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
A1 Region * A10 Which is the most important factor to consider while selecting a university?	533	92.4%	44	7.6%	577	100.0%

Table 16 shows frequency distribution of certain factors affecting university selection by entrants in different regions. Particularly, Table 16 demonstrates that the highest frequency value was associated with the following factors affecting university selection: “Educational programs / course content” – in Tbilisi (40%) and six regions: Imereti (14), Kakheti (27%), Achara (10%), Mtskheta-Mtianeti (10%), Racha-Lechkhumi (4%), Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneti (15%), Shida Kartli (9%); “Tuition fees” – in two regions: Kvemo Kartli (13%), Samtskhe-Javakheti (10%); “Location” and “Program content” – Guria (4%); “University ranking” – Mtskheta-Mtianeti (5%).

**Table 16. Factors affecting the university selection process by regions**

Table 16 Factors affecting the university selection process by regions																
A1 Region * A10 Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?																
Cross-tabulation																
Regions	A10 Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?														Total	
	Location of the university	Educational program / course content	Society / university support to pursue your programs (available)	Tuition fees	Communication with students	Web-site, blog, social media	Schoolteachers	University ranking	Possibility to select an additional / secondary	Reputation	Financial condition	Parents' university	Being a single university in the selected field	Opportunity to continue education abroad	Other	Total

1	Tbilisi	Fr	4	64	9	12	17	0	0	1	15	1	8	1	1	4	22	18	177
		%	17	40%	39%	27%	25	0%	0%	0%	31	20%	35	13	50	20%	38%	43	33%
2	Mtskhet	Fr	0	3	0	2	3	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	15
		%	0%	2%	0%	5%	4%	0%	0%	0%	10	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%
3	Imereti	Fr	1	14	1	2	9	0	0	0	6	0	3	1	0	5	5	1	48
		%	4%	9%	4%	5%	13	0%	0%	0%	13	0%	13	13	0%	25%	9%	2%	9%
4	Guria	Fr	4	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	14
		%	17	3%	4%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%
5	Kakheti	Fr	0	27	5	4	5	1	0	0	5	1	4	1	1	1	6	7	68
		%	0%	17%	22%	9	7%	25.	0%	0%	10	20%	17.	13	5%	5%	10.	17	13%
6	Achara	Fr	6	10	1	4	0	0	0	0	6	1	1	1	0	1	6	4	41
		%	25	6%	4%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13	20%	4.3	13	0%	5%	10%	10	8%
7	Rach	Fr	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
		%	4%	3%	4%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
8	Samegr	Fr	1	15	4	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	4	5	4	51
		%	4%	9%	17%	23%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	13	0%	20%	9%	10	10%
9	Samtskh	Fr	4	5	1	4	10	3	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	4	4	39
		%	17	3%	4%	9%	15	75	0%	0%	2%	40%	0.0	13	0%	0%	7%	10	7%
10	Kvemo	Fr	1	7	0	1	13	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	4	5	1	37
		%	4%	4%	0.0%	2%	19	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	4%	25	0%	20%	9%	2%	7%
11	Shida Kartli	Fr	2	9	0	4	4	0	1	0	6	0	2	0	0	1	4	2	35
		%	8%	6%	0.0%	9%	6%	0%	0%	0%	13	0%	9%	0.0	0%	5%	7%	5%	7%
Total		Fr	24	162	23	44	68	4	1	1	48	5	23	8	2	20	58	42	533
		%	5%	30%	5.5%	8%	13	1%	0%	0.	9%	1%	5%	2%	0%	4%	11%	22	100

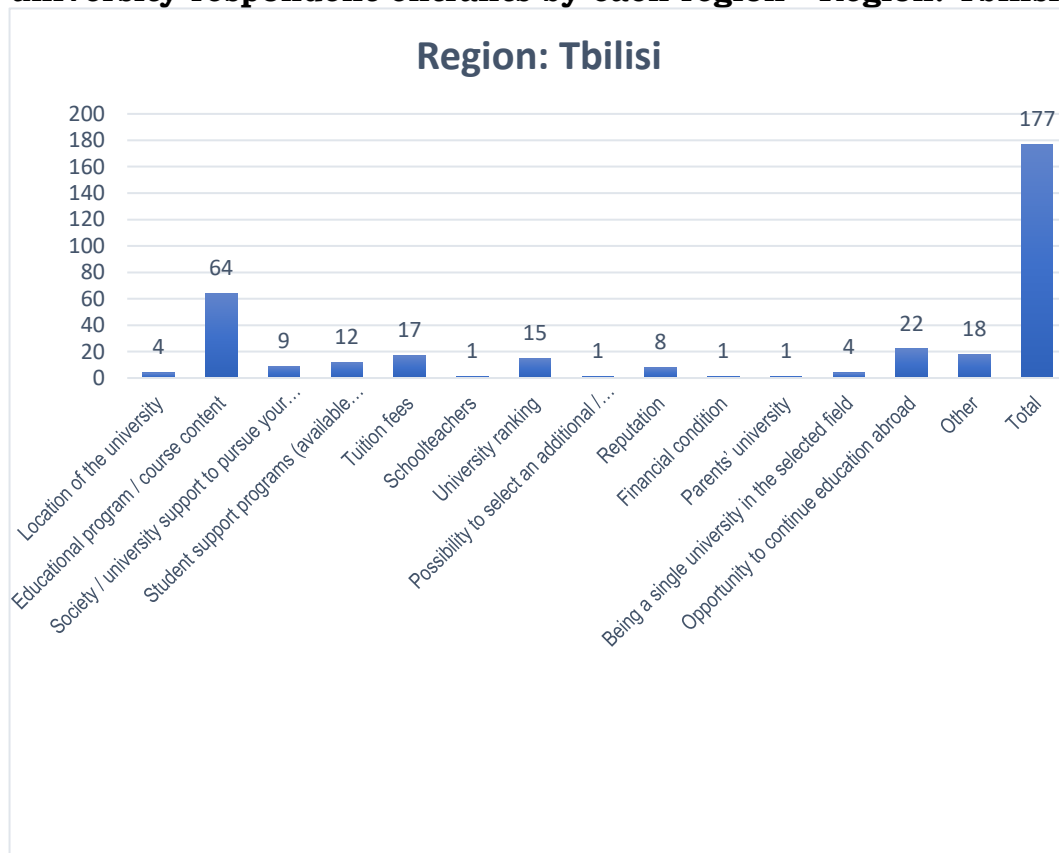
Table 17 shows Chi-Square test result, where P is less than 0.01, indicating that there is a statistically significant correlation between variables A1 (Region) and A10 (Which is the most significant factor affecting university selection?).

**Table 17. Chi-Square test**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	224.953 <sup>a</sup>	150	.000
Likelihood Ratio	200.373	150	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	.014	1	.906
N of Valid Cases	533		

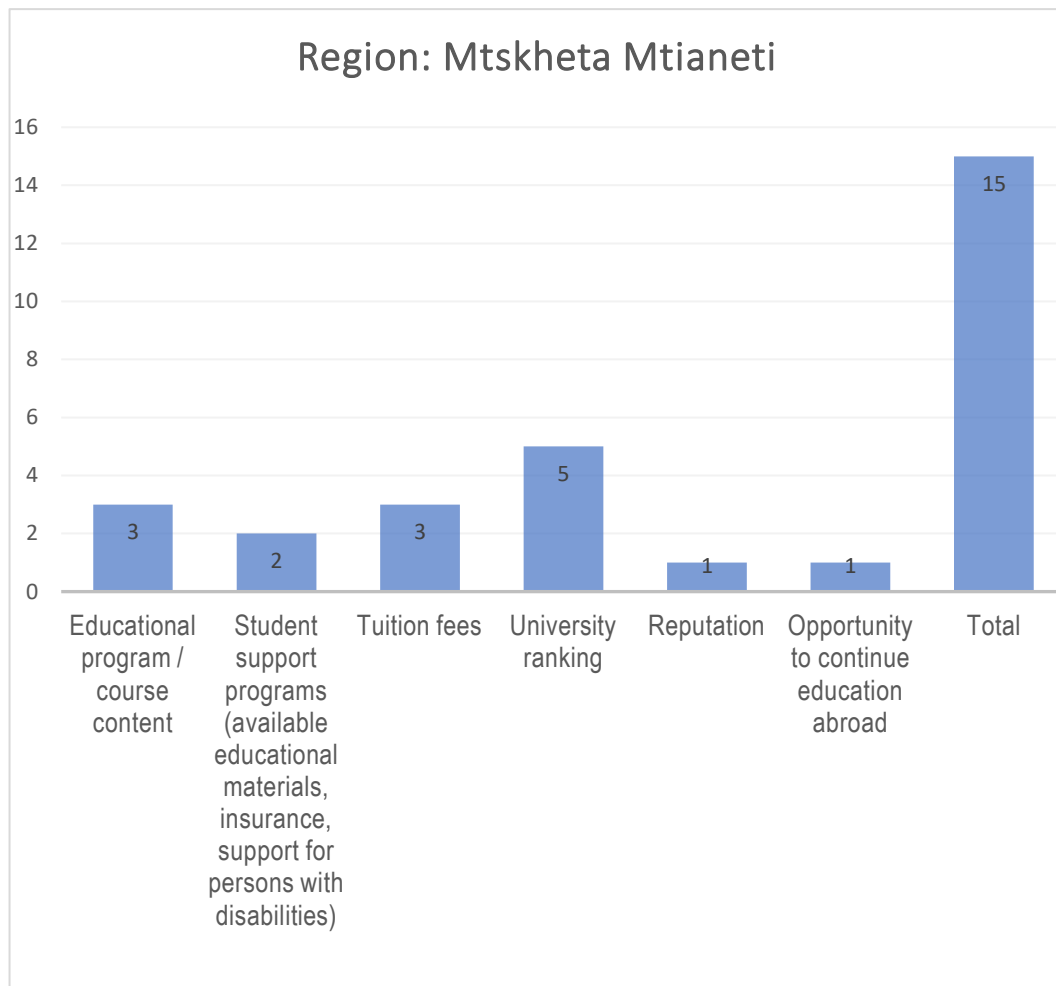
**Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region (see Chart 12 - 22):**

**Chart 12. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Tbilisi**

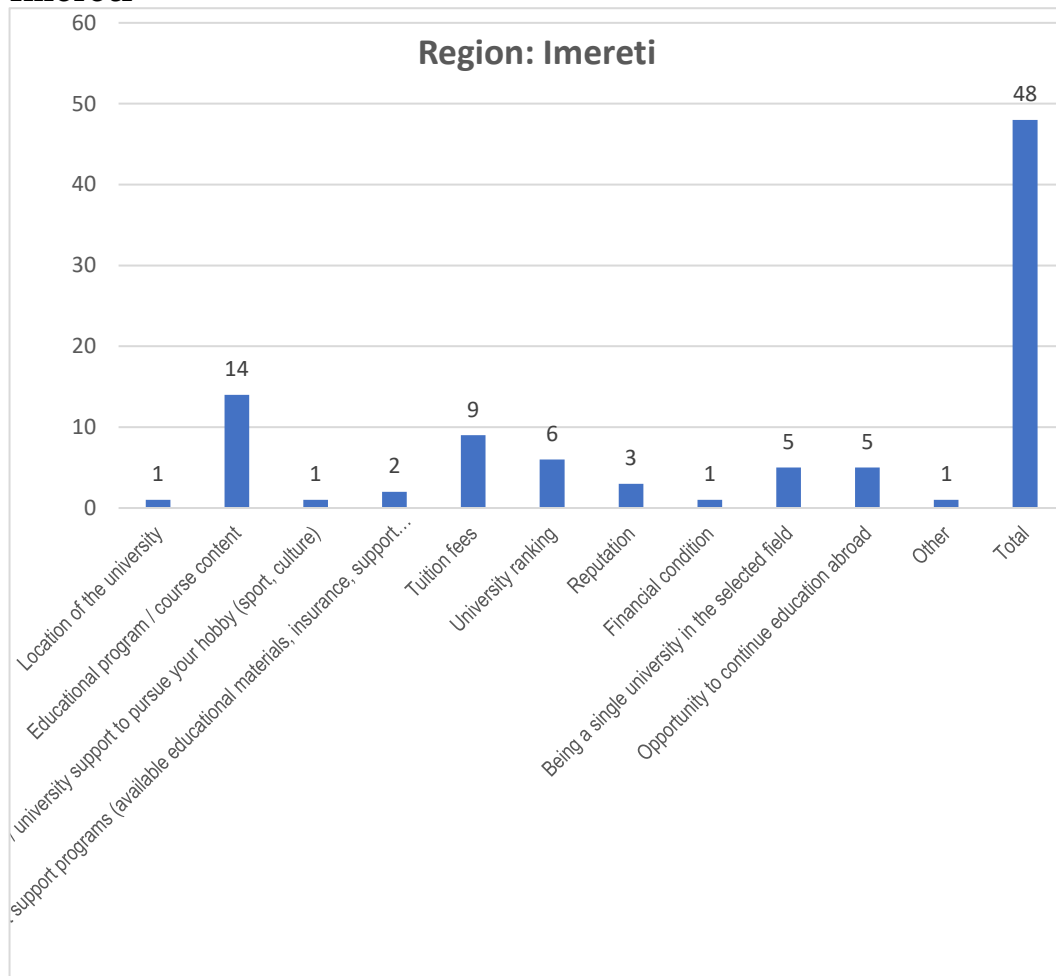




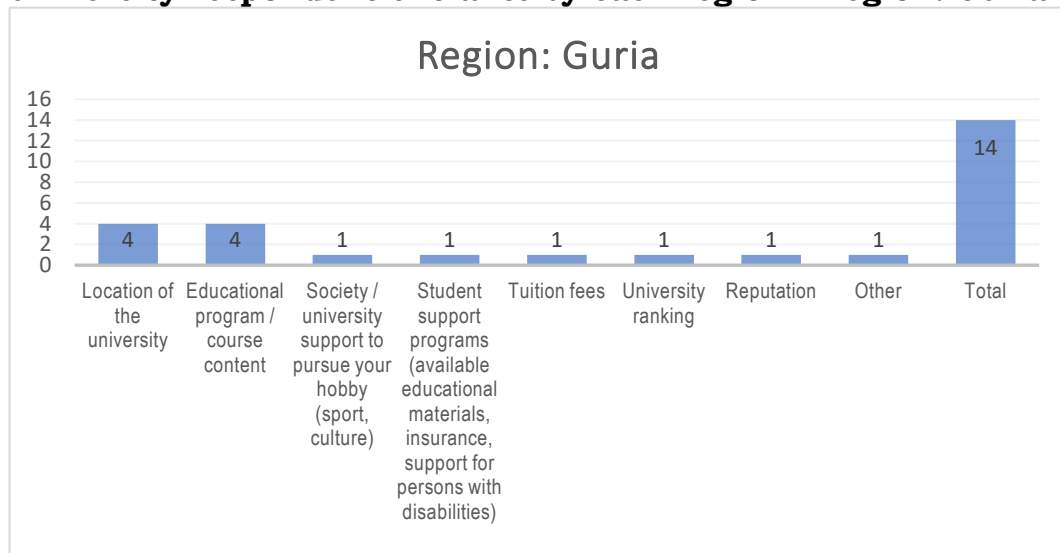
**Chart 13. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Mtskheta Mtianeti**



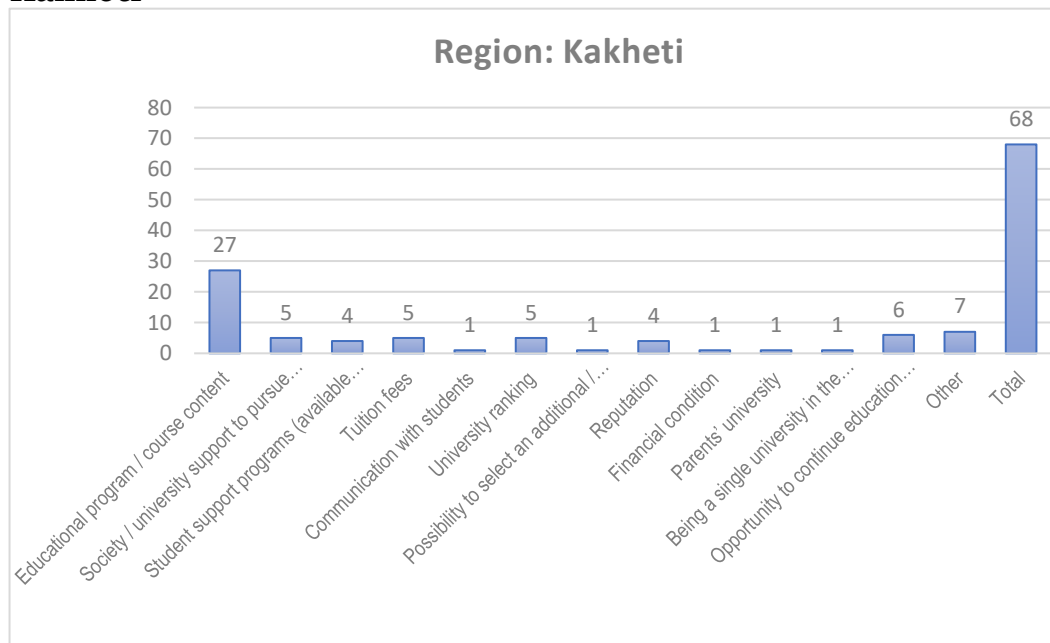
**Chart 14. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Imereti**



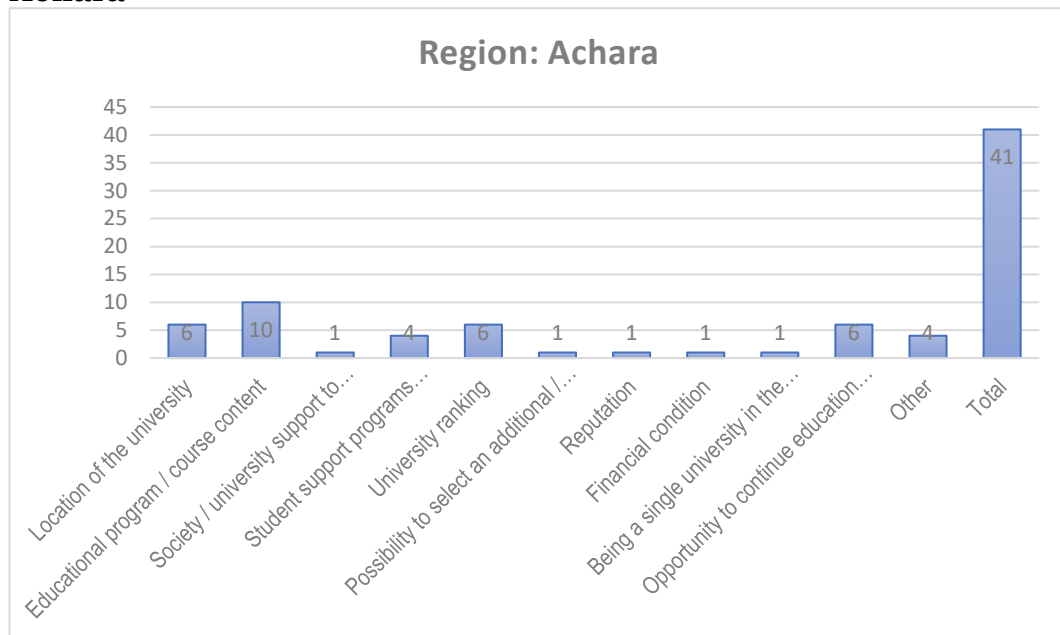
**Chart 15 Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Guria**



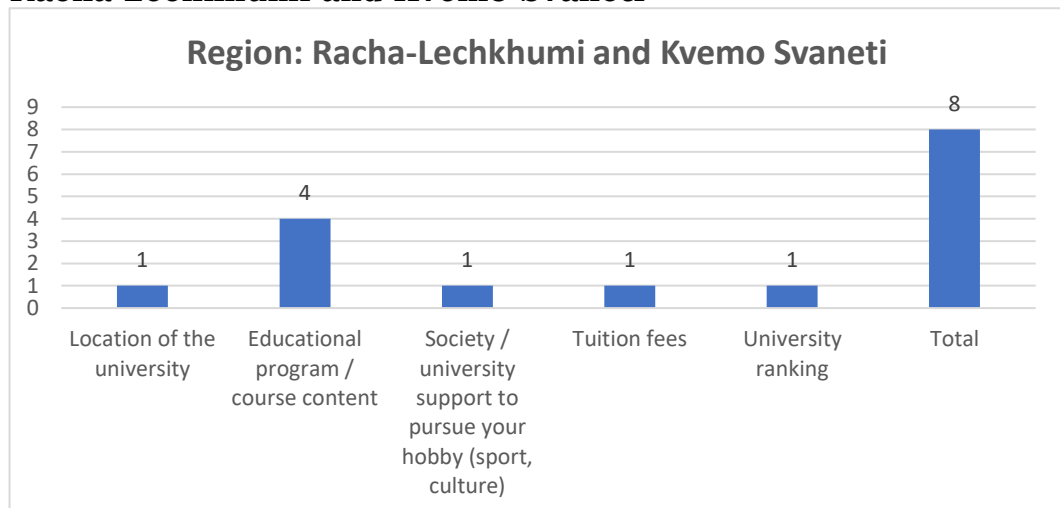
**Chart 16. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Kakheti**



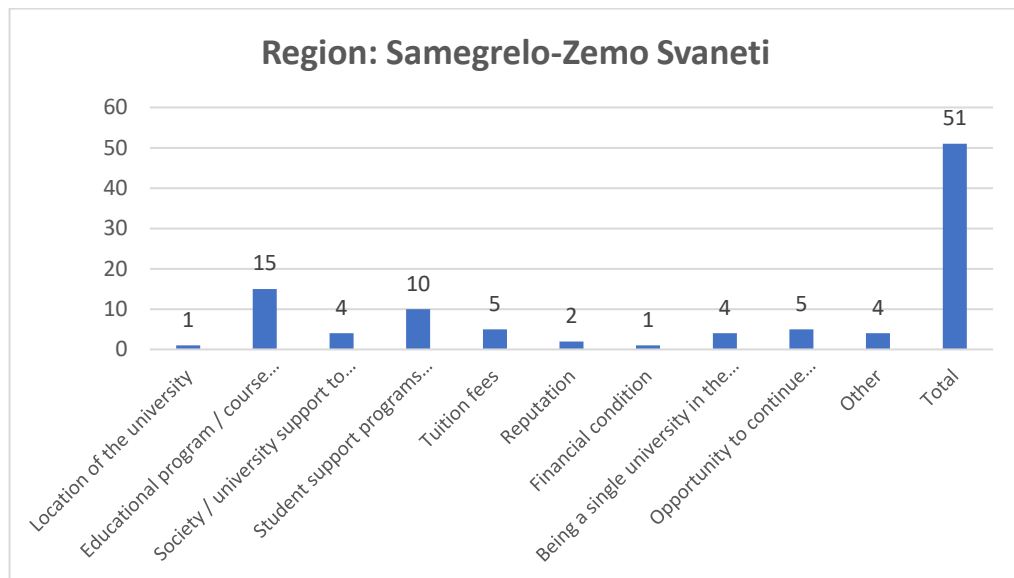
**Chart 17. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Achara**



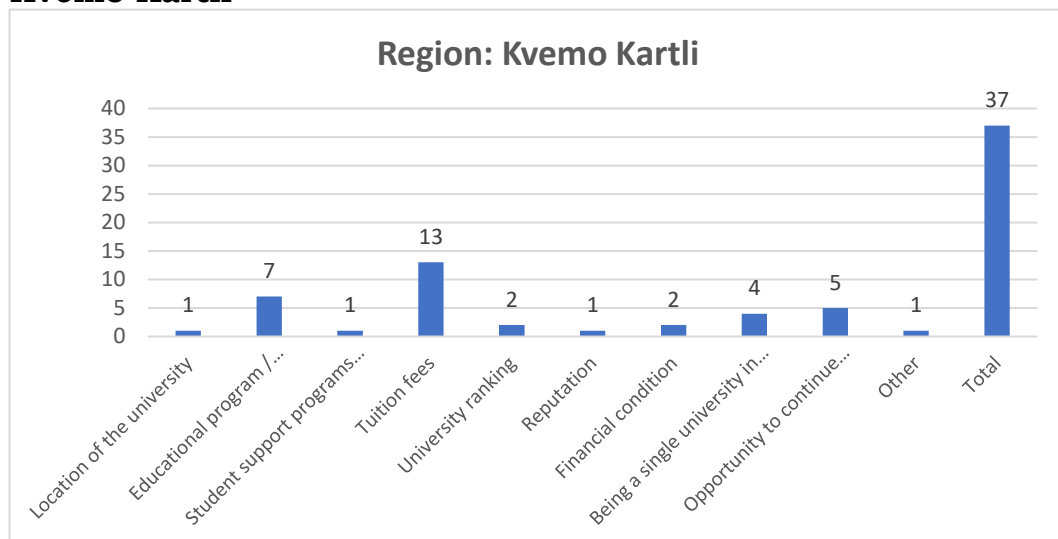
**Chart 18. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti**



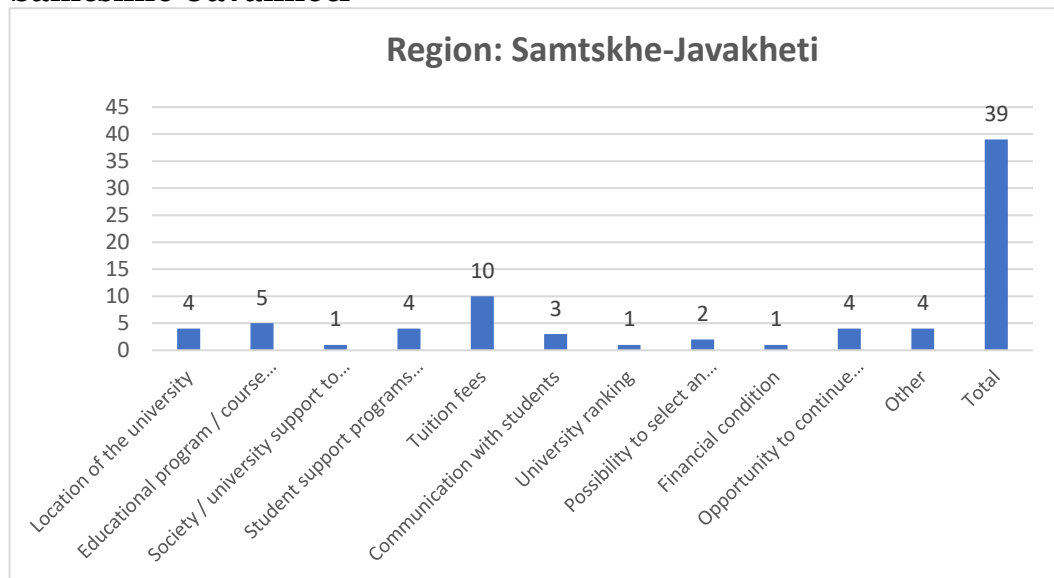
**Chart 19. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti**



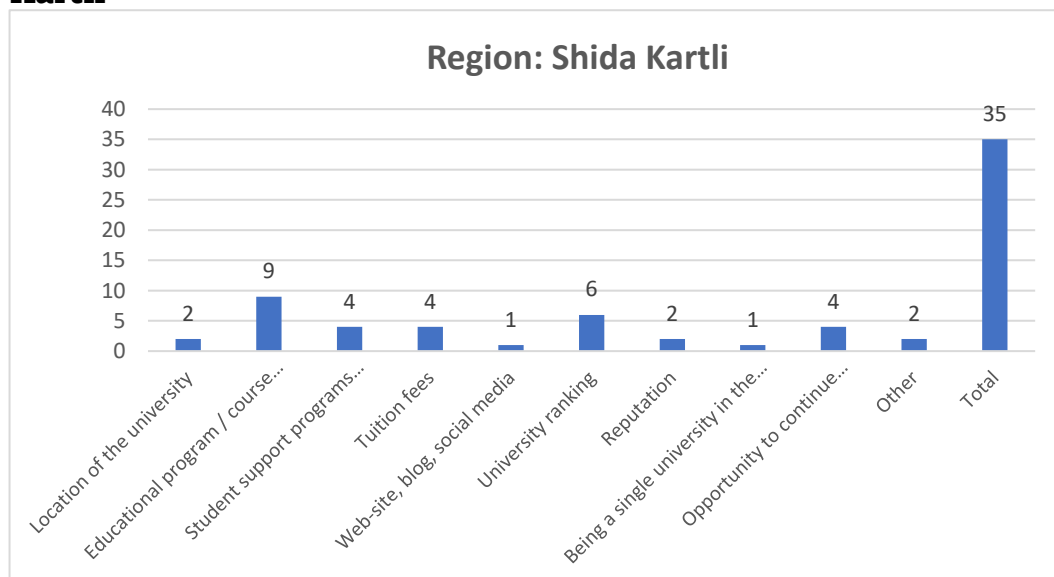
**Chart 20. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Kvemo Kartli**



**Chart 21. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Samtskhe-Javakheti**



**Chart 22. Graphical presentation of the factors, named by university respondent-entrants by each region - Region: Shida Kartli**



### 3. Determining the correlation between factors, considered while selecting a program and university by respondents (A12x A10)

**Hypothesis 3: While choosing a program, respondents consider the factors affecting university selection.**

With Kruskal-Wallis test we determined the correlation between the variables - A12 (Which program are you choosing?) and A10 (Which factor is the most significant to consider while selecting a university?). We received tables, where Table 18 showed median values, and Table 19 – the correlation between them.

**Table 18. Median values**

Table 18. Ranks			
	A10- Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?	N	Mean Rank
A12- Which program are you going to choose?	1 Location of the university	24	220.79
	2 Educational program / course content	162	281.18
	3 Society / university support to pursue your hobby (sport, culture)	23	262.28
	4 Student support programs (available educational materials, insurance, support for persons with disabilities)	45	291.71
	6 Tuition fees	68	203.90
	8 Communication with students	3	121.33
	10 Web-site, blog, social media	1	361.00
	11 Schoolteachers	1	67.00
	12 University ranking	48	233.18
	13 Possibility to select an additional / secondary profession	5	302.20
	14 Reputation	22	159.57
	15 Financial condition	8	324.25
	16 Parents' university	2	214.00
	17 Being a single university in the selected field	20	331.60
	18 Opportunity to continue education abroad	58	289.66
	19 Other	42	343.88
	Total	532	

In Table 19 for statistical parameters, Chi-Square equals 71.110, and the level of statistical significance -  $P < 0.001$ , confirming that there is a correlation between these two variables. It proves

authenticity of the hypothesis: “While choosing a program, respondents consider the factors affecting university selection”.

**Table 19. Test Statistics**

	A12 Which program are you going to choose?
Chi-Square	71.110
df	15
Asymp. Sig.	.000

**4. Analyzing correlation between the variables - A4 (At which university are you going to continue your education?) and A11 (Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?) ( A4 x A11)**

We conducted a research using customer tables and Chi-Square test to determine based on which indicator entrants preferred other institutions over TSU, while selecting a university.

In Table 20 we received frequency distribution of each answer to a multiple-response question – variable A4 (At which university are you going to continue your studies?) to variable A11 (Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?). According to the data, the following factors have the highest frequency value: quality of education – 123 respondents; employment opportunity – 68 respondents; high rate of graduate employment - 23 respondents; program content - 21 respondents; modern technological equipment – 12 respondents; opportunity to continue education abroad – 11 respondents.



**Table 20. Advantage of your desirable university over TSU**

		A4 At which university are you going to continue your education?											
		A4_1 TSU	A4_2 Business and Technology University	A4_3 Kutaisi International University	A4_4 Ilia State University	A4_5 Agricultural University of Georgia	A4_6 Georgian Technical University	A4_7 Free University	A4_8 The University of Georgia	A4_9 Georgian-American University	A4_10 Georgian National University	A4_11 Caucasus International University	Total
A11 Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?	1 Program content	21	5	1	12	2	5	4	4	0	3	1	58
	2 Quality of education	123	23	9	72	18	25	25	8	4	21	13	341
	3 Scholarships offered by the university	6	0	0	7	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	19
	4 High rates of graduate employment	23	6	1	16	7	3	8	0	0	3	0	67
	5 Highly qualified academic personnel	7	0	0	5	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	17
	6 University, equipped with modern technologies	12	5	6	14	8	10	3	4	1	12	1	76
	8 Accommodation in student dormitory	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
	9 Supporting sport and leisure activities	2	1	3	3	1	3	1	0	0	3	0	17
	10 Infrastructure condition	6	1	2	5	2	2	1	0	0	4	0	23
	11 Tuition fees	11	5	0	10	3	3	2	1	0	1	2	38
	12 Reputation	11	2	1	11	4	1	5	0	1	2	0	38
	13 Opportunity to continue education abroad	11	0	2	6	2	0	6	0	0	2	2	31
	14 Student support programs	5	3	0	5	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	16
	15 Employment opportunity	68	17	5	41	22	8	21	12	4	14	9	221
	16 Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

In table 21, using Chi-Square test we received a table of statistical parameters, based on which ( $p < 0.01$ ) we conclude that answers of the entrants who would like to enroll at different universities, vary with the indicators by which they prefer other institutions over TSU. So, the variable A4 (At which university are you going to continue your studies?) is significantly affected by the variable A11 (Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?)

**Table 21. Pearson Chi-Square Test**

	\$NEW_A4
Chi-square	244.858
A11 Based on which indicator do you prefer your desirable university over TSU? df	143
Sig.	.000

In order to determine the strength of correlation between these two variables, we used Correlation Analysis. Based on the data of Table 22 we suppose that there **is weak positive correlation** between the variables – A3 (Which university do you prefer?) and A11 (Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?)

**Table 22. Correlations between the variables – A3 and A11**

		A3 Which university do you prefer?	A11 Based on which indicator do you prefer your desirable university over TSU?
A3 Which university do you prefer?	Pearson Correlation	1	.087*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048
	N	558	523
A11 Based on which indicator do you prefer the university of your choice over TSU?	Pearson Correlation	.087*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	
	N	523	525

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Determination of correlation between the variables – “Region” (A1) and “Continuing education at TSU” (A4\_1) using T-Test ( A1\* A4\_1)

Table 23, designed using T-Test, demonstrates the results of group statistics – the difference between median values for two independent selections (A1 Region and A4\_1 Are you going to continue your education at TSU?)

**Table 23. Group Statistics**

	A4_1 Are you going to continue your education at TSU?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
A1 Region	1 Yes	326	5.20	3.505	.194
	2 No	227	4.32	3.404	.226

Table 24 designed using T-Test, demonstrates the results of Levene's test.

**Table 24. Levene's Test Results**

Levene's Test Results										
		Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Means subtracted	Standard error of difference	95% confidence interval	
									Lower	Upper
A1/Region	Equal variances assumed	.166	.684	2.936	551	.003	.879	.299	.291	1.467
	Equal variances not assumed			2.951	495.193	.003	.879	.298	.294	1.464

Table 24 shows that depending on regions the median values of those willing to continue education at TSU or those who do not, differ from each other. There is a statistically significant correlation of 0.01 between these variables (P=0.003), and T=2.936.

**6. A list of the most significant factors considered by respondent-entrants while selecting a university, presented for different educational programs.**

**Hypothesis 4. The selection of programs by the respondent-entrants is influenced by the factors affecting the selection of the university.**

The aim of the study is to determine dependence of the variable A10 (Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?) on A12 (Which program are you going to choose?):

1. Business Administration
2. Economics
3. Tourism
4. Other

The results of the study are presented for each of these categories. Also, there is a graphical representation of frequency distribution of the variable A10 (Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?) for each program.

**1. A study based on the Business Administration Program.**

Table 25 shows frequency distribution of entrant answers regarding the variable A10 (Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?) for the Business Administration Program.

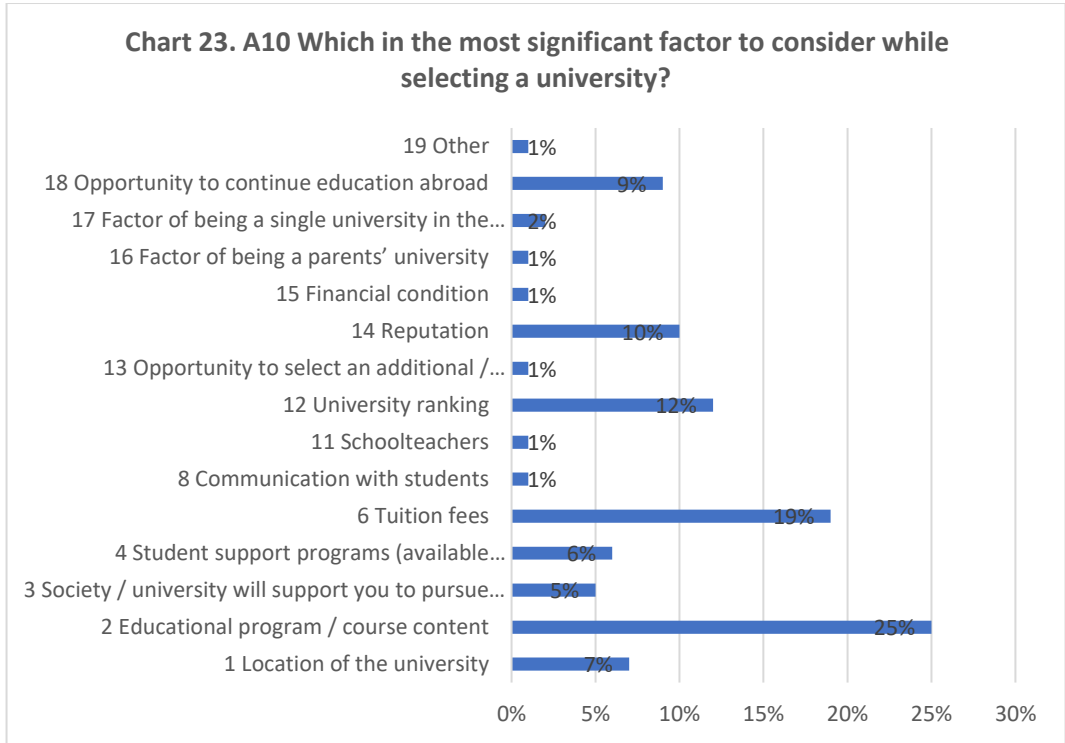
**Table 25. Factors having an impact on selecting the Business Administration Program**

<b>A10 Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?<sup>a</sup></b>					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Location of the university	10	7%	7%	7%
	2 Educational program / course content	34	25%	25%	32%
	3 Society / university will support you to pursue a hobby (sport, culture)	7	5%	5%	37%
	4 Student support programs (available educational materials, insurance...)	8	6%	6%	43%
	6 Tuition fees	25	19%	19%	62%
	8 Communication with students	1	1%	1%	63%
	11 Schoolteachers	1	1%	1%	64%
	12 University ranking	16	12%	12%	76%
	13 Opportunity to select an additional / secondary profession	1	1%	1%	77%
	14 Reputation	13	10%	10%	87%
	15 Financial condition	1	1%	1%	88%
	16 Factor of being a parents' university	1	1%	1%	89%
	17 Factor of being a single university in the selected field	2	1%	2%	90%
	18 Opportunity to continue education abroad	12	9%	9%	99%
	19 Other	1	1%	1%	100%
	Total	133	99%	100	
Missed		1	1%		
Total		134	100%		

According to the data given in Table 26 (and/or Chart 23), the most significant factors that influence university selection based on the Business Administration Program, are as follows: program content

- 25%; tuition fees - 25%; university ranking - 16%; reputation - 13%; opportunity to continue education abroad - 12%.

**Chart 23. The Most Significant Factors That Influence University Selection Baded on the Business Administration Program.**



**2. A study based on the Economics Program**

Table 26. shows frequency distribution of entrant answers regarding the variable A10 (Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?) for the Economics Program.

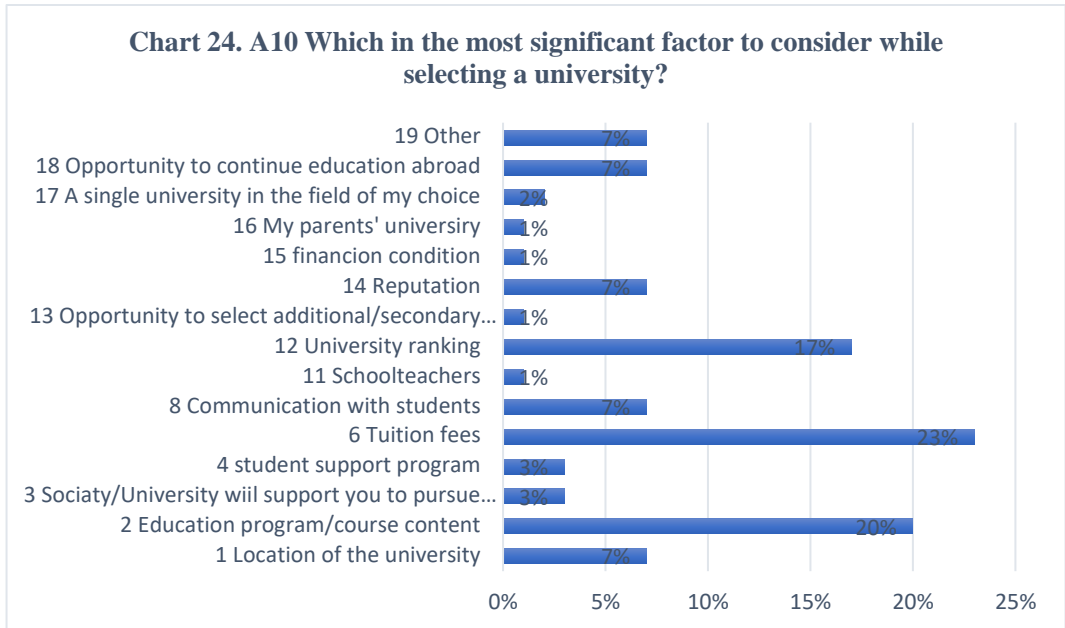
**Table 26. Factors having an impact on selecting the Economics Program**

A10 Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university? <sup>a</sup>					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Cat	1 Location of the university	2	6%	7%	7%

2 Educational program / course content	6	19%	20%	27%
3 Society / university will support you to pursue a hobby (sport, culture)	1	3%	3%	30%
4 Student support programs (available educational materials, insurance...)	1	3%	3%	33%
6 Tuition fees	7	23%	23%	57%
8 Communication with students	2	6%	7%	63%
12 University ranking	5	16%	17%	80%
14 Reputation	2	6%	7%	87%
18 Opportunity to continue education abroad	2	6%	7%	93%
19 Other	2	6%	7%	100%
Total	30	97%	100%	
Missed	1	3%		
Total	31	100%		

According to the data given in Table 6.2 (and/or Chart 27), the most significant factors that influence university selection based on the Economics Program, are as follows: tuition fees - 23%; program content - 20%; university ranking - 17%.

## Chart 24. Factors having an impact on selecting the Economics Program



### 3. A study based on the Tourism Program

Table 28 shows frequency distribution of entrant answers regarding the variable A10 (Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?) for the Tourism Program.

**Table 27. Factors having an impact on selecting the Tourism Program**

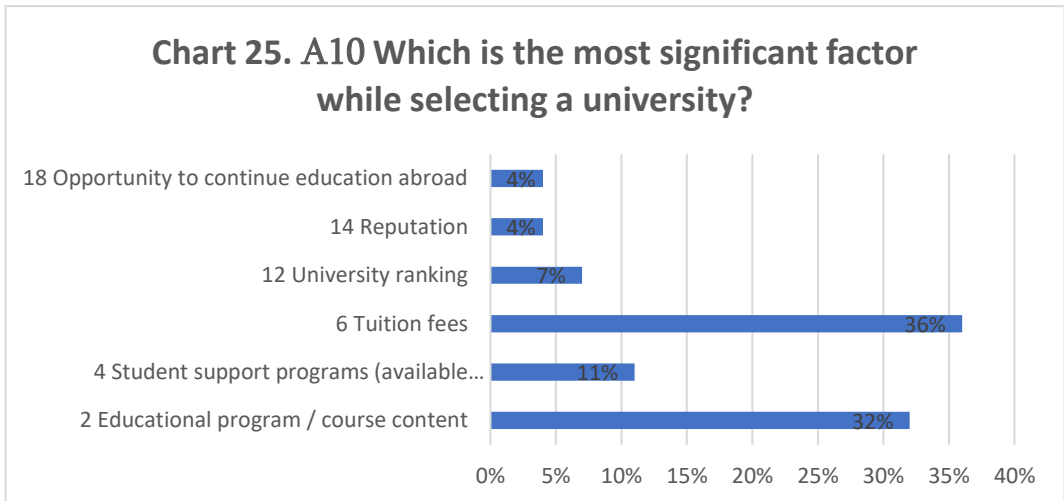
A10 Which is the most significant factor while selecting a university?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	2 Educational program / course content	9	32%	35%	35%
	4 Student support programs (available educational materials, insurance, support programs for people with disabilities)	3	11%	12%	46%
	6 Tuition fees	10	36%	38%	85%



	12 University ranking	2	7%	8%	92%
	14 Reputation	1	4%	4%	96%
	18 Opportunity to continue education abroad	1	4%	4%	100%
	Total	26	93%	100%	
Missed		2	7%		
Total		28	100%		

According to the data given in Table 27 (and/or Chart 25), the most significant factors that influence university selection based on the Tourism Program, are as follows: tuition fees - 36%; program content - 32%;

**Chart 25. The Most Significant Factors That Influence University Selection Baded on the Tourism Program**



**4. A study based on other programs**

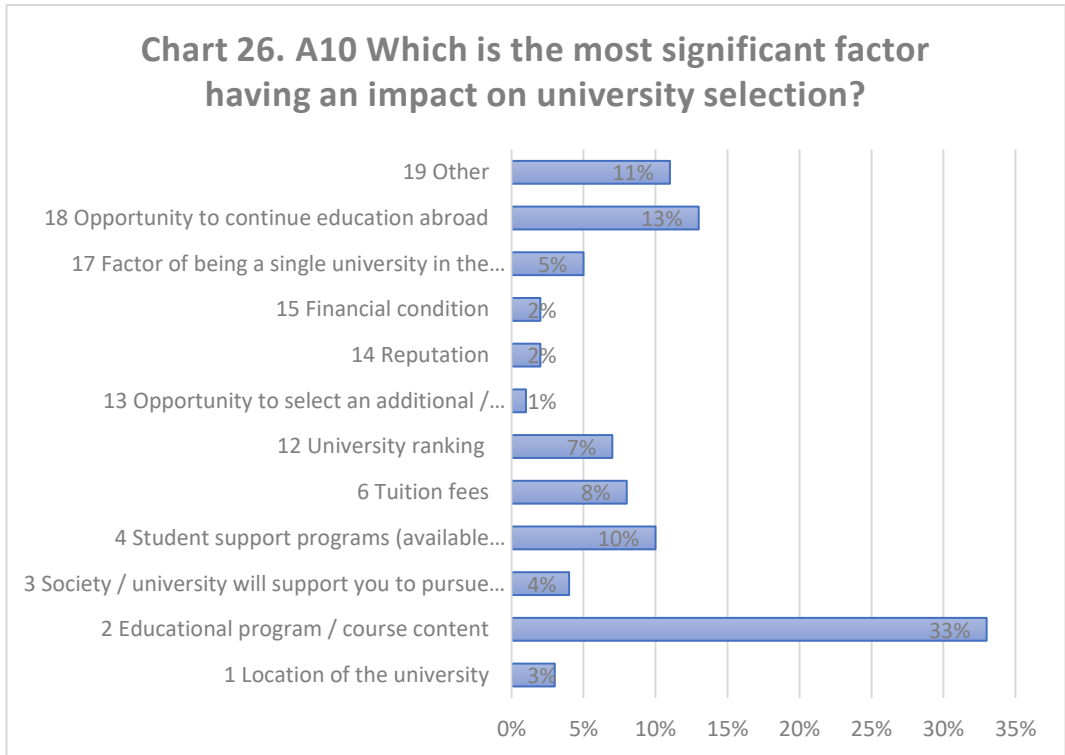
Table 28 shows frequency distribution of entrant answers regarding the variable A10 (Which is the most significant factor to consider while selecting a university?) for other programs.

**Table 28. Other factors having an impact on program selection**

A10 Which is the most significant factor having an impact on university selection?					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Categories	1 Location of the university	12	3%	3%	3%
	2 Educational program / course content	113	31%	33%	36%
	3 Society / university will support you to pursue a hobby (sport, culture)	15	4%	4%	41%
	4 Student support programs (available educational materials, insurance, support programs for people with disabilities)	33	9%	10%	50%
	6 Tuition fees	26	7%	8%	58%
	10 Web-site, blog, social media	1	0%	0%	58%
	12 University ranking	25	7%	7%	66%
	13 Opportunity to select an additional / secondary profession	4	1%	1%	67%
	14 Reputation	6	2%	2%	69%
	15 Financial condition	7	2%	2%	71%
	16 Factor of being parents' university	1	0%	0%	71%
	17 Factor of being a single university in the selected field	18	5%	5%	76%
	18 Opportunity to continue education abroad	43	12%	13%	89%
	19 Other	39	11%	11%	100%
	Total	343	95%	100%	
Missed		17	5%		
Total		360	100		

According to the data given in Table 6.4 (and/or Chart 26), the most significant factors that influence university selection based on the other programs, are as follows: educational program content - 33%; opportunity to continue education abroad – 13%; student support programs – 9%.

## Chart 26. The Most Significant Factors That Influence University Selection Baed on the Other Programs



## 7. Evaluating reliability of the model

**According to the model reliability evaluation Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 64%. Hence, the model is considered reliable and valid.**

Based on this procedure, we received the following tables:

1. Table 29- Summary table demonstrates the number of respondents participating in the study, how many respondents took / did not take part in the survey.

**Table 29. Summary table**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	512	88.7
	Missed	65	11.3
	Total	577	100.0

2. Table 30 - Reliability Statistics table, demonstrating reliability of the model.

**Table 30. Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.642	36

3. Table 31. Statistical table for individual variables, the last column of which shows the value of the Cronbach's Alpha variable when deleting a single variable. According to Table 31, deleting a single variable does not make a significant change to Cronbach's Alpha.

**Table 31. Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
A4_1 Are you going to continue your studies at TSU?	63.71	22.428	.304	.625
A4_2 Are you going to continue your studies at Business and Technology University?	63.26	22.970	.323	.629
A4_3 Are you going to continue your studies at Kutaisi International University?	63.18	23.879	.081	.641
A4_4 Are you going to continue your studies at Ilia State University?	63.52	22.829	.221	.632
A4_5 Are you going to continue your studies at Agricultural University of Georgia?	63.25	23.179	.260	.632
A4_6 Are you going to continue your studies at Georgian Technical University?	63.25	23.388	.196	.636

A4_7 Are you going to continue your studies at Free University?	63.28	23.215	.223	.634
A4_8 Are you going to continue your studies at the University of Georgia?	63.19	24.092	-.022	.645
A4_9 Are you going to continue your studies at Georgian-American University?	63.15	23.892	.129	.640
A4_10 Are you going to continue your studies at Georgian National University?	63.26	23.436	.172	.637
A4_12 Are you going to continue your studies at Caucasus University?	63.23	23.691	.107	.640
A4_13 Are you going to continue your studies at Black Sea University?	63.22	23.555	.165	.637
A5 I mainly select a university based on...	63.07	18.318	.186	.690
A7 I feel confident in my decision regarding the university	63.83	22.706	.222	.632
A9_1 Does the location factor have an impact on university selection?	63.35	23.330	.143	.638
A9_2 Does the factor of educational program / course content have an impact on university selection?	63.74	22.784	.230	.631
A9_3 Does the factor of an opportunity to pursue a hobby (sport, culture) have an impact on university selection?	63.32	23.288	.172	.636
A9_4 Does the factor of student support programs have an impact on university selection?	63.40	23.126	.180	.635
A9_6 Does the factor of tuition fees have an impact on university selection?	63.47	22.574	.288	.627
A9_10 Does the factor of web-site, blog, and social media have an impact on university selection?	63.18	23.673	.188	.638
A9_11 Does the schoolteachers' advice have an impact on university selection?	63.16	23.866	.122	.640
A9_12 Does the factor of university ranking have an impact on university selection?	63.48	21.949	.428	.616
A9_13 Does the factor of reputation have an impact on university selection?	63.37	22.343	.390	.621
A9_14 Does the factor of financial condition have an impact on university selection?	63.25	23.457	.170	.637

A9_15 Does factor of being parents' university have an impact on university selection?	63.16	23.948	.084	.641
A9_17 Does the opportunity to continue education abroad have an impact on university selection?	63.49	22.188	.372	.620
A9_18 Does the opportunity to select an additional / secondary profession have an impact on university selection?	63.23	23.727	.099	.641
A12 Which program are you going to choose?	61.98	19.395	.275	.635
A9_7 Does the factor of Doors Open Day have an impact on university selection?	63.18	23.685	.182	.638
A9_8 Does the factor of communication with students have an impact on university selection?	63.19	23.726	.135	.639
A6 I know where I am going to continue my studies	63.88	22.527	.284	.627
A9_9 Does the factor of communication with contact persons have an impact on university selection?	63.16	23.889	.124	.640
A8 I am confident in my decision regarding the university	63.85	22.806	.207	.633
A2 What are you going to do after receiving secondary education?	64.02	23.060	.228	.633
A9_5 Does the location factor have an impact on university selection?	63.18	23.614	.203	.637
A4_11 Are you going to continue your studies at Caucasus International University?	63.19	23.774	.119	.640

Based on the above, we can consider the following conclusions:

- Curriculum selection is influenced by the factors of university selection by the entrants;
- TSU is a priority in the selection of universities by entrants;
- Prioritization of universities by regions is more or less different (for example, in Adjara and Guria regions TSU is not a priority, unlike other regions);

- The most important factors in the selection of universities were the content of the programs, tuition fee, employment prospects;
- When TSU is not the top choice, the other university is preferable due to the following factors: quality of teaching, employment prospects, curriculum content, graduate employment rate, equipments with modern technologies.
- Factors in the selection of the University by the entrants according to the educational programs of the Faculty of Economics and Business are:
  - Business Administration: Curriculum Content, Tuition fee, Ratings;
  - Economics: Tuition fee, Curriculum Content, Ratings;
  - Tourism: Tuition fee, Curriculum Content.

Therefore, these following steps are very important:

- Continuous improvement of the quality of teaching, event planning and implementation of various measures to promote the involvement of staff with modern knowledge;
- Improving curriculum and adapting it to the requirements of the labor market;
- Attracting additional funding for the improvement of the university infrastructure and the promotion of the widespread use of modern technologies in the educational process;
- Utilizing the potential of university graduates for the further development of the University.

## **DEFINING EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES**

Education is one of the fields of service, the purpose of which is to provide educational and related services to the target groups. To do this, it provides a basic profiling service and also includes the production of providing/support services for this core function. Educational activities and their provision/support activities are carried out by educational institutions, governing bodies, regulatory institutions equipped with supervisory functions, organizations producing other complementary services (Adams , Don;, 2002). Educational service mean teaching, programs, activities or other services designed to provide appropriate education to individuals with educational needs or with special educational needs Educational service also implies the service that the state system, universities and scientific institutes should provide professors with in order to improve the quality and develop their efficiency/ effectiveness in educational institutions. It also implies services that support and underpin the implementation of educational policy, the achievement of the goals of educational institutions and the effectiveness of the education system as a whole (AL\_Dulaimi, 2016).

The education service sector includes institutions that provide education and training. They are implemented by special institutions such as: schools, colleges, universities, training centers, etc. Educational service providers, or education management organizations, can be nonprofit and commercial organizations that assist educational institutions in implementing comprehensive reforms.

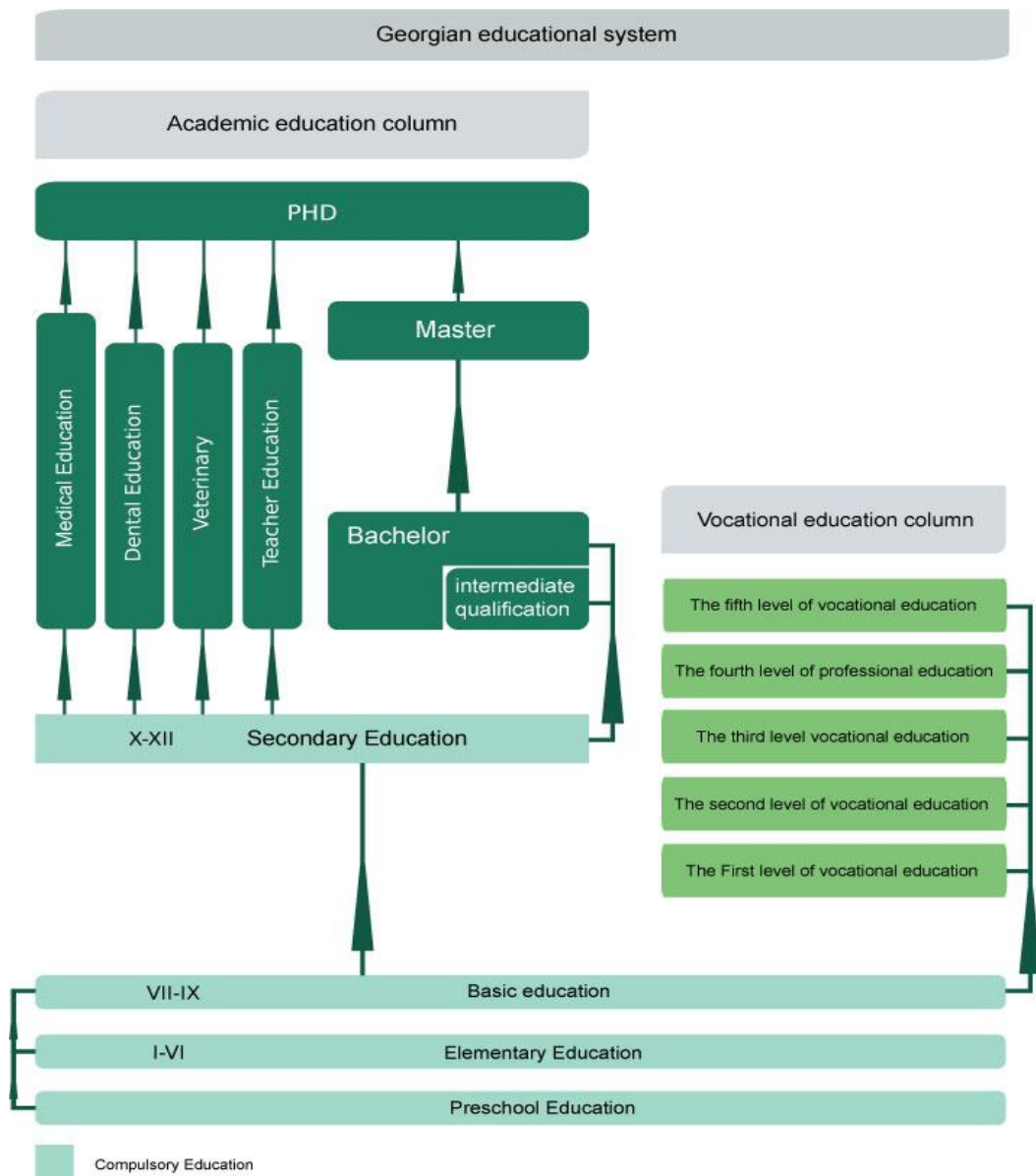
It is important to increase the role of educational institutions in ensuring social flexibility and social equality, as modern research suggests that access to education for vulnerable groups may be a prerequisite for higher pay and higher employment probability (Kasradze, Tea; Zarnadze, Nino;, 2018) . (The International Institute for Education Policy, 2013)

Georgian educational system includes: a)early and pre-school education; b)general, c) vocational and d) higher education subsystems (**see Chart 27**) (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, 2020), within which the provision of



educational services is carried out (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2020) .

**Chart 27 Georgian Educational System**



The system of early and pre-school education in Georgia is mainly under the supervision of local government bodies, the management

of other educational institutions is coordinated and the policy goals (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, 2016-2020) are defined by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and its structural subdivisions (Ministry of Education Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, 2020). These include: Department of Higher Education and Science Development, National Center for Education Quality Development, LEPL National Center for Assessment and Examinations, Department of International Relations and Strategic Development, as well as LEPL Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency, etc.

Education in Georgia is a fundamental constitutional right of every citizen of Georgia (CONSTITUTION of GEORGIA, 1995). According to the official position of the state of Georgia, the basis of socio-economic and cultural development of the country is the development of human capital, which is based on three fundamental directions: 1. Development of education system, which provides a preparation of labor force in line with labor market requirements; 2. Affordable health care; 3. Social security. Based on the above, education is officially considered to be a priority for the development of the country – in the document of the socio-economic development strategy of Georgia: “Georgia 2020”, the education sector, access to education is mentioned as a priority for the development of the country (Government of Georgia, 2014). The priorities of educational service, in turn, of course must be in line with the priority goals of the country’s development.

The attitude of the state towards the development priorities of the education sector is set out in the unofficial document “Unified Strategy of Education and Science in 2017-2021” (Government of Georgia, 2016). The following important directions are highlighted here:

A) Strengthening the entrepreneurial skills of pupils and students in educational institutions, especially at the level of vocational education;

B) Commercialization of research in order to implement applied research and development quality in practice, development of links between the private sector and the system of education, science and technology;

C) Improving educational (technoparks, business incubators, regional development agencies, innovation centers) and auxiliary infrastructure;

D) Integration of learning and research processes. Introducing models for monitoring the results of research activities and result-oriented funding.

E) Creating equal opportunities for the development of human capital, which means providing the employees of the system with quality services, social protection systems, quality education, access to health systems, social justice.

The global economy is in a period of sharp dynamism, which has a significant impact on the service sector. Educational institutions have a significant and steadily growing impact on the quality of life. As the main focus of the research paper is on the competitiveness issues of higher education institutions, it is important to emphasize the basic standards of authorization of higher education institutions (HEIs) (Government of Georgia, 2018) adopted in the higher education system of Georgia. HEI authorization standards to ensure the quality of education and a student-friendly learning environment include: assessing HR resources, regulations, implemented, ongoing and planned activities, achieved results and opportunities for achievable results (relevant planned activities, their implementation mechanisms and allocated resources). What is considered important and therefore a subject to evaluation is: organizational structure and management of HEI; Internal quality assurance mechanisms; Adherence to the principles of ethics and fairness; Introduction and Development of educational programs; Structure and content of the educational program; Evaluation of learning outcomes; Personnel management; Workload of academic, scientific and invited staff; The rules for obtaining, changing and recognizing a student status and student rights; Support activities for students; Research, development and/or other creative activities; Research support and internationalization; Evaluation of research activities; Material, information and financial resources; Library resources;

According to the Accreditation Standards of Georgian Higher Education Institutions (National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement, 2017) the following directions are emphasized: the

purpose of the educational program, learning outcomes and the compliance of the program with them; Teaching methodology and organization, adequacy of program acquisition assessment; Student achievements, individual work with them; Providing training resources; Opportunities to develop the quality of teaching; Conditions for accreditation of regulated and doctoral educational programs.

Modern scholars recognize that there are no well-defined, precisely determined parameters for the quality of higher education services. Students, professors, government substantiate different positions here. As in all types of services, here interpersonal relationships have a significant impact on the positive perception of the customer, his/her satisfaction and the growth of the number of customers (MUNTHIU, Maria-Cristiana; TURTOI, Maria; TUȚĂ, Mihaela; ZARA, Adina Iulia;, 2014).

When setting educational service priorities it is important for the organization to become market-oriented. No matter how awkward it can be the market is thought to be: entrants, students and potential employers of graduates. Researchers agree that understanding this fact will have a significant impact on the management of this field. Higher education institutions must spread targeted "messages" and keep these promises (Ng C L, Irene; Forbes, Jeannie;, 2008).

If stakeholders (entrant, student, employer, government, market, professor) share their expectations with one another, this will certainly have a significant impact on improving the process. Based on the conceptualization, qualitative and quantitative research of this system, the marketing and management systems of modern universities, human resource management policies are developed. Digital development, offline and online learning/teaching opportunities present these directions with a completely new perspective (MUNTHIU, Maria-Cristiana; TURTOI, Maria; TUȚĂ, Mihaela; ZARA, Adina Iulia;, 2014).

Three types of service expectations are distinguished: a desirable service, a sufficient service, and a predicted service. The difference between desirable and sufficient leaves a range of loyalty. Also on the front line are expectations and values, participation, role clarity and motivation (Zeithaml, Valarie A; Bitner, Mary Jo; Gremler,

Dwayne D;, 2013), (Voss, R; Gruber, T; Szmigin, I;, 2007). Scholars agree that the most important role in this whole process is played by the professor and the quality of his/her efforts (Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2020).

To define the service quality standards, higher education institutions use a variety of service quality measurements (MUNTHIU, Maria-Cristiana; TURTOI, Maria; TUȚĂ, Mihaela; ZARA, Adina Iulia;, 2014), which can be found in the chart (**see Table 32**). (Ibrahim, Ibrahim Zuhdi; Ab Rahman, Ibrahim Nizam; Yasin, Ruhizan M;, 2012)

**Table 32. Determinants of Service Quality**

<i>Determinants of higher education service priorities:</i>	
<b>SERVQUAL</b>	Non-academic aspects; Academic aspects; Reputation; Access;
<b>SERVPERF</b>	Understanding
<b>HEdPERF</b>	Availability; Trust, responsibility, security, compassion;
<b>EduQUAL</b>	Learning Outcomes, Response Ability, Resources, Individual Approach, Development, University Professors
<b>SQM-HEI</b>	Teaching methodology, learning and general environment, disciplinary measures taken, activities; Quality of general service, level of satisfaction, etc.
<b>EDUSERVE</b>	Empathy, infrastructure / resources, belief, ensuring responsibility and discipline.

Based on the above, the goals of educational service are:

1. Creation, evaluation and improvement of educational programs,
2. Improving the teaching, learning process and professors' and teachers' skills;
3. Transformation of a pupil's/student's learning experience;
4. Creating an effective and efficient educational process;
5. Promoting continuing education;
6. Promoting and introducing innovation in the educational process and in all activities

The listed goals require the development of support services such as:

1. Existence of a library service in universities, which aims to improve the quality of teacher staff;
2. Informing professors and teachers in order to improve their educational and scientific activities through the introduction of appropriate technologies, infrastructure, communication technologies, development of information flows. (Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2018) (Gulua, Ekaterine;, 2019)
3. Providing teachers with continuous training and other forms of teaching.
4. Mobilizing the necessary resources to facilitate staff training in seminars, conferences, working groups or forums (Yaseen, Zaid ; AL\_Dulaimi, Saud;; 2016).

Higher education priorities in the United States are distinguished because they are based on specific and pragmatic interests:

1. Access to learning;
2. The institution is committed to helping students complete their studies without debt;
3. Most graduates should have a well-paying job within 9 months after completing their studies;
4. Most graduates have a desired job within 9 months after completing their studies;
5. Instructors with practical experience in the field and not just academic staff should be involved in the teaching process;
6. The training course includes practical training (for example, laboratories, workshops);
7. Students will receive on-the-job trainings through internship;
8. Students are connected to mentors in their preferred field of work;
9. The institution offers an open enrollment, which means enrollment for anyone with a secondary school diploma or a GED status (the status obtained as a result of a general education development test);
10. Students are equipped with the skills currently in demand by employers;

In recent decades technological advances have made it important to create flexible systems, introduce virtual systems and online learning methods, and provide relevant educational services to

students. This necessity has become vital since 2020 under the Covid Pandemic. The supply of online educational courses and programs is expanding. In the post-Covid period, this trend will continue again. Accordingly, the priorities for HEIs are: continuous development of the virtual environment, quality of online education, high quality services, student satisfaction and loyalty to the institution, popularization. The main challenge in this case is the lack of a real relationship between the student and the professor. And it requires the introduction of different approaches, principles, norms, indicators. The American Institute of Higher Education has developed 24 indicators to ensure the perfection of online education which are combined in the following 7 key aspects: - Institutional support; - Student support; - Faculty support; - Course development method; - Course structure; - Teaching/learning support; - Evaluations and goals. In the context of international programs, however, differences in the perceptions of students from different countries should be taken into consideration (MUNTHIU, Maria-Cristiana; TURTOI, Maria; TUȚĂ, Mihaela; ZARA, Adina Iulia; 2014). Accordingly, the priorities of educational service are:

- Creating a competent workforce for both market and domestic demand;
- Creating a competitive learning environment;
- Introducing those innovations in educational institutions which take place in technology, society, organization management and demand to ensure competitiveness;
- Improving the information delivery/turnover process to improve competitiveness and a position on the market, which is directly related to maximizing customer satisfaction and adapting to the environment;
- Satisfaction of non-standard requirements of students, including the demand for online education; Creating appropriate methods and models;

## INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

The education system, like other modern systems, is constantly influenced by the development of innovations. As the market and society demand changes, so do the demands towards the education system. Printed textbooks were gradually replaced by electronic textbooks, classic lecture courses were largely replaced by online lectures and interactive tutorials, and handwritten exams were replaced by computer-based exams. It should also be noted that researchers do not always agree with the effectiveness of modern teaching methods. The traditional method also naturally has its advantages. According to this method, the teacher directly controls what the students do and the interactive engagement is high. In contrast, when teaching individually online, it is difficult to control what a student is doing on their own computer. The differentiation between traditional and modern teaching is clearly shown in the figure below (chart. 28) (Revathi G., Elavarasi S., aravanan. K. , 2019).

**Chart 28. Differentiation between traditional and modern teaching**

Traditional Teaching							
Chalk and talk	Lecture	Discussion	Books				
Modern Teaching							
Lecture	Discussion	Interaction	Problem Solving	Audio and Video Visuals	Skill-Based	Different Languages	Globally Collaborated

The importance of the development of modern information technologies and digital education is highlighted in the special chapter of the Paris Communiqué 2018 "**Innovation in Teaching and Learning**". EU Education Ministers emphasized that they would empower their countries' education systems to make better use of digital and mixed education with proper quality assurance, to improve continuous and flexible learning, to enhance digital skills



and competencies, to improve data analysis, educational research and foresight. (Communique, 2018). As the Paris Communiqué is one of the main documents of the Bologna Process (to which Georgia acceded in 2005), the implementation of this principle is extremely relevant for our country as well.

Our education system will not be able to break away from the global changes in the education system. Accordingly, the "Unified Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia" approved by the Government of Georgia in 2017 emphasizes that the modernization and internationalization of the system of science, technology and innovation is necessary to create new knowledge and promote sustainable development of the country. The same document highlights the link between higher education, science, technology and innovation and the sustainable development of the country's economy. (Government of Georgia, 2017).

Georgia is involved in many international programs in terms of sharing international experience. As Georgia is a participating country in the Bologna Process, Georgia's involvement in EU research programs is important. Since 2016 Georgia has been involved in the Eighth EU Research and Innovation Framework (E8P) program "HORIZON 2020". The total budget of this program is 77 billion Euros and shows additional potential, as well as opportunities for the development of science, technology and innovation system. At the same time, it should be noted that the Georgian system of science, technology and innovation is insufficiently integrated in the international scientific-technological network, due to which the rate of commercialization of technology and innovation is not satisfactory. (WIPO, 2020). According to the Global Innovation Index, Georgia ranks 63rd out of 131 countries (Score: 31.78/100). The country has improved this figure by 5 over the last 3 years (in 2017 - 68th place).

In modern conditions, the following can be considered to be innovative approaches in the field of teaching:

- **Modern teaching methods.** In the last two decades traditional methods of teaching have been increasingly replaced with modern approaches. During this period modern forms of knowledge acquisition such as case studies, video tutorials, group exercises,

self-study, gamification, Power Point presentation, workshops, etc. were developed;

- **Modern technical means.** In the digital age the rapid development of information technology is happening in all areas and the education sector is no exception. Modern technical means have developed particularly rapidly and have become increasingly usable under pandemic conditions (Covid-19). Platforms such as Zoom, Web-ex, Moodle, Meet, Skype Meetings App, etc. are widely used in modern teaching;

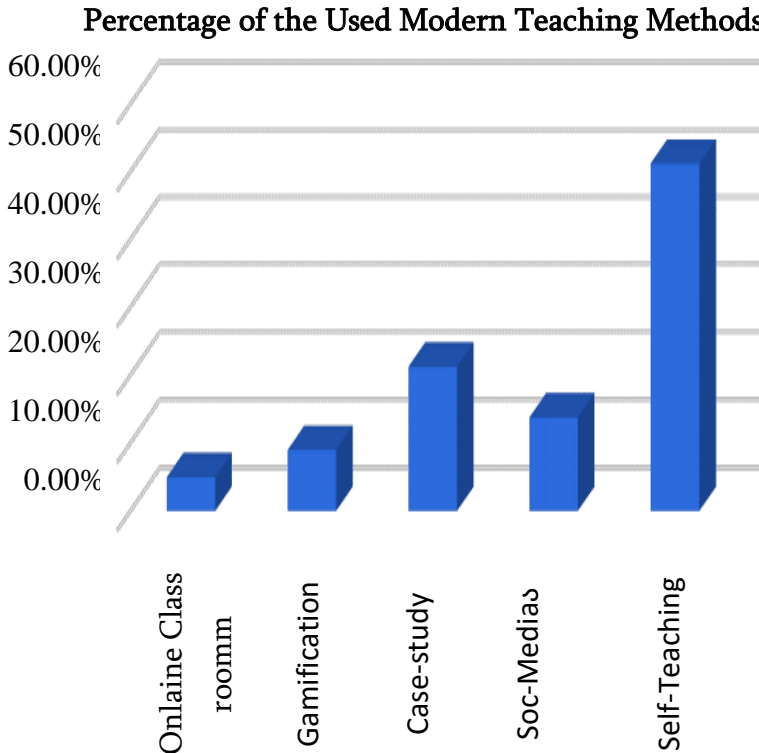
- **Innovative laboratories (Fablabs).** FabLab enhances the entrepreneurial thinking of students and in this regard makes a significant contribution to the development of a wise future generation. At the state level, there is a Fablab, in the organizational form of LEPL (Fablab Technopark) . The creation and handover of FabLabs by Tbilisi City Hall to Tbilisi State University and Technical University in 2016 is a successful example of cooperation between public higher education institutions and the municipality. Private higher education institutions (e.g. University of Business and Technology) also have their FabLabs made with their own facilities, which serve the development of future generations;

- **Innovative learning weeks and competitions.** Innovative Learning Weeks are focused on delivering innovative education to the next generation. They are held on the basis of private initiatives, as well as with the support of various public institutions (e.g. Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency, Tbilisi City Hall, etc.). There are also various competitions in the form of hackathons or other forms. Hackathon is a modern competition focused on generating and prototyping innovative business ideas in a short time. (Creative Georgia, 2020).

It is very interesting to compare the most used modern teaching methods and their results. The results of a study conducted at the University of Texas in 2000-2017 highlighted that the self-teaching method became popular around the world after the availability of free information on the Internet. This is followed by the case-study method, which is the best way to improve communication skills

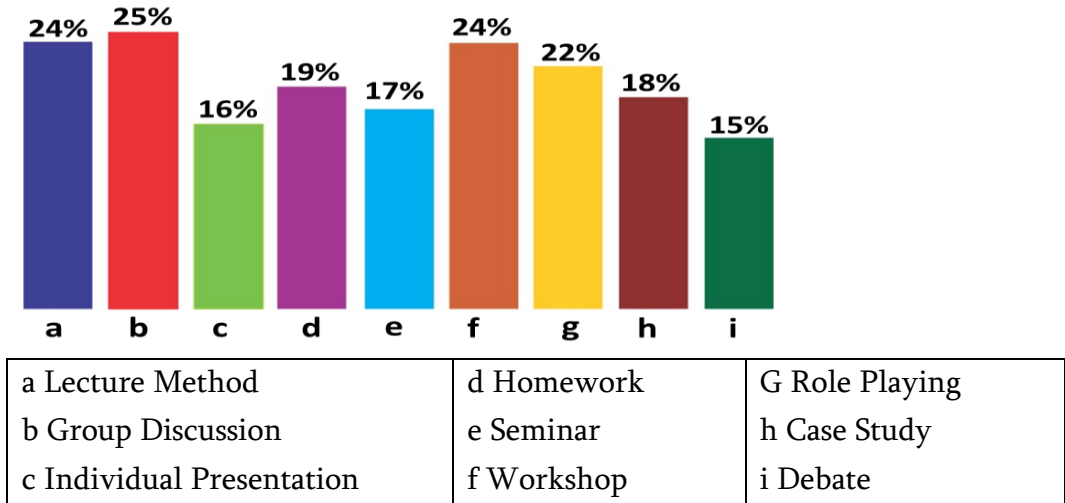
between students (**see chart. 29**). (Taneja, P; Safapour, E; Kermanshachi, Sh, 2018).

**Chart 29. Percentage of the Used Modern Teaching Methods**



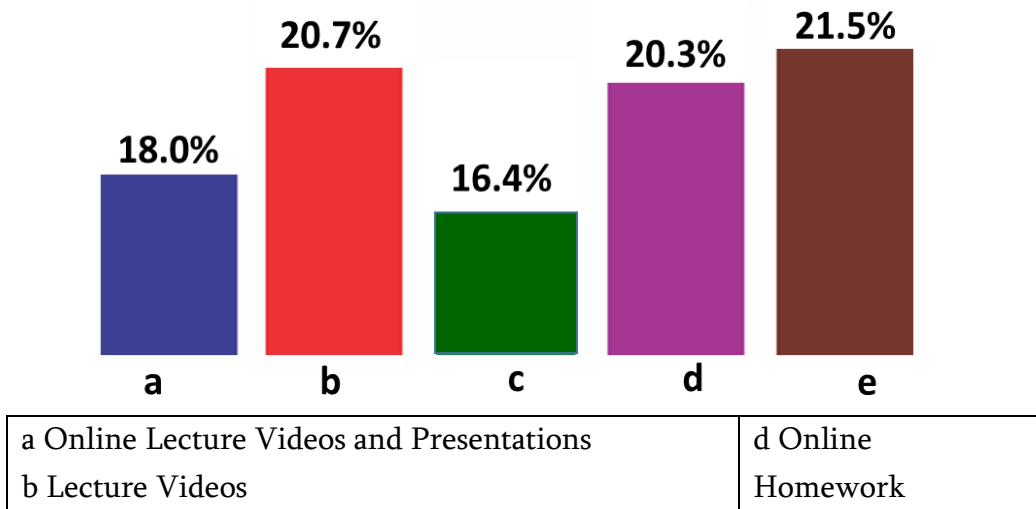
According to the conducted research a group discussion, lecture method and workshop are mostly used in the traditional audience. Debates and individual presentations are the least used methods (**see chart. 30**).

**Chart 30. Teaching methods used by students of the Faculty of Management in a traditional audience**



In contrast to the traditional audience, the teaching methods used by the students of the Faculty of Management are very interesting, where the most used methods are online quizzes, lecture videos and online assignments. And the least used methods are online forums and debates (Chart. 31). (Wickramasinghe, S; Upeksha, G, 2016).

**Chart 31. Online teaching methods used by students of the Faculty of Management**



c Online Forums, Discussions, Debates	e Online Quiz
---------------------------------------	---------------

Various studies have proved that visual material is perceived by the human brain much faster than textual material. Consequently, the use of visual effects in teaching (whether printed or electronic) makes teaching more result-oriented. According to the existing studies:

- 65% of the population belongs to the type of visual learners;
- The brain receives 90% of information visually;
- The brain processes visual material 60,000 times faster than textual material;
- The use of visuals in the classroom increases the learning effect by 400%. (Dgebuaдзе, M; Giorgadze, M, 2016).

Thus, in recent years, innovative approaches have been increasingly used in the education system, which means the use of both modern approaches of teaching and technological advances. Studies have shown that the self-teaching method became popular around the world after the development of free access to information on the Internet. In addition, the case-stage method is the best way to improve communication skills between students.

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