

STUDENT AS CONSUMER – BENEFITS OF BEING ACADEMIC CITY

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Abstract:

Universities strongly influence development of cities. The quality of the university is the main criterion for young people which decides about attractiveness of the place of study. Many try to realize their development by attracting young people to study there. Even smaller cities located near the border of the European Union can pursue this strategy. But for some of them the only benefit of being an academic city is the benefit of having students as consumers during their studies. Students have different motivations when choosing a place of study, not always the most important thing is the quality of education. Purchasing power of students affects the local market of goods and services, allows local entrepreneurs to develop. The greatest degree of purchasing power of students is revealed in the housing market. During studies a part of young people declares their willingness to change the city/university. Most often because they assess better their chances of finding a job or the level of education in a bigger city.

Keywords: academic city, student consumer, city development

1. INTRODUCTION

Universities strongly influence development of cities. Higher education institutions are an important factor influencing competitiveness of cities and regions (van den Berg & Russo, 2004, p. 2). They often attract to the city new citizens, business and international corporations. In the knowledge based economy the number of students impacts the knowledge base of the city (Winden & van den Berg & Pol, 2007, p. 534-535). That is one of key factors enhancing development of human capital and knowledge based industries. Universities influence urban competitiveness as they supply intellectual capital on which knowledge enterprises rely (Beneworth & Charles & Madanipour 2010, p. 1612).

The choice young people make of the place of study is connected with mobility of people and fluctuation of human capital. Brain gain or brain drain is correlated with looking for better life and typically promotes immigration from less developed countries or regions to developed ones (Dauge & Liene & Marcinkeviciene, 2009, p. 14). The decision to stay in the host country is dependent on adjustment process to the university but also strong ties with the family in home country make students return home (Baruch & Budhwar & Khatri, 2007, p. 107). People from the less developed cities are more determined to study abroad and are culturally curious about the outside world in comparison to citizens of more developed cities (Hung, 2010, p. 222). The literature identifies "pull" and "push" factors which cause students mobility. Some factors strongly "pull" students to a city. Among them are an affordable cost of living and perceiving a city as a gateway to other destinations in the country (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008, p. 600). The most valuable pull factors connected with the higher education institution are the academic and research quality of the institution (Lam & Ariffin & Ahmad, 2011, p. 71).

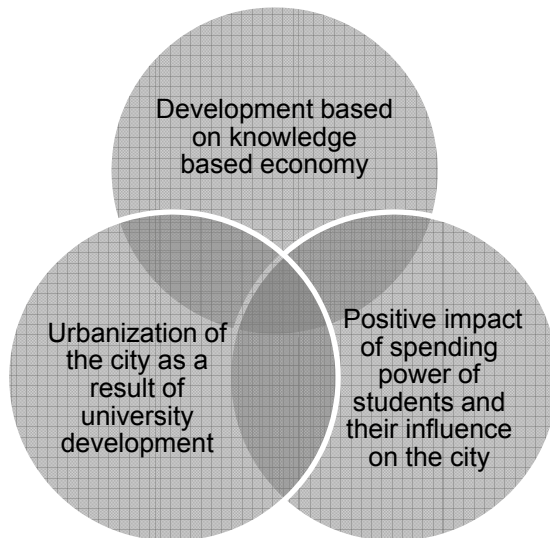
The quality of the university is the main criterion for young people which decides about the attractiveness of the place of study (Darchen & Tremblay, 2010, p. 228). But in the same study it was also revealed, that in some cities the quality of life may have the same importance. Attractiveness of a place to study may be assessed differently than attractiveness of the place to live and work (Borozan & Barkovic, 2008, p. 14). For young people expectations from an academic city are: a lot of students, young population, public transport, technologies (e.g. WiFi), cheap public services and special prices for students (Brandt & de Mortanges, 2011, p. 58). Students want to live in close proximity to their place of study, amongst their peers in cheap accommodation (Allinson 2006, p. 93). But after graduating the main criteria are employment opportunities (Darchen & Tremblay, 2010, p. 232). The quality of live is the second criterion after established career.

Expansion of higher education increases attractiveness of cities. But the impact that higher education institutions have on the place may differ according to the city e.g. its size. Being academic has both positive side and negative effects on the city. The negative impact is mostly connected with the style of life of young people, which interferes with local community habits. The positive impact is often perceived through the spending power (Allinson 2006, p. 88-90). It manifests itself in the demand for consumer goods and rental housing. Some authors define two different ways how universities influence cities. The first one is their impact on the urban manifestation, the second is increase of territorial competitiveness through knowledge outputs. (Beneworth & Charles & Madanipour 2010, p. 1612).

There are also different types of students segments. Some of them study in the same city they live. The others have to move to a different city or even country in order to study the desired field. The influence of different students segments on the city may differ. For example, identification with the place of study is stronger when people lived in the same city before study (Cicognani & Menezes & Nata, 2011, p. 42). Identification with the city decreased among students who live far from home. A benefit from being an academic city is that students want to stay in that city after graduating. Attractiveness of the city is strongly correlated with assessment of the possibility to find a job. It is also often a factor deciding of migration (Bozan & Markovic & Dabic, 2008, p. 13). Students look for better life and because of that job opportunities and earnings are the things which attract them to stay in a city.

According to the literature, the benefits of academic character of the city can be divided into three groups as shown in picture 1.

Picture 1: Benefits of being academic city



Source: own development.

Each of the positive effects of academic character of the city affects the other. A larger number of young people increases the potential of knowledge economy and the opportunities of urbanization through the expansion of university. Due to mobility of young people in search of work and career after graduation there may be no positive impact on the knowledge based economy from being an academic city. Other reasons accounting for this situation are, firstly, the fact that less known, smaller academic centres provide lower level of education, research and secondly, students have limited prospects of finding a job, especially in poorer regions. In some situations, education in the city can be a kind of outsourcing as benefits of developing human capital pass on to other city or even country. In such case, the only benefit of an academic city is the benefit of having students as consumers during their studies.

2. LUBLIN AS AN ACADEMIC CITY IN POLAND

The city of Lublin is located on the edge the European Union. The distance from the city to the Ukraine and Belarus is similar and it is only about 150 km. To the capital city of Poland – Warsaw – there is over 170 km. There live about 350.000 citizens in Lublin. Being an academic city is one of the four elements of strategy development described in Strategy City Development 2020. As it is emphasised it is difficult to imagine development of Lublin without academic dimension, since universities are the largest employers of the city, and every fourth inhabitant is a student (City of Lublin Development Strategy 2020, p. 58). The strategy gives four ways to implement academic character of the city:

1. The internationalization of the university as a condition of its survival in the face of globalization, demographic decline and funding policies of leading universities by the Polish government;
2. The symbiosis with socio-economic environment in order to commercialize the results of research and development of cooperation between: universities - city, universities - business, universities – universities.
3. *Genius loci* academic city - multidirectional development of passions and activation of young people in the urban environment;
4. Attracting and retaining talented people in Lublin by e.g. graduates support programme on the labour market.

The strategy was prepared with the participation of universities. This documents pointed out in many places that the city can only support activities of universities. The factors attracting international students, including the quality of education and research, depend only on universities. The strategy was prepared for eight years in 2012 to a large extent using the support of EU funds for perspective 2014-2020.

The academic tradition in Lublin starts in 1918. That year Catholic University of Lublin (CU) was established. After the Second World War four different public high schools were established there –

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (MCSU in 1943), Medical University (MU 1950), Technical University (TU in 1953) and University of Life Sciences (ULS in 1955). There are also located a few smaller private high schools. In the universities in Lublin in the academic year 2012/2013 were employed 5838 teachers (High education institution..., p. 24). In public universities study from 7.000 (MU) to 23.000 (MCSU) students. The number of students studying in Lublin in 2013 was about 76.000 but it has been rapidly decreasing due to demographic decline for the last few years. In the year 2010 there were about 86.000 students studying in the city (Lublin universities offers analysis..., p. 24). A disadvantage of universities is that the biggest one of them is only fourteenth on the list of largest high education institutions in Poland. But at the same time Lublin is seventh academic city in Poland. Many fields of study and research are provided in two or even three different institutions, which creates competition to gain students and splits scientific force.

There was about 3% (2.300) of international students in population studying in Lublin. The biggest group of international students – over 1.000 – studied at Medical University. The largest ethnic group among foreign students was Ukrainian. A great part of all the students come here to study from rural areas. On average only 20% of students lived in Lublin before their studies. During the academic year the number of students is over 20% of all inhabitants.

There are also other cities in Poland which try to realize their development by attracting young people to study there. One of them is Wrocław, which provides programme study-in-wroclaw.pl in order to encourage both Polish and international students to study in this city. In the last few years the number of students in Poland has rapidly decreased. It is due to aging society. Polish universities try to attract international students to study in Poland in order to minimize the bad influence of demographic tendencies. In 2013 there were about 30.000 international students studying in Poland, but it was only 1,74% of the total numbers of students. The biggest group of international students come from Ukraine. The most popular field of study for all international students in Poland is medicine.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

There are different benefits from being an academic city. Many cities try to get an advantages on the academic market. For some of them it is simply an easier task because there are famous education institutions located there. Other cities offer high cultural level of experiences or may have historical academic tradition which attracts many young people. But some of them have no such advantages but still in spite of that they try to achieve even a part of these benefits which come from being an academic city. Sometimes their only goal is to stop young people living in the city from leaving it. There are various motivations for choosing a place to study. In the open word of today young people are more mobile then ever. So it does not matter to some of them if they choose studies in Lublin, London or Hong Kong, it is only a question of motivation and how wealthy their parents are.

The purpose of the paper is to answer the following questions:

1. Where do students come from to study in the city of Lublin and why?
2. What impact do they exert on the economy of the city?
3. To what extent do students take part in the city life?
4. How do they assess friendliness of the city and what do they expect most from an academic city?

In order to answer these research questions the study was carried out using a standardized questionnaire and PAPI method. This research was a broader project founded and realized for the purpose of city council of Lublin. There were researched 485 students studying in Lublin, including 80 foreign students attending full courses. The sample was selected in such a way that the results are representative for the whole student population of the city. For this purpose quota sample was used. The number of researched people from different higher education institutions was adequate to the percentage of students studying there. The survey covered 0.6% of students in the city. Approximately 20% of questioned people were living in the city before starting higher education. Foreign students were overrepresented in the sample. In this group 3,5% of the whole population was asked. Demographic characteristics of the group of respondents presents table 1. The survey was conducted in the last quarter of 2013. The collected data were analysed using SPSS 20.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the group of respondents

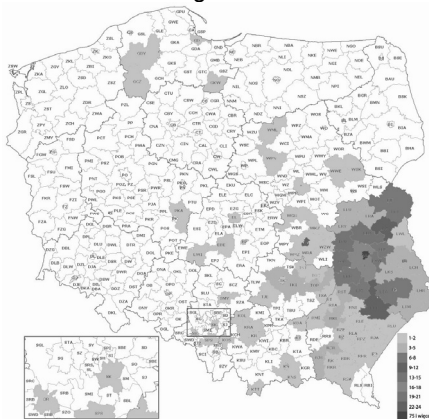
Specification	Polish students [n=405]	Foreign students [n=80]
Woman/man	286/119	36/44
Place of the resident Lublin/other	82/323	3/77
University:		
• MCSU	127	19
• MU	66	36
• CU	55	15
• TU	59	7
• ULS	62	1
• Private high schools	36	2
Age		
• Under 20 years	71	13
• 21-22 years	168	15
• 23 – 24 years	137	22
• 25 or more	26	23
• no answer	3	7

Source: own calculation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sample confirmed the regional origins of students in colleges of Lublin. Nearly 57% of the students were from the Lubelskie Voivodeship. If Lublin universities attract young people from outside the voivodeship to study, they come vastly from the neighbouring regions lying close to the city. The origins of Polish students are presented in picture 2.

Picture 2: The origins of Polish students in universities of Lublin



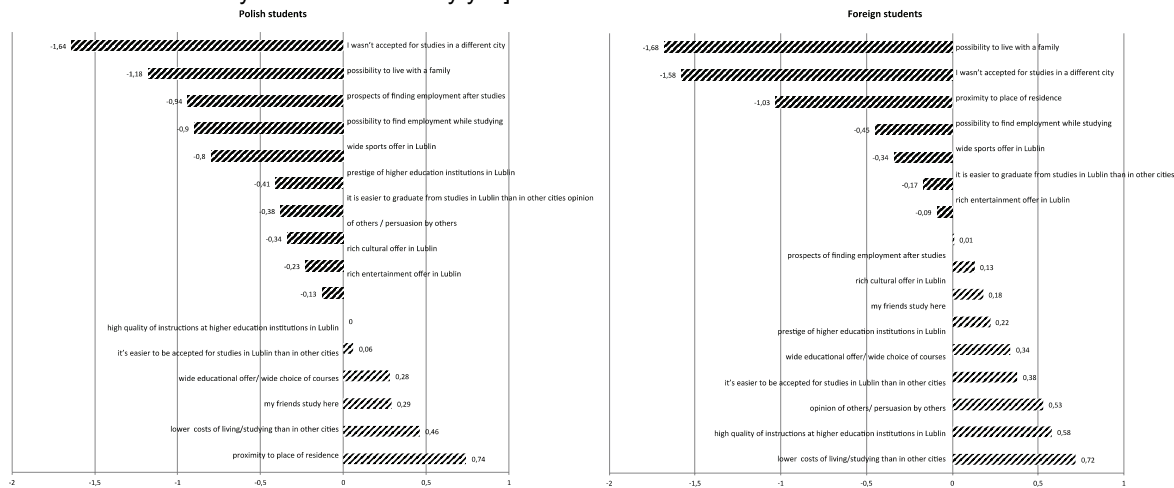
Source: own development.

Among the foreign students the largest researched groups were: Ukrainians, Americans, the Taiwanese and Norwegians. The largest ethnic group among foreign students is Ukrainians, who in the whole population of foreign students in Lublin account for approximately 28%. (Lublin academic center. Opportunities and threats of development, p. 84). The group of foreign students is very diverse. A part of it are people from Eastern Europe countries (e.g. Ukraine, Belarus), who study with Polish students, and often because of Polish origins they are exempted from tuition fees. The second group are medical students studying in Poland. They study in the English language, in a group of other foreign students with a program tailored to their place of origin. These students pay high tuition fees, but much lower than in their home countries.

The reasons for choosing Lublin as a place of study by Polish students are shown in picture 3. Polish students choose Lublin as a place to study mainly due to proximity of domicile, lower cost of living/studying, studying place chosen by friends and a wide range of studying fields. The city offer, the quality of the universities and especially the prospects of finding a job during and after graduation are assessed below the average. The reasons for choosing Lublin as a place to study by international students are different. They decide to study here because of lower costs of living/studying, high-quality

of the university and positive opinions of other people. Foreign students assess better than Poles the cultural offer of the city. Similarly, both groups positively perceived relatively lower costs of living/studying in Lublin. In other criteria (quality of universities and the city's offer), foreign students assess Lublin better. The results confirm that attracting people from abroad is related to the quality of the university. On the other hand, people from Poland assess the quality of study in the academic centre of the country worse.

Picture 3: The reasons for choosing Lublin as a place of study by Polish students [n=405, average rating on a scale from 1 – definitely not to 7 – definitely yes]

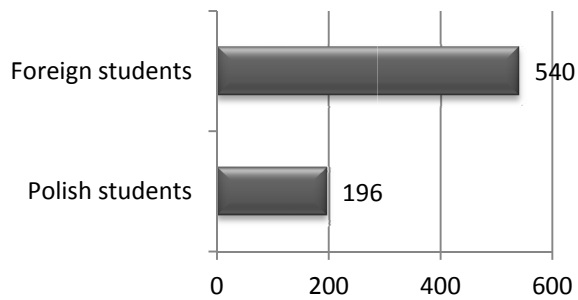


Source: own development.

Factor analysis showed that seven main reasons for studying in Lublin can be identified. The first is the “attractiveness of the city” associated with a wide range of entertainment, cultural and educational offer. The second is the “quality” linked with the level of education, prestige of the university and the prospects of finding a job after graduating. The third can be called “near-economically”. It combines the opportunity to live with the family during their studies and work in that period. The fourth factor “easy” is the motives that guide people who want to get to the study easily and effortlessly complete them. The fifth factor is the “recommendation”. The reason for studying for these people is a positive verbal message from other people already studying in Lublin. Second last factor is “worse choice.” People in this group do not get into university where most want to study. The last factor is the “lower costs.” People have chosen Lublin as a place of study because of the awareness of a much higher cost of studying in other major cities.

Respondents were asked to indicate the amount of money they spend during their studies. They were asked to indicate the total amount of money spent on living and to break it into categories of expenditures in accordance with the categories of the Polish statistical office. The expenditures of different segments of students clearly differed. Two and a half times more spent foreign students in comparison to Polish students. Monthly expenditures by the group are shown in picture 4. Statistical averages do not show differences within the group of Polish and foreign students. The least - 156 Euros per month - spent students domicile Lublin, more – 205 Euros – other Polish students. Most foreign students spent 237 Euros per month, but the students of medicine much more - 900 Euros. Average medical student expenditures are almost four times more in comparison to Polish student coming from outside Lublin. Differences in spending are due to wealth of students. Students from rich countries (the USA, Norway, Taiwan) spent much more, especially on the fees for tuition, food and housing.

Picture 4: Monthly expenditures by the group of students [1 Euro = 4 PLN]



Source: own development.

If we assume that 60.000 students are coming to the city to study, and the average cost of studying/living is 205 Euro, it gives a contribution to purchasing power of residents of the city more than 12%. Most of this amount is spent on housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels - 88 Euros, food and non-alcoholic beverages - 50 Euros and clothing and footwear - 35 Euros. This can be calculated by comparing the purchasing power of the average inhabitant of which there are 350,000 and each has a monthly level of expenditure amounting to 289 Euros (The situation of households..., p. 9).

Students wield the greatest influence on the demand for housing. A way of meeting the housing needs of the respondents is presented in table 2. Polish students residing outside of Lublin mostly live in rented apartments with flatmates. Foreign students most frequently use the dorms. They are also significantly more likely to self-rent an apartment/house without flatmates in comparison to Poles. With a conservative assumption it may be anticipate that half of the students from rural area coming to the city rents an apartment. It is rented on average for four people and only during the academic year. Students are renting 7.500 flats/houses in Lublin. Most students from outside Lublin live near the university. Nearly 60% of them declare that they daily come to lectures on foot. The advantage for many of them is the small size of town and close proximity of university buildings.

Table 2: Places of residence chosen by students

Specification	Students from outside of Lublin	
	Poles	Foreigners
1. with parents	11,4	3,7
2. in my own flat/house (without parents)	4,3	6,3
3. in a rented flat/ house (alone, without flatmates)	7,7	17,8
4. in a rented flat/ house (with flatmates)	48,0	21,5
5. in lodgings in strangers' house (I rent a room in a flat/house and the landlord/landlady also lives there)	3,7	6,3
6. in lodgings by acquaintances/ family (I rent a room in a flat/house and the landlord/landlady also lives there)	1,8	0,0
7. in a dormitory	21,5	43,0

Source: own development.

Most students spend their free time participating in private parties, visiting shopping centers and shopping malls and visiting entertainment places like clubs, pubs and bars. Students living in Lublin because of the study less often enjoy attractions offered by the city then students that live permanently in Lublin. It can be due to more serious limitation of financial resources because of higher costs of studying away from home or lack of awareness of the possibility to take part in a certain activity. More often, students from outside Lublin indicate only a sightseeing tour of the city and visiting a shopping center/shopping mall. Nevertheless, students from outside of Lublin are the dominant group of people enjoying the city attractions (table 3).

Table 3: Spending free time by students

Specification	Students from outside of Lublin	
	Pecentege of frequently user	Pecentege of total number of students often use
1. attractions such as parks/gardens	27	70
2. participation in a sporting event (as a spectator)	8	53
3. participation in private parties (in a dormitory /at friends' houses, etc.)	59	78
4. participation in events such as festivals/open-air concerts/ indoors concerts	35	74
5. practicing sports in a sports hall/at a gym/pool	24	65
6. practicing sports outdoors (e.g. running, cycling)	22	61
7. a visit to a shopping center/shopping mall	61	81
8. a visit to an entertainment place/clubs/pubs/bars	52	76
9. a visit to a museum/art gallery		
10. a visit to a restaurant/café	5	75
11. a visit to a theatre/cinema	30	74
12. sightseeing Lublin and its vicinity	25	75
13. sightseeing historical places/ sightseeing the Old Town	22	80
	30	84

Source: own development.

Foreigners more often than Poles visited green areas of the city, actively involved in sports and participated in sporting events as spectators, visited restaurants and cafes, and went sightseeing Lublin and its surroundings. Frequency of enjoying those specific attractions was similar to the behaviour of students residing in Lublin. Foreigners much more often than people domicile Lublin are interested in sightseeing. The research indicated differences and similarities between the behaviour of foreigners in relation to Polish students can be practically permanent residence of foreigners in the city of Lublin in connection with a large distance to the house.

Half of the researched students want to continue their education. 45% of them planned continuing their studies rather, or certainly in Lublin. In the group of surveyed people there were identified those planning to pursue master's degree in other cities than Lublin. Most of them want to study in the capital city of Poland – Warsaw. Such students were questioned about the motives of such plans and the results were compared with the motivation to study in Lublin (picture 3). The biggest differences in ratings on a seven-point Likert scale explaining going to other cities are a better perspective of finding a job after graduating, higher prestige of the university and a greater chance to find a job during studies. This may mean that already during the study, people evaluate the prospects of finding a job after graduating, and some of them due to this plan to change the place of study. Answering the question of what would need to be changed in the city or at universities in Lublin in order to encourage students to continue their studies in Lublin respondents declared the following things:

1. In relation to the university:

"They should become more user-friendly, open to the needs of students"

"Adaptation (of universities) to current standards and modern approach to education"

"I wanted a higher level, reject mediocrity, greater prestige, practice"

2. In relation to the city:

"It should be better maintained, colorful, modern. Buses should cease to be late, and people should begin to smile"

"If I had the opportunity to work during their studies I would not mind being in Lublin"

"(It should be) Easier to find work in their profession after graduation"

5. CONCLUSIONS

Even smaller urban centers can derive great benefits from being an academic city. But its offer should be addressed to different audiences. Students differ among themselves as to the reasons for studying in a particular place. Some want high-quality education, others just easy graduation. Foreign students better assess the quality of the university and the city offer. An important advantage of the academic city for all students is low cost of living/studying. Benefits from being an academic city can be summarized as follows:

- high purchasing power of students affects the local market of goods and services, allows local entrepreneurs to develop;
- the greatest degree of purchasing power of students is revealed in the housing market, and allows to generate additional income for property owners;
- students residing outside the city to a lesser extent are interested in its attractions, but for a large number of them their best customers are students;
- more interest in the city's attractions display foreign students than Polish students;

During study a part of young people declare their willingness to change the city/university. Their decision is most often motivated by presumably better chances of finding a job in a bigger city or the expected higher level of education. In this context, in order to effectively compete on the education market, universities should raise the prestige and quality of education. They should also be more open for the needs of young people. The city should whereas invest in services for students and encourage investors/entrepreneurs to create new workplaces.

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