# THE ROLE OF THE CLASS ADVISER IN THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AT THE LOMZA STATE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES BASED ON THE OPINIONS OF THOSE SURVEYED

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### Abstract

**Introduction.** It is of the utmost importance that the young generations are properly prepared to function in society. A well-organized process of education should ensure this. A key role in this respect at universities is played by the class advisers, on whom the result of a complex network of socio-psychological influences largely depends.

The aim of the study: The aim of the study was to define the role of the class adviser in the social and educational process at the Lomza State University of Applied Sciences as evaluated by the respondents.

Materials and methods. The research used the method of a diagnostic survey, to which the survey technique was subordinated, using an anonymous questionnaire of a proprietary survey. The research was conducted among first-year students of full-time studies at the Lomza State University of Applied Sciences in 12 fields. A total of 314 people were surveyed. Results. The analysis of the subject of the meetings of students with the class adviser proves that the duties and rights of the student, self-education as well as current university events are, according to the respondents, the key issues that are the subject of meetings with the class adviser. Further positions include the results of the session as well as all kinds of problems and conflicts bothering students. Moreover, the analysis showed statistically significant relationships between gender and the subject of students' meetings with the class adviser in two fields of study and a general summary.

Conclusion. Most of the respondents believe that the function of the class adviser at the university is very much needed. This is what the majority of women in all fields of the study think. More than half of the respondents do not maintain contact with the class adviser, and this group consists mainly of men.

Key words: social and educational process, class adviser, students

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### Introduction

Along with the globalization and standardization of the modern world, both challenges and new threats to social life have emerged. Problems and conflicts related to the cultural, ideological, religious and moral background create an urgent need for reflection on raising the young generation [1]. Each developed and morally shaped society has its roots in childhood, so the question about the future of societies is in fact a question about the goals of educating children [2].

Appreciating the importance of the process of education for the quality of human life, Michele De Beni proposed a broader view of education, i.e. a departure from seeing it as a social product and perceiving it as a real engine of change and the smartest investment for our future. At the same time, the author postulated that education should be brought back to the centre, and teachers should make an effort to place the pedagogical discourse in the context of the times in which we live [3].

Issues related to the process of educating the young generation should be treated with particular seriousness in our country. The social change taking place in Poland in recent years is, at the same time, a time of a deepening crisis of child rearing, which has resulted in the axiological disorientation of young people [4]. Meanwhile, although the considerations of educators clearly emphasize the problems of education, the activities of many decision-makers focus mainly on improving the education offered. The aspects related to the social and educational process are ignored, as if the process took place incidentally [5].

The ability to manage oneself and the active participation of individuals and groups in social life are especially important in times of rapid change. Most of the external instructions and orders lose their meaning in that situation [6]. Intellectual and cultural competences, understanding the world and one's place in it can positively contribute to coping with and solving difficult problems in situations with a high degree of uncertainty [7].

It is of the utmost importance that the young generations

are properly prepared to function in society. Therefore, it should be supported by a well-organized educational process. [8]. Its aim should be to support the pupils in the development of their own personality, so that each of them feels like an individual person who can responsibly decide about himself and his behaviour. It is particularly important to introduce young people to the world of universal values that would be a signpost in their life choices [9].

The issue of values is an important component of the educational system in which educating means helping to expose students to values and stimulate human development. In order to lead the educational process, a teacher must be perfectly prepared for it and aware of the great role it plays in shaping and developing the personality of pupils [10]. The key role in this respect at universities is played by the class advisers, on whom the result of the complex network of social and psychological influences largely depend [11].

Problems experienced by students are of a different nature. Some of them require therapeutic, psychological, medical or didactic intervention. Others can be resolved through professional advisory and educational activities. The environment with which they have the most frequent contact is essential for the functioning of people experiencing various crises. The university is such an environment for students. The atmosphere of the university may support students in the sense of coping with the requirements of adulthood or exacerbate and reinforce various types of difficulties. This climate is created not only by the university authorities but mainly by academic teachers who have direct contact with students during the classes. The people who introduce the university to new students are the class advisers. They are also the ones young people turn to for help in difficult situations [12].

The class adviser is appointed by the Dean of the Faculty for the entire cycle of education from among the academic teachers of the Faculty. Performing the function of the class adviser is taken into account during the periodic appraisal of an academic teacher in the part concerning organizational activities. The aim of the class adviser of the student group is to improve the implementation of didactic and educational tasks of the university. The class adviser acts as an intermediary between students and the university authorities and administration. He or she is committed to providing students with constant and comprehensive help in studying.

In particular, the class adviser's task is to:

- a) introducing newly admitted students to the process of learning and living at the university,
- b) informing students at the beginning of the academic year about any new ordinances regarding the organization of studies,
- c) organizing a meeting of the entire year at least once a semester,
- d) participating in a meeting of first-year students with university authorities at the beginning of the academic year,

- e) inspiring the self-government of the student community and helping to shape it, especially in student groups of the 1st and 2nd year,
- f) mediating between students and the Dean and other lecturers in matters relating to the course of studies, classes, any proposals and expectations,
- g) maintaining contact and cooperation with the starost of the class in important matters for students. The starost of the class is a representative of the students of their year in current didactic, organizational and administrative matters.

In addition, the class adviser is obliged to provide university authorities, at their request, with opinions on matters of particular importance to students (e.g. extending the examination session, granting leave, obtaining consent for an individual course of study, changing the field of study, and deleting students from the list of students), as well as issuing opinions on appeals in these cases. The class adviser is also obliged to cooperate closely with the student government bodies and student organizations in all matters related to the didactic and educational process as well as in social and living matters of students. The class adviser is also entitled to obtain information about all ordinances of the university authorities regarding a given year of study.

In particular, the class adviser has the right to:

- a) ask the instructors to give their opinion on the students' progress in learning, their behaviour during classes, etc..
- b) obtain information on the timetable, exam session schedule and (in consultation with the student group starost) to apply for possible changes to them,
- c) presenting to the university authorities a proposal regarding the award of students and suggestions regarding the possible imposition of penalties on students or initiation of disciplinary proceedings [13].

## The aim of the study

The aim of the study was to define the role of the class adviser in the social and educational process at the Lomza State University of Applied Sciences as assessed by the respondents. In the course of the research, answers were sought to the following questions:

- 1. Do the respondents think that the institution of the class adviser is needed at universities?
- 2. Do the students maintain contact with the class adviser and how often?
- 3. What are students' expectations of the class advisor and what is the subject of their meetings?
- 4. Does gender differentiate the above variables?

## Material and method

The research used the method of a diagnostic survey, to which the survey technique was applied, using an anonymous questionnaire of a proprietary questionnaire entitled "Students' adaptation difficulties". The research was carried out in the academic year 2015/2016 among first-year students of the first-cycle studies at the Lomza State University of Applied Sciences in 12 fields of study. A total of 314 people were examined.

The test results were developed in Statistica 6.0 by calculating: percentages, Pearson chi-square test values, Z–U Mann Whitney a test values, weighted averages. Differences between variables were tested at the significance level of p < 0.05.

#### Results

When analysing the issue concerning the needs of the class adviser at the University of Lomza, it should be stated that over half of the respondents (65.1%) believe that such a function of an academic teacher is very much needed. This is the opinion of students in most fields of study, with women constituting the majority holding this opinion. The respondents of the four following fields of study are of a different opinion: management, dietetics, cosmetology and food technology. In this case, men are the dominant group. Moreover, the analysis showed statistically significant relationships between gender and the needs of the class adviser only in automation and robotics (Table 1).

Table 1. The need for the institution of the class adviser at Lomza State University of Applied Sciences

Courses of study	Response categories								
,	Gender	N	Yes [%]	No [%]	Chi2	P			
Physiotherapy	women	34	97.06	2.94	0.09	0.763			
	men	3	100.00	0.00					
	total	37	97.3	2.70	-				
Administration	women	24	79.17	20.83	2.52	0.112			
	men	8	50.00	50.00					
	total	32	71.88	28.13	-				
Management	women	21	28.57	71.43	0.40	0.525			
	men	10	40.00	60.00					
	total	31	32.26	67.74	-				
Automation	women	2	50.00	50.00	7.47	0.006*			
and Robotics	men	14	100.00	0.00					
	total	16	93.75	6.25	-				
English	women	8	75.00	25.00	0.93	0.334			
philology	men	6	50.00	50.00					
	total	14	64.29	35.71	-				
Nursing	women	29	72.41	27.59	1.46	0.227			
	men	5	100.00	0.00					
	total	34	75.76	24.24	-				
Dietetics	women	16	25.00	75.00	2.55	0.110			
	men	1	100.00	0.00					
	total	17	29.41	70.59	-				
Cosmetology	women	32	46.88	53.13	-				

Food	women	15	33.33	66.67	0.38	0.539
Technology	men	4	50.00	50.00	]	
	total	19	36.84	63.16	-	
Informatics	women	4	75.00	25.00	0.39	0.530
	men	29	58.62	41.38	]	
	total	33	60.61	39.39	-	
Physical	women	4	75.00	25.00	0.02	0.898
education	men	7	71.43	28.57		
	total	11	72.73	27.27	-	
Social work	women	32	81.25	18.75	0.01	0.904
	men	6	83.33	16.67		
	total	38	81.58	18.42	-	
Overall	women	221	64.25	35.75	0.28	0.596
	men	93	67.39	32.61		
	total	314	65.18	34.82	-	

Source: own research, N - number of respondents, \* statistically significant relationships, P- level of statistical significance

Despite the fact that students support the functioning of the class adviser at the university, the majority (74.5%) do not maintain contact with teachers fulfilling this function. A lack of contact is mostly reported by males in all fields of study. Only students of physiotherapy in the vast majority (86.1%) maintain these relationships, and they are mostly also men. In addition, the analysis showed statistically significant relationships between gender and the contact between students and the class adviser in management, automation and robotics, and in the overall summary (Table 2).

Table 2. Maintaining contact of Lomza State University of Applied Sciences students with the class adviser

Courses	Response ca	ategories				
of study	Gender	N	Yes [%]	No [%]	Chi2	P
Physiotherapy	women	33	84.85	15.15	0.53	0.468
	men	3	100.00	0.00	7	
	total	36	86.11	13.89	-	
Administration	women	24	20.83	79.17	1.98	0.160
	men	8	0.00	100.00	7	
	total	32	15.63	84.38	-	
Management	women	21	0.00	100.00	4.49	0.034*
	men	10	20.00	80.00		
	total	31	6.45	93.55	-	•
Automation	women	2	100.00	0.00	5.03	0.025*
and Robotics	men	14	21.43	78.57		
	total	16	31.25	68.75	-	
English	women	8	37.50	62.50	2.00	0.157
philology	men	4	0.00	100.00		
	total	12	25.00	75.00	-	
Nursing	women	29	31.03	68.97	0.57	0.451
	men	4	50.00	50.00		
	total	33	33.33	66.67	-	
Dietetics	women	16	6.25	93.75	0.07	0.797
	men	1	0.00	100.00		
	total	17	5.88	94.12	-	'

Cosmetology	women	32	6.25	93.75	-	
Food	women	15	20.00	80.00	0.05	0.827
Technology	men	4	25.00	75.00		
	total	19	21.05	78.95	-	
Informatics	women	4	0.00	100.00	-	-
	men	29	0.00	100.00		
	total	33	0.00	100.00	-	
Physical	women	4	25.00	75.00	1.93	0.165
education	men	7	0.00	100.00		
	total	11	9.09	90.91	-	
Social work	women	32	37.50	62.50	0.04	0.846
	men	6	33.33	66.67		
	total	38	36.84	63.16	-	
Overall	women	220	30.00	70.00	8.14	0.004*
	men	90	14.44	85.56		
	total	310	25.48	74.52	-	

Source: own research, N-number of respondents, \* statistically significant relationships, P- level of statistical significance

As for the frequency of meetings between the respondents and the class adviser, they take place mainly as needed. This option was chosen by more than half of the respondents (76.5%). Rare meetings are held for 20.9% of respondents and only a few opt for systematic meetings. In this case, the analysis did not show any statistically significant relationships between the variables. Due to the lack of data from students of physical education and computer science, these fields of study were not included in the statistical analysis (Table 3).

Table 3. The frequency of meetings of Lomza State University of Applied Sciences students with the class adviser

Courses	Respon	nse categories				
of study	N	Systema- tically [%]			Chi2	Р
Physiotherapy	32	3.13	75.86	20.69	8,48	0,388
Administration	4	0.00	50.00	50.00		
Menagement	2	0.00	50.00	50.00		
Automation and Robotics	5	0.00	50.00	50.00		
English philology	3	0.00	100.00	0.00		
Nursing	11	0.00	90.91	9.01		
Dietetics	1	0.00	100.00	0.00		
Cosmetlogy	2	0.00	50.00	50.00		
Food Technology	5	0.00	50.00	50.00		
Social work	16	6.25	81.25	12.50		
Overall	81	2.47	76.54	20.99		

Source: own research, N - number of respondents, P- level of statistical significance

Considering the issue of students' expectations from the class advisers, it is stated that the respondents expect understanding first then trust and kindness. Help in learning and interest in living matters turn out to be less important in the perception of students as expectations from the class advisers. Moreover, the analysis showed statistically significant relationships between gender and students' expectations of the class advisers in two fields of study and in a general summary. In management and in the overall summary, all categories of responses are differentiated by gender. On the other hand, in automation and robotics, gender differentiates students' expectations such as: trust, understanding, kindness and interest in living matters (Table 4).

 ${\bf Table~4.~Lomza~State~University~of~Applied~Sciences~students'~expectations~from~their~class~advisers}$ 

Courses	Response categories									
of study	Gender	N	Trust	Under- standing	Helps in learning	kind- ness	Interest in living matters			
Physiothe-	women	34	0.66	0.66	0.41	0.41	0.25			
rapy	men	3	0.73	0.73	0.67	0.47	0.40			
	total	37	0.66	0.67	0.43	0.41	0.26			
	Z		0.20	0.03	1.17	0.31	0.95			
	P		0.84	0.97	0.24	0.75	0.34			
Administra-	women	24	0.17	0.18	0.07	0.08	0.08			
tion	men	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
	total	32	0.13	0.14	0.05	0.06	0.06			
	Z	•	1.34	1.34	1.17	1.17	1.17			
	P		0.17	0.17	0.24	0.24	0.24			
Management	women	21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
	men	10	0.12	0.16	0.06	0.14	0.12			
	total	31	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.04			
	Z		2.03	2.03	2.03	2.03	2.03			
	P		0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*			
Automation	women	2	1.00	0.70	0.10	0.70	0.40			
and Robotics	men	14	0.11	0.15	0.04	0.05	0.12			
	total	16	0.21	0.21	0.05	0.13	0.15			
	Z		2.72	2.04	1.01	2.81	2.11			
	P		0.007*	0.042*	0.313	0.005*	0.033*			
English	women	8	0.18	0.28	0.25	0.18	0.25			
Philology	men	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
	total	14	0.10	0.16	0.14	0.10	0.14			
	Z		1.53	1.53	1.53	1.53	1.53			
	P		0.126	0.126	0.127	0.126	0.127			
Nursing	women	29	0.21	0.23	0.07	0.10	0.14			
	men	5	0.36	0.36	0.00	0.12	0.00			
	total	34	0.24	0.25	0.06	0.10	0.12			
	Z	•	0.64	0.70	0.83	0.15	1.06			
	P		0.525	0.483	0.409	0.883	0.288			
Dietetics	women	16	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.06	0.00			
	men	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
	total	17	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.06	0.00			
	Z	•	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
	Р		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00			

Cosmetology	women	32	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.04
Food	women	15	0.16	0.23	0.15	0.13	0.13
Technology	men	4	0.00	0.25	0.20	0.00	0.00
	total	19	0.13	0.23	0.16	0.11	0.11
	Z		1.05	0.00	0.00	1.05	1.05
	P		0.293	1.000	1.000	0.292	0.292
Informatics	women	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	men	29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Z		0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
	P		0.978	0.978	0.978	0.978	0.978
Physical	women	4	0.20	0.15	0.05	0.10	0.25
education	men	7	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	11	0.07	0.05	0.02	0.04	0.09
	Z		1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13
	P		0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257
Social	women	32	0.27	0.32	0.12	0.24	0.17
work	men	6	0.33	0.27	0.00	0.10	0.00
	total	38	0.28	0.31	0.10	0.22	0.14
	Z		0.30	0.38	1.50	0.95	1.60
	P		0.767	0.704	0.134	0.341	0.111
Overall	women	221	0.22	0.24	0.12	0.15	0.12
	men	93	0.09	0.11	0.04	0.05	0.04
	total	314	0.18	0.20	0.10	0.12	0.10
	Z		3.28	3.02	3.14	3.29	3.54
	P		0.001*	0.003*	0.002*	0.001*	0.000*

Source: own research, N-number of respondents, \* statistically significant relationships, Z- The test of U Mann Whitney, P- level of statistical significance

The analysis of the subject of the meetings of students with the class adviser proves that the duties and rights of the student, self-education as well as current university events are, according to the respondents, the key issues that are the subject of meetings with the class adviser. Other topics include the results of the session as well as all kinds of problems and conflicts bothering students. Moreover, the analysis showed statistically significant relationships between gender and the subject of students' meetings with the class adviser in two fields of study and the general summary. In management and in the general summary, gender differentiates all categories of responses, while in automation and robotics, the factor differentiated by gender are current events at the university (Table 5).

Table 5. The subject of meetings of Lomza State University of Applied Sciences students with the class adviser

Courses of study	Response	Response categories									
	Gender	N	Self- -education	Self- -education	Problems and conflicts	Session results	Current university events				
Physiothe-	women	34	0.52	0.55	0.13	0.29	0.59				
rapy	men	3	0.73	0.80	0.27	0.33	0.87				
	total	37	0.54	0.57	0.14	0.30	0.61				
	Z		0.60	0.80	1.66	0.41	1.18				
	P		0.547	0.421	0.097	0.682	0.238				

Administra- tion	women	24	0.08	0.17	0.04	0.05	0.12
tion	men	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	32	0.06	0.13	0.03	0.04	0.09
	Z		0.99	1.18	0.99	0.99	1.17
	P		0.322	0.239	0.322	0.322	0.240
Management	women	21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	men	10	0.20	0.16	0.04	0.10	0.10
	total	31	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.03
	Z		2.03	2.03	2.03	2.03	2.03
	P		0.042*	0.042*	0.042*	0.042*	0.042*
Automation	women	2	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
and Robotics	men	14	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.19
	total	16	0.14	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.28
	Z		1.34	0.40	0.40	0.40	2.33
	P		0.179	0.690	0.690	0.690	0.020*
English	women	8	0.23	0.30	0.15	0.20	0.18
Philology	men	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	14	0.13	0.17	0.09	0.11	0.10
	Z		1.17	1.53	1.17	1.53	1.53
	P		0.244	0.127	0.244	0.126	0.127
Nursing	women	29	0.11	0.21	0.03	0.05	0.23
	men	5	0.20	0.32	0.08	0.04	0.32
	total	34	0.12	0.23	0.04	0.05	0.24
	Z		0.34	0.50	0.65	0.43	0.45
	P		0.664	0.615	0.514	0.664	0.649
Dietetics	women	16	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	men	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	17	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Z		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	P		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Cosmetology	women	32	0.04	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.05
Food	women	15	0.13	0.24	0.04	0.09	0.21
Technology	men	4	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.25	0.00
	total	19	0.11	0.23	0.03	0.13	0.17
	Z		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	P		0.386	0.897	0.385	0.726	0.293
Informatics	women	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	men	29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Z		0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
	P		0.978	0.978	0.978	0.978	0.978
Physical	women	4	0.10	0.20	0.05	0.15	0.25
education	men	7	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	total	11	0.04	0.07	0.02	0.05	0.09
	Z		1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13
	P		0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257
Social	women	32	0.15	0.32	0.12	0.23	0.29
work	men	6	0.13	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.27
	total	38	0.13	0.29	0.10	0.19	0.19
	Z	1	0.33	0.84	1.50	1.69	0.11
	P		0.741	0.399	0.133	0.090	0.909
	I *		I V., 71	0.577	0.133	0.070	0.707

Overall	women	221	0.16	0.22	0.05	0.11	0.22
	men	93	0.08	0.09	0.03	0.05	0.10
	total	314	0.14	0.18	0.05	0.09	0.8
	Z		2.49	2.91	2.26	2.49	2.79
	P		0.013*	0.004*	0.024*	0.013*	0.005*

Source: own research, N – number of respondents, \* statistically significant relationships, Z- The test of U Mann Whitney, P- level of statistical significance

#### Summary

- Most of the respondents are of the opinion that the function of the class adviser at the university is very much needed. This is what the majority of women in all fields of study think.
- 2. More than half of the respondents do not maintain contact with the class adviser, and this group includes mainly men. Those students who maintain such contacts do so as needed.
- 3. The vast majority of students expect understanding, trust and kindness from their class advisers.
- 4. The duties and rights of the student, self-education and current events at the university are, according to the respondents, the key issues that are the subject of meetings between students and the class adviser.
- Gender is a feature that differentiates students' opinions on the role of the class adviser in the social and educational process at Lomza State University of Applied Sciences.

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