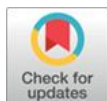


Academic satisfaction of undergraduate students from Save University, Inhambane, Mozambique

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Abstract

This study assessed the academic satisfaction of undergraduate students at Save University, located in the southern region of Mozambique, using the Academic Experience Satisfaction Scale, a sociodemographic questionnaire, and an open-ended question. The 285 participants attended eight courses and were between 19 and 43 years old. Descriptive analyses and analysis of variance were performed using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software. The results indicate that most students were satisfied with the elements of the course dimension. The most satisfied students were male, with partners, in the courses of Human Resource Management, Educational Psychology, History, Agriculture, Chemistry, and Psychology, in the after-work shift, and over 35 years old. The participants suggested improvements in the existing teaching conditions, course management, interpersonal relationships between teachers/students, institutional public services, quality of teachers, student assistance policies, and monthly tuition fees.

Keywords

academic satisfaction; quality of teaching; higher education; university.

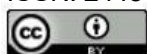
Satisfação acadêmica de estudantes de graduação da Universidade Save, em Inhambane, Moçambique

Resumo

Neste estudo, avaliou-se a satisfação acadêmica de estudantes de graduação da Universidade Save, localizada na região sul de Moçambique, através da Escala de Satisfação com a Experiência Acadêmica, questionário sociodemográfico e uma pergunta de livre expressão. Os 285 participantes frequentavam oito cursos e tinham idades entre 19 e 43 anos. As análises descritivas e análise de variância foram realizadas com auxílio do *software* Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Os resultados indicam que a maioria dos estudantes estava satisfeita com os elementos da dimensão do curso. Os discentes mais satisfeitos foram do sexo masculino, com companheiros, dos cursos de Gestão de Recursos Humanos, Psicologia Educacional, História, Agropecuária, Química e Psicologia, do turno pós-laboral e com idades superiores a 35 anos. Os participantes sugerem a melhoria das condições de ensino existentes, gestão do curso, relacionamento interpessoal entre professores/estudantes, atendimento público institucional, qualidade de professores, políticas de assistência estudantil e taxas de mensalidades.

Palavras-chave

satisfação acadêmica; qualidade de ensino; educação superior; universidade.



**Satisfacción académica de estudiantes universitarios de la
Universidade Save, en Inhambane, Mozambique****Resumen**

Este estudio evaluó la satisfacción académica de estudiantes universitarios de Universidad Save, ubicada en la región sur de Mozambique, utilizando la Escala de Satisfacción de Experiencia Académica, un cuestionario sociodemográfico y una pregunta de libre expresión. Los 285 participantes asistieron a ocho cursos y tenían entre 19 y 43 años. Se realizaron análisis descriptivos y análisis de varianza utilizando el software utilizando el software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Los resultados indican que la mayoría de los estudiantes estaban satisfechos con los elementos de la dimensión del curso. Los discentes más satisfechos fueron los varones, con parejas, de las carreras de Gestión de Recursos Humanos, Psicología Educativa, Historia, Agronomía, Química y Psicología, por la noche y mayores de 35 años. Los participantes sugieren mejoras en las condiciones actuales de enseñanza, la gestión de los cursos, las relaciones interpersonales entre profesores y estudiantes, los servicios públicos institucionales, la calidad docente, las políticas de asistencia a los estudiantes y los costos de matrícula.

Palabras clave

satisfacción académica; calidad de la enseñanza; educación superior; universidad.

1 Introduction

The history of higher education in Mozambique is relatively recent, when compared to that of other countries in Africa and the world. It emerged in 1962 through Decree no. 44.530/1962, of August 21, when the General University Studies of Mozambique (EGUM) was created in response to criticism from nationalist movements in the Portuguese colonies (Taimo, 2010). Subsequently, through Decree-Law no. 43.779/1968, of December 1968, the University of Lourenço Marques (ULM) was created, which, with national independence proclaimed on June 25, 1975, was transformed into Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) (Bene *et al.*, 2022; Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education [MCTES], 2023; Taimo, 2010).

Until the mid-1980s, UEM was the only Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the country. As part of the socioeconomic and political reforms initiated in the late 1980s, which resulted in the change from the Marxist-Leninist-oriented socialist political regime to that of a market economy, the Government approved, in 1992, Law No. 6/92, of May 6 – National Education System (SNE) –, repealing Law No. 4/83, of March 23, 1983, in which, through it, the State began to allow the participation of other entities, including community, cooperatives, business and private entities in the educational process, as provided for in Article 1 (b) (Mozambique, 1992). It is within this legal framework that the

first higher education law – Law No. 1/93, of June 24, 1993 – was approved in 1993, admitting the creation of private HEIs (Mozambique, 1993) and, from 1995, new institutions of this network have emerged in the country.

However, the significant increase in HEIs and Mozambican students began to be recorded significantly from the year 2000. These advances are justified by the opening of new HEIs, which went from 44 in 2015 to 56 in 2023, of which 22 are public, including universities, academies, higher schools and higher institutes (MCTES, 2023). Faced with this new political situation of massification of HEIs in the country, coupled with the economic crisis that has plagued Mozambique, especially since 2016, competition and differential competitiveness between them has been generated, in which each HEI struggles to remain in the educational scenario with a favorable number of students. To this end, many HEIs use various techniques of retention and attraction of students ranging from the implementation of technical courses, reduction of the duration of courses and introduction of various modalities and teaching regimes (Salomão; Abacar; Aliante, 2018) and change of the admission criteria of entrance exam (entrance exam in Brazil) to documentary analysis for entrants to distance learning and post-work courses.

In addition to these techniques considered attractive applied by HEIs in their competition policies to the educational scenario, they need to maintain an acceptable degree of academic satisfaction of the student community in order to retain them and attract others. In recent years, however, especially in the period from 2020 to 2025, Mozambican HEIs have started to face a crisis of candidates, both public and private.

For example, in the period in question, many Mozambican public HEIs (e.g.: Save University, Eduardo Mondlane University, Rovuma University, Licungo University, Púnguè University, Joaquim Chissano University and the School of Journalism) did not have enough candidates to start some courses, being obliged to take recaps of non-admitted competitors, even allowing the entry of candidates who were only interested in attending such courses, even without having taken initial registration and entrance exams. Even so, some courses at these universities did not have enough applicants for their start-up. Thus, evaluating the academic satisfaction of internal students is a very important institutional diagnosis and step to understand their level and their respective background, in order to guide HEIs to position themselves and better adjust their policies

in the Mozambican educational scenario today, which is increasingly complex and competitive.

The term “satisfaction” can be applied in different contexts, such as commercial, professional and academic, suggesting the existence of various definitions depending on the area of knowledge in which it is applied. Satisfaction, associated with the different contexts of academic experience, can be understood as the students' appreciation of the institution, academic climate, course and interpersonal relationships (Almeida *et al.*, 2020). These authors conceive academic satisfaction as a variable of a student's life that involves their perception, engagement and personal and professional fulfillment with the academic environment. For Deafness-Pérez, Sandoval and Lamoyi (2018), academic satisfaction can be defined as well-being experienced by students because they feel that their academic expectations are met as a result of the activities carried out by the institution to meet their educational needs. And, from the perspective of Gomes, Dagostini and Cunha (2013), student satisfaction is related to the positive image they have of their university and the course they attend. When the balance between expectations and experiences translates into a frustration of such aspirations, then significant levels of dissatisfaction are expected.

Based on this premise, Osti and Almeida (2022) and Osti *et al.* (2020) warn that it is important to know how students are relating to the institution in general, including their satisfaction with the course, the institution's own resources, its services and *campus life*. This shows that there are several factors that contribute to academic satisfaction. In general, Vecchio (2012) classifies the sources of satisfaction into two categories, namely: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic sources originate from the individual himself and have psychological value. And extrinsic sources originate externally to the individual, that is, they are forces of control beyond the person.

Within the scope of extrinsic factors, Ramos *et al.* (2016) aimed to know the factors that determined satisfaction with the academic experience among 26 undergraduate nursing students at a public university in southern Brazil. Three categories emerged as results, of which two were related to academic satisfaction, namely: academic and curricular determinants (subjects and learning methodologies) and social determinants (quality of interpersonal relationships). In the same country, another

research identified the elements of satisfaction of academics in the Midwest of Santa Catarina in a sample of 150 participants, having pointed out that the greatest satisfaction was related to the location of the *campus*, the interpersonal relationship with teachers and coordination (Gambirage *et al.*, 2017).

In China, in the meta-analysis review by Than and Khaing (2020), it was found that personal (self-efficacy, motivation and university experience), instructional (courses, learning environment and teaching and instruction), social (social presence and student-teacher relationship), university (quality of service, cost and reputation) and outcome-related (job prospects and developed skills) factors were the strongest predictors of academic satisfaction. In the same direction, Gu and Lu (2023), in their literature review, found that the factors that influence the satisfaction of university students were composed of seven dimensions, namely: school reputation; school environment; personal improvement; organizational management; logistical support; quality of teaching; and charges and subsidies. Among them, teaching quality, school environment, organizational management and logistical support are the main categories.

In Spain, De-Juan-Vigaray *et al.* (2024) verified the acquisition of skills, the development of capacities, the teaching methods, the faculty involved, the management of the course and the facilities and infrastructure of the classes as the antecedent variables of student satisfaction. In addition, the fulfillment of students' expectations was also a predictor of their loyalty to the higher education institution where they studied.

The investigation of academic satisfaction is so relevant today and has been the object of study in several studies in the area of Education and Psychology, as it is assumed that their perception by students interferes with their involvement with the institution, implying the decision to remain in it or not (Almeida *et al.*, 2020; Bardach *et al.*, 2020; Biswas *et al.*, 2024; Osti *et al.*, 2020). Student satisfaction, therefore, is an important index to assess the quality of higher education and the competitiveness of colleges and/or HEIs (Gu; Lu, 2023). For this reason, the research of this construct is seen as an important element in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness and educational contexts, enabling institutions to restructure their organization to adapt to the needs of students (Hue; Chi; Hao, 2023; Schleich; Polydoro; Santos, 2006).

Research on academic satisfaction in the international scenario has been highlighted due to the increase in the number and diversity of students in higher education and the need for institutions to try to understand the conditions that favor the permanence and completion of courses by their students. Student satisfaction is understood as a determining factor for their permanence and academic success (Gu; Lu, 2023; Kuzehgar; Sorourkhah, 2024; Osti; Almeida, 2022), as high levels of student satisfaction are essential for the creation of a favorable and productive learning environment, especially in higher education (Boyd *et al.*, 2022; Yu *et al.*, 2021). Despite this, in Mozambique the subject is still little investigated.

In addition, the performance of this research is justified by other professional reasons of the proponents. Thus, considering that the country has registered a significant advance in the expansion of higher education and in the increase in the number of university students belonging to different social, cultural and economic realities in recent years (Bene *et al.*, 2022; MCTES, 2023), the theme of academic satisfaction should arouse the interest of several Mozambican researchers, in order to bring to light scientifically validated results that could help institutions understand the levels and factors of academic satisfaction, in order to foster actions and public policies aimed at ensuring high levels of satisfaction of the academic community, ensuring the permanence and completion of students' courses. Moreover, these studies could increase the academic production of the theme and foster the design and implementation of institutional public policies aimed at ensuring higher levels of academic satisfaction.

From a professional point of view, it is worth informing that most of the authors of this work are teachers linked to the Save University, which is a public HEI created in 2019, as a result of the decentralization of the Pedagogical University, affections in the Faculty of Education and Psychology, and that academic satisfaction is an object of their interest. Considering the time of existence of this university, it was urgent to carry out the evaluation of students' satisfaction in relation to different aspects of their academic life, in order to identify the level and the conditions and to gather suggestions from students on the aspects to be improved. The results achieved are essential to ensure the certification of the courses offered by the HEI investigated, as the evaluation of students' academic satisfaction is one of the requirements of the National Council for Quality Assessment of

Higher Education (CNAQ), an institution equivalent to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) in Brazil.

And being a university restructured and inserted in a highly competitive Mozambican educational scenario, it needs to assert itself from the guarantee of high levels of student satisfaction, which may possibly favor the attraction of new candidates. This scenario described aroused the interest of the researchers to develop this study, which shows the level of academic satisfaction, the elements related to the degree of satisfaction of the students and the aspects to be improved at the level of the organic unit and the coordination of the courses. The exploration of these elements can help decision making by the managers of the institution investigated with scientific evidence, in order to restructure their actions to meet the real needs of students. Furthermore, the results achieved will serve as a basis to support the theoretical framework in future research.

In view of the above, the general objective of this investigation was to evaluate the academic satisfaction of students from Universidade Save, Extensão da Massinga, located in the southern region of Mozambique. Specifically, the following objectives were sought: to understand the level of academic satisfaction of students; to verify the variation of academic satisfaction according to sociodemographic and student variables; to identify the antecedents of academic satisfaction and to explore the aspects to be improved at the level of the organic unit of Massinga and the courses from the perspective of students.

2 Methodology

This research is explanatory and quantitative. According to Gil (2008, p. 28), explanatory research “[...] is that research whose central concern is to identify the factors that determine or contribute to the occurrence of phenomena”. This is the type of research that deepens the knowledge of reality, because it explains the reason, the why of things, and it can be said that scientific knowledge is based on the results offered by explanatory studies.

For Creswell, J., and Creswell, D. (2018, p. 336), quantitative research “[...] aims to test objective theories, examining the relationships between variables”. For these

authors, such variables can be measured by standardized instruments, so that data numbers can be analyzed by statistical procedures. Thus, the choice of these types of study is justified by the fact that they allow the understanding of the factors related to the occurrence of the phenomena, on the one hand, and the involvement of a larger size of participants, as well as the use of standardized instruments and allow statistical analysis of the data, on the other hand.

Data collection was performed using the following instruments: sociodemographic and academic data questionnaire, Academic Experience Satisfaction Scale (ESEA) and a free expression question. The questionnaire on sociodemographic data was prepared by the authors, with the purpose of obtaining personal and academic information, such as: age, marital status, gender, course, year of attendance and shift. This information was used to determine the profile of participants and verify variations in the level of academic satisfaction among students.

The ESEA is an instrument by Schleich, Polydoro and Santos (2006), composed of 35 items, comprising three dimensions: satisfaction with the course (13 items: 1, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 21, 25, 28, 31, 33, 34 and 35; $\alpha = 0.90$), satisfaction with the development opportunity (10 items: 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 23, 24 and 26; $\alpha = 0.87$) and satisfaction with the institution (12 items: 4, 7, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 27, 29, 30 and 32; $\alpha = 0.87$). Regarding internal reliability, in the original version, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94 was obtained, indicating an excellent internal consistency of its items in the evaluation of satisfaction with the academic experience.

The instrument is answered on a five-point Likert scale: 1) "not at all satisfied", 2) "not very satisfied", 3) "satisfied", 4) "well satisfied"; and 5) "completely satisfied". In terms of the evaluation of academic satisfaction, the participants who indicate in points 1 and 2 are dissatisfied with the referenced item and from 3 to 5 are satisfied, and 5 reveals that the student is highly satisfied or delighted. According to this criterion, two categories were organized through the sum of the frequencies of points 1 and 2 (dissatisfied) and 3, 4 and 5 (satisfied) to measure the total number for each of these categories.

In addition to the excellent value of Cronbach's alpha that Esea presents, the preference for this instrument to assess academic satisfaction lies in the fact that the scientific literature reveals that it has been commonly used in recent times, overcoming some

of the psychometric insufficiencies of other measures, and, even more, in the fact that it is written in Portuguese and is easy to apply (Ramos *et al.*, 2015; Salomão; Abacar; Aliante, 2018). Finally, an open question – of free expression to students – was asked to indicate and describe the aspects to be improved in all contexts of the Save University, Massinga Extension.

The treatment of collected information was done with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 22.0. The data were initially entered into the Excel database and migrated to SPSS. Based on the SPSS, simple descriptive analyzes (means, standard deviation and frequencies) were performed to determine the sociodemographic profile of the participants, the degree of academic satisfaction and their background and the elements to be improved. Likewise, the inspection of Esea's internal property was carried out through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha value, as well as the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA, *one-way*) to compare the means of Esea's dimensions according to sociodemographic and academic characteristics.

This study included 285 of the 1,172 students regularly enrolled in different undergraduate courses in the 2022 academic year at Save University, Massinga Extension. The sample investigated falls within the non-probabilistic typology, by accessibility (Gil, 2008), that is, those students who, after receiving the invitation made by the researchers, voluntarily consented to participate in the research were involved.

Of the 285 participants, the majority ($n=173$; 60.7%) were female, ranging in age from 19 to 43 years ($M=24.74$; $SD=4.79$). As for the courses to which they were linked, 66 (23.2%) were in Biology, 37 (13.0%) in Agriculture, 36 (12.6%) in Educational Psychology, 33 (11.6%) in Chemistry, 30 (10.5%) in History, 29 (10.2%) in Physics, 28 (9.8%) in Psychology and 26 (9.1%) in Human Resource Management.

Regarding the year of attendance, 175 (61.0%) were in the 4th year, 56 (19.6%) in the 2nd year and 55 (19.4%) in the 3rd year. Regarding the shift they attended, 231 (81.1%) were from work and 54 (18.9%) from post-work. With regard to marital status, the majority ($n=174$; 61.1%) declared not having a partner. Thus, this research involved students from 2nd to 4th year, in the face-to-face regime, who voluntarily accepted to participate in it, of both genders and from different courses. On the contrary, students from the 1st year, the distance learning regime and other levels of education were excluded.

Data collection was carried out between September and October 2022 at Save University, Massinga Extension, preceded by the request for authorization made through a letter addressed to the director of the extension, which was answered favorably. After authorization by the maximum direction of the institution, the researchers contacted the directions of the courses for their presentation, request for collaboration and availability of time for the application of the research instruments.

The application of the research instruments occurred in the classrooms during the period provided by the coordination of the courses and teachers. Before the questionnaires were administered to the students, the researchers explained the objectives and methodological procedures of the research, as well as requested their voluntary participation. Students who freely consented to participate in the research were given the printed questionnaires for their individual completion. There was a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of the information, as the name of any participant was not requested; only the researchers had access to the questionnaires answered.

After the questionnaires were applied, a screening was carried out to verify that all of them were properly completed. This process resulted in the destruction of certain questionnaires due to several reasons, such as: incorrect completion and omission of some data. For questions of questionnaire identification, each of the participants was assigned an SA code, followed by the respective number according to the sequence of the participants, being, for example: SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4 ... SA285.

The public dissemination and socialization of the results took place through the presentation of the abstract at the IV International Seminar on Scientific Research and XIV Seminar on the Dissemination of Projects Financed by the National Research Fund (FNI), which took place in the city of Maputo, from October 19 to 20, 2022, in a hybrid manner, as well as at the festivities on September 5, 2024, Save University Day.

3 Results

3.1 Descriptive analysis of ESE reliability

Table 1 presents results of descriptive analysis (means and standard deviation) and internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha values) of the Esea-35 and the items. Regarding

the averages of the items and dimensions, the results indicate that, in general, the dimension that obtained the highest average is the satisfaction with the course ($M=3.12$). This reveals that most of the students investigated were satisfied with several aspects of this dimension. As proof of this, seven of the 13 items that make up this subscale had an average above three, namely: interpersonal relationship with classmates; teachers' knowledge of the content of the subjects they teach, as well as relevance of the content of the subjects; teachers' interest in serving students during classes, *chats*, forums and throughout the subjects in general; teaching strategies used by teachers; teachers' availability to serve students outside the classroom and content adequacy for training.

Also in Table 1, the dimensions of satisfaction with the institution and with the development opportunity presented averages below three, which suggests that there is dissatisfaction of the students surveyed in relation to the items that make up these two subscales. As evidence, in the dimension of satisfaction with the institution, only two of the 12 items reached the average of three, which are: security offered by the institution and cleaning of the institution. In the satisfaction factor with the development opportunity, it was observed that only one item (example: my involvement in the course activities) of the 10 reached an average higher than the cutoff point: three.

Regarding the values of the internal reliability inspection, Esea revealed to achieve an excellent overall Cronbach's alpha value of 0.92. As for the values of each dimension, the Cronbach's alphas are 0.87, 0.79 and 0.74 for the factors of satisfaction with the course, satisfaction with the institution and opportunity for development, successively.

Table 1 – ESE descriptive and internal consistency analysis

Factor/item	(continues)		
	M	DP	α
<i>Course satisfaction – 13 items</i>	3.12	0.681	0.873
Interpersonal relationship with teachers	2.94	0.982	0.862
Interpersonal relationships with classmates in the course	3.72	1.125	0.873
Adequacy between personal involvement in the course and academic performance obtained	2.83	1.028	0.861
Teachers' interest in serving students during classes, <i>chats</i> , forums and in the course of subjects in general	3.20	1.185	0.859
Teachers' knowledge of the content of the subjects they teach	3.40	1.082	0.859
Recognition by teachers of my involvement in my education	2.99	1.088	0.862
Institution's commitment to the quality of training	2.90	1.118	0.866

Table 1 – ESE descriptive and internal consistency analysis

Factor/item	(conclusion)		
	M	DP	α
Course satisfaction – 13 items	3.12	0.681	0.873
Evaluation proposed by teachers	2.93	1.074	0.859
Teaching strategies used by teachers	3.17	0.995	0.859
Relevance of the content of the subjects	3.33	1.029	0.862
Teachers' willingness to serve students outside the classroom	3.10	1.242	0.862
Adequacy of content for training	3.06	1.024	0.860
Adequacy between the tasks required in the course and the time established by the teachers for the accomplishment	2.88	1.146	0.867
<i>Development opportunity – 10 items</i>	2.46	0.644	0.784
Diversity of extracurricular activities offered by the institution	2.31	1.054	0.767
Course curriculum	2.82	1.216	0.761
Social events offered by the institution	2.63	1.240	0.770
My involvement in course activities	3.20	1.096	0.771
Student support programs or services offered by the institution	1.96	1.111	0.755
Conditions offered for my professional development	2.31	1.088	0.749
Conditions for entry into the professional training area	2.43	1.007	0.769
Financial support program offered by the institution	2.05	1.069	0.775
Personal development opportunity offered by the institution	2.31	1.052	0.758
Adequacy between my financial investment to pay for studies and the training received	2.52	1.093	0.774
<i>Satisfaction with the institution – 12 items</i>	2.60	0.625	0.799
Audiovisual resources and equipment available at the institution	2.31	1.177	0.794
Attendance and clarity of the information offered by the employees of the secretariat	2.73	1.192	0.783
Equipment and <i>software</i> offered by the computer room	1.90	1.048	0.795
Attendance and clarity of the information offered by library staff.	2.03	1.086	0.776
Collection available in the library	2.30	1.094	0.774
Security offered by the institution	3.31	1.155	0.775
Physical infrastructure of classrooms	2.94	1.179	0.779
Physical infrastructure of the institution	2.72	1.103	0.774
Cleanliness of the institution	3.17	1.283	0.790
Services offered by the library	2.26	0.943	0.778
Architectural adaptation of the institution's facilities	2.60	0.943	0.785
Location of the different sectors that make up the institution	2.93	1.057	0.787
Esea-35	2.75	0.578	0.923

Source: Own authorship (2025).

3.2 Analysis of variance between the dimensions of academic satisfaction and the sociodemographic variables of the students investigated

According to Table 2, the students of the courses of Human Resources Management, Educational Psychology, History, Agriculture, Chemistry and Psychology of

the 2nd and 4th years, of the two regimes, with varying ages, were more satisfied with the dimension of the course. In the dimensions of satisfaction with development opportunities and with the institution, only students over the age of 35 revealed their satisfaction.

Table 2 – Analysis of variance of the level of academic satisfaction and sociodemographic variables

Variables	Esea Factors					
	Course satisfaction		Development opportunity.		Satisfaction with the institution	
	Average	DP	Average	DP	Average	DP
<i>Sex</i>						
Male	3.19	0.671	2.51	0.604	2.69	0.612
Female	3.06	0.688	2.42	0.668	2.54	0.625
<i>Marital status</i>						
With partner	3.18	0.679	2.48	0.658	2.65	0.592
Without partner	3.07	0.684	2.44	0.637	2.57	0.642
<i>Attendance course</i>						
Educational Psychology	3.28	0.677	2.46	0.554	2.50	0.699
Psychology	3.01	0.559	2.27	0.519	2.62	0.593
History	3.21	0.554	2.66	0.615	2.75	0.408
Human Resources Management	3.63	0.703	2.85	0.805	2.99	0.708
Physics	2.73	0.508	2.19	0.577	2.44	0.528
Agriculture	3.20	0.545	2.40	0.593	2.41	0.648
Chemistry	3.06	0.659	2.37	0.555	2.51	0.594
Biology	2.94	0.774	2.45	0.693	2.63	0.610
<i>Year of attendance</i>						
2nd year	3.25	0.623	2.64	0.652	2.80	0.508
3rd year	2.86	0.546	2.23	0.546	2.52	0.562
4th year	3.15	0.731	2.46	0.655	2.55	0.656
<i>Class attendance shift</i>						
Anytime shift	3.03	0.649	2.39	0.597	2.52	0.591
After-work	3.46	0.718	2.74	0.760	2.93	0.659
<i>Age</i>						
18 to 35 years	3.07	0.664	2.41	0.615	2.56	0.597
36 to 43 years	3.87	0.588	3.19	0.734	3.23	0.764

Source: Own authorship (2025).

3.3 Aspects to be improved to ensure high levels of academic satisfaction: participants' perspectives

Finally, in order to explore the institutional aspects and the academic environment that should be improved in the perception of the students investigated, the participants

were asked to report them, and the results of the answers to this question of free expression are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 – Aspects to be improved to increase the level of academic satisfaction

Category	Analysis subcategory	n
Conditions of university and teaching learning	Quality and internet access	98
	Provision of teaching materials – laboratories	66
	Classroom conditions – ventilation, lighting, desks, spraying and projectors cables	56
	Cleaning schedule for classrooms and bathrooms	46
	Provision of means of transport for field work – practices, internships and excursions	46
	Provision of bibliographic collection in the library	44
	Provision of computers and large computer room	20
	Provision of conditions in the bathrooms (taps, water supply, especially in the Maguezane campuses)	8
	Provision of more classrooms	2
	Practical lectures	66
Course – organization and management	Course management – defenses, overdue chairs, communication and attendance	44
	Courses in line with current labour market requirements	6
	Promotion of extracurricular training	4
	Balance in the distribution of tasks based on shifts	2
	Rigidity and behavior of teachers	49
Interpersonal relationship	Healthy teacher/student interaction	37
	Library support	42
Institutional functioning – public service, complaints and grievance box and communication	Attendance at the general secretariat, academic registration and course directions	14
	Provision of complaints box for students (treat concerns calmly)	8
	Advance notice/communication on the increase in monthly fees	3
Quality of teachers	Teachers with skills and mastery of the subjects taught by them	56
Student assistance policies	Scholarships – Flexibility of payment time	16
	Provision of institutional care services	16
	Creation of a social center at the university	6
	Criteria for awarding more objective scholarships	2
Monthly Fees	Reduction of after-work program monthly fees	20
	Tuition payment time – extend the term	3
	Advance notice/communication on the increase in monthly fees	3
Personal identification document;	Assignment of student cards	6

Source: Own authorship (2025).

As shown in Table 3, the elements of the category of university conditions and teaching-learning were the most mentioned, followed by organization and management of

the course, interpersonal relationship, public service, quality of teachers, student assistance policies, tuition fees and institutional document identifying students.

4 Discussion

The results of this study indicate that most students were satisfied with the dimension of the course and dissatisfied with the dimensions of satisfaction with the institution and the opportunity for development. Likewise, Fadel *et al.* (2018), when understanding academic satisfaction with the use of the same instrument used in this study, found that higher averages were observed in the dimension of "satisfaction with the course", while the dimensions "satisfaction with the institution" and "opportunity for development" obtained lower averages, but close to each other. In the same vein, Assis, Moura and Alves (2020), when analyzing the academic satisfaction of students, observed high expectations in relation to the dimension of satisfaction with the course, such as: the institution's commitment to the quality of teaching and research, teachers' knowledge of the content of the disciplines they teach and relationships with teachers and classmates.

Soares *et al.* (2021) developed a study in which they aimed to identify the characteristics that make up the satisfaction of university students with higher education and found that the role of the teacher and the curriculum were highlighted as elements of academic satisfaction. Regarding satisfaction with the course, it was detected that the well-articulated curriculum had a positive impact on the students' perception of the university, and this reflected the importance that the university attributed to the course and the student. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with the course occurred when the Hei provided low quality extracurricular activities, a precarious structure on *campus* and little offer of internships. Dissatisfaction was also mainly related to not experiencing practical aspects of the profession or the poor quality of the information provided.

In Mozambique, Campira, Almeida and Araújo (2021) analyzed the academic satisfaction of university students through a sample of 30 participants who answered a semi-structured interview script. The results indicated that aspects of satisfaction were related to learning (example: quality of learning and teaching methodologies), interpersonal relationships (example: mutual respect among the academic community, collaboration and friendship among students), infrastructure (example: location and

conditions of the *campus*), career perspectives (example: professional success due to learning and expectations of good professional performance) and course (example: satisfaction with the course curriculum).

On the contrary, other previous research (Helfenstein *et al.*, 2020; Oliveira *et al.*, 2022; Pereira *et al.*, 2018; Rossato; Pinto; Müller, 2020; Suehiro; Andrade, 2018) had divergent results. Pereira *et al.* (2018) and Rossato, Pinto and Müller (2020), for example, analyzing the satisfaction of students at a public university through their academic experiences, found that students showed high levels of general satisfaction with the course, the institution and development opportunities. In the investigation by Suehiro and Andrade (2018), it was found that the lowest level was satisfaction in the satisfaction with the course dimension. Oliveira *et al.* (2022) investigated student satisfaction and found that students were indifferent to the domains of satisfaction with the course, opportunity for development and satisfaction with the institution.

Regarding the analysis of variance in the satisfaction of the students investigated with the sociodemographic and academic variables, the results obtained pointed out that the students who attended the courses of Human Resources Management, Educational Psychology, History, Agriculture, Chemistry and Psychology of the 2nd and 4th years of the post-work regime (night course), aged over 35 years, were the most satisfied with the dimension of the course. Similarly, Silva and Oliveira Júnior (2016) found that academic satisfaction varied according to the scientific area of the course, with higher levels of satisfaction among Human Sciences students and lower levels among students in the area of Exact Sciences.

The academic satisfaction with the course of the students of the night course can be justified, possibly, by their employment situation, since most were already employed and inserted in the labor market, having a certain financial stability (Osti *et al.*, 2020). In this same study, the dimension of learning and academic performance was pointed out as a factor of satisfaction among students in the areas of Human and Biological Sciences, and the greatest dissatisfaction was manifested in students in the area of Exact Sciences, who stated that it was difficult to obtain the minimum averages required by the university. Regarding the year of the study, these results differ from those obtained by Czapievski and Sumiya (2014), who

noted that 3rd-year students were the most satisfied in the satisfaction with the course dimension.

The participants of this study suggested improving university and teaching-learning conditions in the organization, course management, interpersonal relationships, public service, as teachers, student assistance policies, reduction of tuition fees and provision of institutional identification documents for students. Kuzehgar and Sorourkhah (2024), when identifying the factors that affected the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of university students, obtained results that indicated a significant level of dissatisfaction with the educational dimension and teaching methods of teachers. In addition, in the administrative dimension, dissatisfaction was more concentrated in the areas of social assistance services and university facilities. In the administrative dimension, failure to properly fulfill responsibilities led to student dissatisfaction.

Considering that academic satisfaction has an influence on aspects ranging from academic performance to the mental health of students, we ratify the suggestion of Chico, Osti and Almeida (2022) regarding the need to carry out more studies in the area and periodic applications of questionnaires and/or scales that assess the satisfaction of higher education students. More consistent investigations, taking more numerous samples from different institutions, courses and regimes, as well as various data collection instruments, can help to identify the weaknesses present in institutions, such as the greatest discontent among students, so that control measures can be planned in order to avoid suffering on the part of undergraduates and avoid possible academic dropout in higher education. Specifically, it is essential for the management of the Save University to take these findings into account, as well as to continue the studies on this theme and extend them to other extensions.

5 Final considerations

This study aimed to evaluate the academic satisfaction of students at Universidade Save, Extensão da Massinga. The results indicated that most students were satisfied with the course and dissatisfied with the development opportunities and the institution. There was a variation in the levels of academic satisfaction with the sociodemographic data of the students. These results can help the direction of the investigated institution in making strategic decisions in order to act on the negative aspects reported by the students in order to

improve them, as well as to support future research. Improving these aspects can not only contribute to raising the degree of student satisfaction, but also to combating academic dropout.

This study was developed with the students of a public university. Thus, it is suggested that the evaluation of academic satisfaction be done continuously in this institution, as it comprises a psychological construct whose conditioning factors are dynamic and contextual. Likewise, it is desirable to extend this type of research to the entire save University and other higher education institutions in the country. Such suggestions are given in the understanding that the diagnosis and evaluation of academic satisfaction help to understand the weaknesses and deficiencies in higher education institutions and present important findings regarding the success and permanence of the university student.

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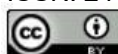
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DATA AVAILABILITY

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study has been published in the article itself.

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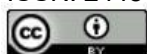
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