

## HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE: CONCEPTION AND PROPERTIES

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### Abstract

Article deals with specification of higher education services. The conception as well as the properties of higher education services are analysed. Higher education services are specific and differ from the other types of services as well as education services. In order to identify all properties of higher education services it is necessary to analyse both general properties of services and specific properties of education services, vocational training services and higher education services. All these properties of higher education services are analysed and summarised in this article. A survey of the relevant literature is provided in this study.

**Purpose** – to analyse higher education service conception and main properties systematically: to review the diversity of conceptions of service, education service, higher education service involving the main properties of each service category; to present the list of properties of higher education services which includes both generic and specific properties of higher education services.

**Design/methodology/approach** – the study is performed using the following methods: systemic analysis, review and generalization of scientific literature and legal regulation.

**Finding** – higher education is an economic category equivalent to the service, which is characterized not only by service generic properties, but also by specific properties inherent to education, vocational training and higher education services. The general list of properties of higher education services consists of 45 characteristics that reveal the complexity of higher education services, uniqueness and specificity. However this list is not exhaustive. Properties of higher education services are necessary phenomenon which helps better understand the nature of higher education and assist in other research areas of higher education.

**Research limitations/implications** – this study is based on review of the newest scientific literature and legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania, which are regulating the research object.

**Practical implications** – properties of higher education services assist in other research areas of higher education. Understanding and assessment of the properties of higher education services affect better quality of research in such research areas as higher education funding model development, higher education service pricing, higher education finance management, higher education service quality assessment and improvement, and etc.

**Originality/Value** – the structured list of higher education services properties is presented, according to the generic properties, inherent to all types of services and specific properties, inherent to education, vocational training and higher education services.

**Keywords:** higher education service, education service, service, properties of higher education services.

**Research type:** literature review.

## Introduction

Higher education is one of the components of the education system and is the main source of human capital formation of a stable national economy. Higher education has a positive impact on the country's economic growth, society and each and every individual. Higher education is directly related to service category. However, it should be emphasized, that higher education services are very specific and differ from other types of services. Different aspects of higher education services were analysed by Crosson (1985), Soutar and McNeil (1996), Panruchin (1995, 1997), Barannik (1998), Spiriuchova (2003), Langviniene and Vengriene (2005), Kotler and Armstrong (2006), Ksenofontova (2006), Guščinskienė and Čiburienė (2008), Yeo (2008), Lifanova (2008), Tsinidou et al. (2010), Schreyer (2010), Skorobogatova (2010); Grigorash (2014), Blinova (2015) and other.

**Purpose of the research** – to analyse higher education service conception and determine main properties systematically. **Tasks of the research:** (1) to review the diversity of conceptions of service, education service, higher education service involving the main properties of each service category; (2) to present the list of properties of higher education services which includes both generic and specific properties of higher education services. **Methods of the research:** systemic analysis, review and generalization of the newest scientific literature and legal regulation.

## The Conception of Higher Education

Higher education – is a service (Spiriuchova, 2003; Langviniene and Vengriene, 2005; Guščinskienė and Čiburienė, 2008; Blinova, 2015). *Higher education (studies)* (Lithuanian – *aukštojo mokslo studijos*) is type of the education services. It is important to pay attention to the basic concepts and processes while analysing higher education services as a type of education services and specificity of higher education services (properties).

Firstly, it should be noted that the concept of higher education is not objectively revealed in the scientific literature or in the legislation. For example, higher education (especially university higher education) concept was analysed by Jucevičienė et al. (2000), Kraujutaitytė (2002), Tinfavičienė (2007), Pilkienė and Sajienė (2009) and others. However, as authors have noted, scientific research works was not providing much attention to the concept of higher education itself, but was used in the context of solving certain problems (Pilkienė and Sajienė, 2009; Blinova, 2015). On the other hand, it is generally agreed that higher education is the studies, carried out in a higher education institution, leading to a qualification, qualification degree or science degree, so that the primary meaning of the “higher education” phrase is forgotten and is not being discussed a lot. (Pilkienė and Sajienė, 2009).

In most languages (e.g. English – *Higher education*, Russian – *Высшее образование*) highlighted not a *science* (e.g. like in Lithuanian – *Aukštasis mokslas = Higher Science*), but *education* (Pilkienė and Sajienė, 2009). Lauzackas (2005) points out that science itself cannot be lower or higher. However, the emphasis on education defines the term as a link to a higher school studies carried out on the basis of science (Pilkienė and Sajienė, 2009). Jucevičienė et al. (2000) points out that higher education differs from other educational units – in higher education a high level of intellectual activity is required, scientific methods of operation are mastered and applied, the

critical thinking is developed. The authors give eight properties that are exclusive to higher education as a specific educational subsystem (Juceviciene et al., 2000):

1. *Studies activity* (develops intelligent personality, which is capable of self-realization);
2. *Parity relationship* (combines academic community members for equal interaction with this material, taking into account the different interests and points of view);
3. *Research* (describes the specificity of the Science and active participation in the creation of new knowledge);
4. *Critical thinking* (helps the individual to change themselves by analysing various objects and phenomena in the search for appropriate solutions);
5. *Autonomy* (associated with self-government and self-control, which makes opportunities for institutions to self-realize);
6. *Academic freedom* (emphasises unity of rights and obligations in the academic community);
7. *Scientific and qualifications acquisition* (gives the possibility for the institutions to assess the intellectual and professional development of its members);
8. *Openness to the society* (higher education functions in society are the dissemination of knowledge and intellectual education).

Kraujutaityte (2002) points out, that higher education activity is very important for society, as it implements cultural process specialization and actualization. For some, higher education is valuable because it enables academic self-expression. For others, acquiring a diploma is a way to determine status of the personality and to prove the ability to create a better future, for someone else it can be a way to ensure public cultural regeneration (Kraujutaitytė, 2002). It is important to emphasise, that objective definitions of higher education are not easy to come by, but it is broadly accepted that higher education fulfils four major functions (Cemmel, 2003):

1. The development of new knowledge (*the research function*);
2. The training of highly qualified personnel (*the teaching function*);
3. The provision of services to society;
4. The *ethical function*, which implies social criticism.

The conception of *Higher education (studies) (Lithuanian – aukštojo mokslo studijos)* is provided by the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania<sup>1</sup>. According to the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, the purpose of *higher education studies* should be to assist an individual in the acquisition of a higher education qualification corresponding to a modern level of knowledge and technologies, meeting demands of economy as well as help in preparation for an active professional career, social and cultural life. According to the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania<sup>2</sup>, the mission of higher education and research is to help ensure the country's public, cultural and economic prosperity, provide support and impetus for a full life of every citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, and satisfy the natural thirst for knowledge. A cohesive system of higher education and research is the foundation for the development of the knowledge society, for strengthening of the knowledge-based economy and the sustainable development of the country, a dynamic and competitive life of the national economy, and social and economic well-being; such a system cultivates a creative, educated, dignified, morally responsible, public-spirited, independent and entrepreneurial personality, fosters the civilizational

<sup>1</sup> Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (*as last amended on 22 December 2015 - No XII-2213*).

<sup>2</sup> Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania (*as last amended on 17 December 2015 - No XII-2198*).

identity of Lithuania, supports, develops and creates national and global cultural traditions<sup>1</sup>. According to the previously valid Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania<sup>2</sup>, the objective of higher education was to develop an educated personality and society with an aptitude for learning, with knowledge of the latest technologies and cultural values, to create, accumulate and disseminate scientific knowledge and cultural values, and to foster a specific character of national culture.

According to mentioned law provisions, the main functions of current higher education can be defined:

1. *Training (learning) (Lithuanian – mokymo(si))* (helps a person to acquire skills and participate in working life, satisfy the natural desire of knowledge);
2. *Science* (scientific knowledge dissemination);
3. *Culture* (cultural values dissemination; supports, develops and creates national and world cultural traditions);
4. *Education (Lithuanian – ugdymo)* (develop creative, educated, dignified, ethically responsible, public-spirited, independent and entrepreneurial personality);
5. *The socio-economic function* (based on the development of the knowledge society, for strengthening of the knowledge-based economy and the sustainable development of the country, a dynamic and competitive life of the national economy, and social and economic well-being).

It should be noted, that Lithuanian higher education is governed by a special law – Law on Higher education and Research, however this law does not provide a precise definition of *Higher education* or *Higher education studies*, but provides conceptions of *Qualification of higher education* and separately defines the *Studies* conception. According to the Law on Higher education and Research, *qualification of higher education* means a qualification degree (professional bachelor’s, bachelor’s, master’s), the doctor of science degree, the doctor of arts degree as well as a qualification which is awarded by a higher education institution in accordance with the procedure laid down by legal acts. *Studies* is used to describe a process, where person, who has at least completed his secondary education, and is studying in a higher education institution according to a certain study programme or when preparing a dissertation.

Consequently, the conception of *Higher education (studies)* can be given – it is a process, where person, who has completed at least his secondary education, is studying in a higher education institution according to a certain study programme or when preparing a dissertation in order to acquire contemporary knowledge and technological level and needs of the economy in line with a higher education qualification, preparing for an active professional, social and cultural activities.

### **The Triple Approach to Services, Education Services and Higher education Services**

The scientific literature provides higher education as *education services*’ concept. Higher education (studies) as a type of the services has its own features. Firstly, higher education is a *service*, secondly – it is an *education service* and lastly – it is a *higher education service*. Each of these categories (services, education services and higher education service) has its own distinct characteristics (*for example*, services differ from the products, education services differ from other types of services, and

<sup>1</sup> Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania

<sup>2</sup> Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania (*as last amended on 18 July 2006 – No X-769*).

etc.). Taking into account this point, we will look at each category, distinguishing the conceptions and characteristics, thus revealing the higher education service properties. Since higher education is particular type of services, we will start from the *service* concept. In the scientific literature, the service is understood in many different ways, and it should be noted that there is no uniform definition of a *service*, but the theoretical definition of the services placed on essential services and different properties of material goods and services, the economic process logic (Vengriene, 1998). Unlike tangible products, a service is a complex phenomenon and many fragmented definitions have emerged (Hirvonen, 2007; Jallat and Wood, 2005). Blinova (2015) points out that, according to the given variety of service definitions, it can be classified taking into account three approaches: service as *a process*, service as *a result*, service as *an economic activity*. According to this triple approach to services, we give the list of the services definitions by authors (see. Table 1.).

**Table 1. Service definition according to the triple approach to the services**

Approach to the service	Authors	Description
Service as a process	Kindurys (1998)	<b>Service</b> – is the aim to meet user's needs and to obtain compensation for services, because services cannot be separated from the client, they are provided and used at the same time.
	Vengrienė (1998)	<b>Service</b> – an action or series of actions, which have intangible nature and impact the interaction between the users and service providers, where service provider offers physical resources, products or systems to deal with users problems.
	Čelenkov (1998)	<b>Service</b> – is coordinated process between two or more operators in the market, where some operators impact others in order to create, develop or restore their access to fundamental benefits (goods).
	Kotler (1997)	<b>Service</b> – is action or activity which can be offered by one party to another, this action or activity is basically intangible and cannot affect any ownership.
	Gronroos (1989)	<b>Service</b> – is a process which involves a series of immaterial actions, which arises between the buyer and the service staff, physical resources, company-services provider.
	Sipina (2011)	<b>Service</b> – is the optimal (cost effective) and logical combination of service elements (activity, transactions, inventory or material) that give added value to the customer.
	Zeithaml et al. (2006)	<b>Services</b> – are deeds, processes and performances.
	Kotler and Keller (2006)	<b>Service</b> – is an act or performance that one party can offer another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything.
	Vitkienė (2004)	<b>Services</b> – activities and benefits, which one side can offer another, it is usually intangible and is not a result of the sale of property.
Service as a result	Kotler and Bloom (1984)	<b>Service</b> – is a benefit or activity that one side may propose to the other, characterized imponderable and it is not an object of property. Its expression can be linked or not linked to a physical product.
	Kulagina (2011)	<b>Service</b> – is the result of activity that meets certain personal or social needs, but has no tangible nature.
	Lozovskij et al. (1997)	<b>Service</b> – is the result of activity or work. No new material product is created during this process, however, the quality of existing products is changed.

Approach to the service	Authors	Description
Service as an economic activity	Law on Service of the Republic of Lithuania (2009)	<b>Service</b> – shall mean any self-employed economic activity, normally provided for remuneration, in so far as it is not governed by the provisions relating to freedom of movement for goods, capital or persons, as referred to in Article 50 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.
	Lavlok (2005)	<b>Service</b> – kind of economic activity, which creates values and provide benefits to consumers.
	EU (2007)	<b>Services</b> – any economic activity which is performed for remuneration.

It should be noted, that all three approaches are important and the fairest solution would be to assess services by using all three components (process, result and economic activity). For example, Jallat and Wood (2005) defined a service as a simultaneous process, a social interaction, a relationship and an intangible result. However, the various definitions recognize that services are intangible, interactive, experiential and do not involve the transfer of ownership (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006).

The scientific literature provides different conceptions of *education services*. Some authors argue that *education service* – is a result (product) of educational industrial activities, others emphasize procedural side of education services, emphasizing that the education service – is the process leading to the knowledge and skills transfer, still others emphasize education services as an economic activity dimension. Council for Trade in Services of the World trade organization (1998) confirms that education services are commonly defined by reference to four categories: *Primary Education Services; Secondary Education Services; Higher (Tertiary) Education Services; and Adult Education*. While these categories are based on the traditional structure of the sector, rapid changes taking place in the area of Higher Education – which normally refers to post-secondary education at sub-degree and university degree levels – may be significantly affecting the scope and concept of education (WTO, 1998).

Schreyer (2010) provides *target definition of education services*. Author emphasizes, that a useful starting point for the definition of *education services* is the description of education services as provided by the UNESCO, consistent with the International Standard Classification of Education. According to ISCED-2011, educational activities are understood as “*deliberate activities involving some form of communication intended to bring about learning*”. Schreyer (2010) argues, that:

1. *Communication* involves the transfer of information between two or more persons;
2. *Organized communication* is planned in a pattern or sequence, with established aims or curricula. It should involve an educational agency that organizes the learning situation and/or teachers who are employed to consciously organize the communication;
3. *Sustained communication* has elements of duration and continuity as part of the learning experience;
4. *Learning* is taken as any change in behaviour, information, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, skills, or capabilities which can be retained and cannot be ascribed to physical growth or to the development of inherited behaviour patterns.

This description of education emphasizes the process approach to the education services. The list of definitions of education service is given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Education service definitions according to the triple approach to the services**

Approach to the service	Authors	Description
Service as a process	Čekmariovas (1998)	<b>Education service</b> – a process in which human capital is created through the manufacturer's working potential individual consumption and an individual user's working potential production.
	Viflejenskij (2002)	<b>Education service</b> – is the transfer of knowledge to other individuals.
	Belyakov (2007)	<b>Educational service</b> – is the process where knowledge is created and where not only teacher but also student participate.
	Syrovatkina et al. (2012)	<b>Education service</b> – is the process of intellectual potential production, through the consumption of individual intellectual work, the labour or human capital production supplied.
	Miškinis and Kučaidze (2012)	<b>Education service</b> – is the action where the effects of interactions (connections) arise between consumers (students, parents, guardians or caretakers) and education providers (schools, freelance teachers or other education providers which have the right to provide education services by the law), when service providers offer physical resources to resolve consumers issues (i.e. provide education and training).
	Grigorash (2014)	<b>Educational service</b> – is forward operation because service itself is not on sale, instead, its provision result is on sale, which depends not only on the subject (i.e. education services provider), but also on the object (i.e. student, listener).
Raclaf and Sedova (2014)	<b>Education service</b> – a tool to meet the individuals' cognitive need to study as well as qualification-professional preparation needs.	
Service as a result	Polovova and Batalova (2009)	<b>Education service</b> – is a result of scientific-pedagogical work, which is produced in order to meet consumers needs.
	Čekmariovas (1998)	<b>Education service</b> – is a result (product) of educational production activity.
	Schetinin (1998)	<b>Education service</b> – a system of knowledge, information, skills which are used to meet a variety of individual, society and state education requirements.
Service as an economic activity	Romanova (2005)	<b>Education service</b> – is an economic units' work activity, which aims to meet the specific subject's educational needs ( <i>etc., systematized knowledge, skills and abilities</i> ), which is implemented by subject's free will.
	Voitovich (2012)	<b>Education service</b> – is a natural or legal person's type of activity, complex process which is intended to transfer knowledge, skills and abilities to the consumer, to meet intellectual and spiritual human needs, in order to develop personal, group and societal needs.

Higher education services are understood as the operation or function of a particular market demand and price; they are often intangible, used in the production site (Langvinienė and Vengrienė, 2005; Vengrienė, 2006). It should be noted, that such services cannot be transferred directly to other users or arbitrated (cannot be acquired for one price, and then sold for another). By Guščinskienė and Čiburienė (2008) higher education services are interpreted as a higher education which is provided by the education package, consisting of tangible and intangible services, which make up the overall result – provided service. According to Sultan and Wong (2010) education services are related to teaching, research and community services. Blinova (2015) provides three *higher education service* definitions (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Higher education services’ definition according to the triple approach to the services**

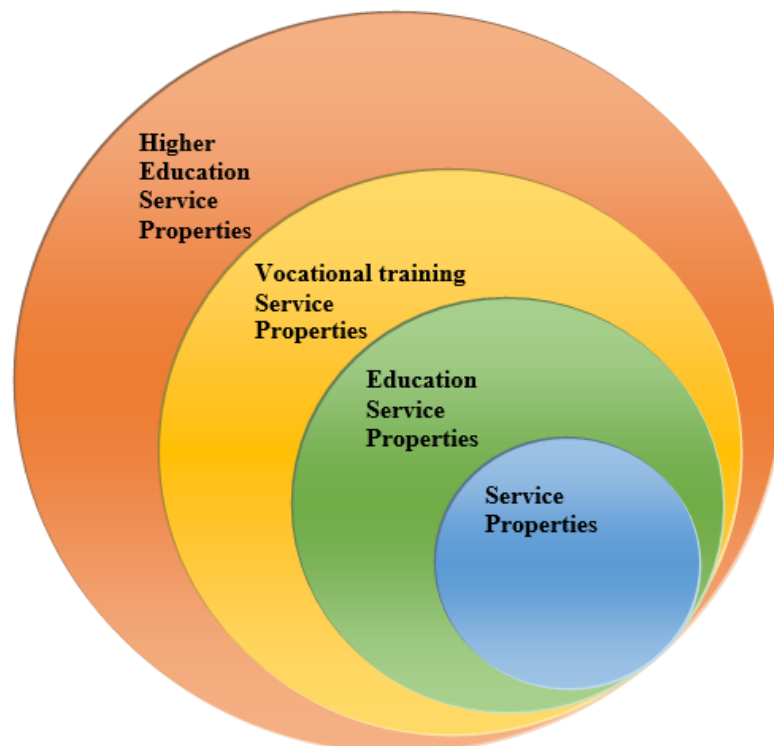
Approach to the Services	Definition
Higher Education Service as a result	<b>Higher education services</b> – is a result of students’ knowledge, skills and abilities, thanks to which it can carry out professional activities related to the diagnostic and heuristic challenges.
Higher Education Service as a process	<b>Higher education services</b> – is a bilateral process of two-party (student on the one side and teacher on the other) in order to transfer knowledge, skills and abilities to solve the diagnostic and heuristic tasks.
Higher Education Service as an economic activity	<b>Higher education services</b> – is an economic activity carried out by educational organization responsible for the higher education with other organizations in order to provide students with knowledge, skills and abilities to solve the diagnostic and heuristic tasks.

Source: prepared according to Blinova, 2015

The basic concepts and processes of higher education services components were reviewed; further the main properties of each category are discussed.

### Properties of Higher Education Services

It is important to note, that scientists have concluded in their researches that education services have generic properties, which all services inherit, and specific properties, which are unique only to education service category. The properties of higher education services include both generic properties of services and specific properties of education, vocational training and higher education services. All these properties *in corpore* characterise higher education services. This aspect is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Higher education service properties**



It should be noted, that all services include these main properties (Vengriene 1998; Lifanova, 2008): *intangibility* (service has immaterial expression), *unity of services production and consumption* (the service is provided and consumed at the same moment, the service provider and the provided services are inseparable), the recipient participation in service production, services are *not accumulated* (available and consumed at the same time, so they cannot be pre-fabricated, collected and stored as goods), *heterogeneity* (service is produced by both – service provider and consumer, the service is a multistage process, and the subjective specific service providers and consumers interaction (relations) as well as and distinctive service value perception influence service development process).

Lifanova (2008) assigns *volatility of quality* to the generic properties of education service, but the author notes that education services comprise relatively the generic properties of services. Zeithaml et al. (2000, 2006), Soutar and McNeil (1996) identified *inseparability, intangibility, variability and perishability* as the basic characteristics that differentiate a service from goods. In contrast to products, services are usually *short-lived* as they are consumed as long as the activity or process lasts (Yeo, 2008). Zeithaml et al. (1990) remarked *intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability and inseparability* as the fundamental characteristics that makes services different from goods in terms of how they are produced, consumed and evaluated. Services are consumed at the same time as they are produced without any clear transfer of ownership (Yeo, 2008).

Skorobogatova (2010) makes the following exclusive list of *education service properties*: process of education service consumption takes place only at the same time as the process of education services provision; inequality of education service and it's consumption's result, creative education service consumption process, collective education service consumption opportunity, a property that allows to change the consumer of education service, delayed effects of education service (russian “*эридитарность*”).

Grigorash (2014) provides education characteristics that distinguish them from other types of services from the perspective of the service providers' side – the author adds additional properties to the education services: education services impossible to keep, high cost of education services, the relative duration of the education service provision, educational services affect people and society as a whole.

Tsinidou et al. (2010) points out, that education services are often *intangible and difficult to measure*, since the outcome is reflected in the transformation of individuals in their knowledge, their characteristics, and their behaviour. Other authors (Barannik, 1998; Ksenofontova, 2006) complement education services with specific list of characteristics: education services attributable to the public, quasi-public goods; appropriate license is necessary for education services provision.

Blinova (2015) notes that in view of the fact that the higher education service prepare future professionals, higher education in addition to the generic properties of the services and specific education services properties, attributable to professional training specific properties, such as: the competitive nature of services, a narrow specialization, targeting to the future profession.

The specific properties of higher education service are distinguished as well. Panruchin (1995, 1997) analysed the education services marketing aspects in higher education and provided these properties of higher education services: seasonality, high cost, relative duration of service provision, delayed manifestation of performance and

dependence of result on future high school graduate's work, the need to consume education services further, education services consumption depends on areas of education service provision and potential students residential areas, education services cannot be resold. It should be noted, that some of these properties can be assigned to the generic properties of education services (i.e. seasonality, high cost, relative duration of service provision). Blinova (2015) makes the following list of *higher education service properties*: higher education services focus more on theoretical matters and less on practical, scientific and professional orientation, short higher education services result in storage period, if the work does not start immediately, high complexity of consumption; long service provision period (4-6 years).

Guščinskienė and Čiburienė (2001) provides list of higher education services properties, without distinction of generic and specific education services properties. The authors present the following characteristics (Guščinskienė and Čiburienė, 2001):

1. *Intangibility* – higher education services are intangible, so these services are intended to be accompanied with physical objects (e.g., a books, etc.);

2. *Heterogeneity* – these services involve both service provider and the consumer. The results as well as consumers' risk, operational standardization depends on their properties and relationships;

3. *Common identity of production and consumption* – in advance is not possible to assess the specific quality of higher education service, because the service does not exist: it is produced and consumed at the same time. This means that even the same type of services are not the same, it is necessary to align supply and demand, it is impossible to reserve services;

4. *The service provider and consumer are necessary factors of higher education service production, the simultaneous participation and high degree of contact*;

5. *Service consumers create their own part of the service, at the same time – its quality*;

6. *There is no transfer of ownership in service provision* – after graduation and with a higher education degree the property is not acquired, but the higher education diplomas confirms the completion of studies and qualifications, that higher education services has been provided.

The properties of higher education services are revealed through service, education service, vocational training service and lastly higher education service characteristics. After analysing all the relevant higher education services conceptions and characteristics it is possible to distinguish the properties of higher education service with respect to each category (see Table 4).

**Table 4. List of properties of Higher education studies services**

Category	Properties
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intangibility</li> <li>• Inseparability of services production and consumption</li> <li>• The recipient participation in service production</li> <li>• Services are not accumulated</li> <li>• Heterogeneity</li> <li>• Volatility of quality</li> <li>• Interactive</li> <li>• Experiential</li> <li>• Perishability</li> <li>• Short-lived period</li> </ul>
Education service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonality</li> <li>• Education services impossible to keep</li> <li>• High cost of education services</li> <li>• The relative duration of the education service provision</li> <li>• Education services affect people and society as a whole</li> <li>• Education services consumption takes place only in the process of education services provision</li> <li>• Inequality of education service and it's consumption's result</li> <li>• Creative education services consumption process</li> <li>• Collective education services consumption opportunity</li> <li>• A property that allows to change the consumer of education service</li> <li>• Delayed effects of education services</li> <li>• Education services cannot be resold</li> <li>• Education services attributable to the public, quasi-public goods</li> <li>• The appropriate license is necessary for education services provision</li> <li>• Difficult to measure</li> <li>• There is no transfer of ownership in service provision</li> </ul>
Vocational training service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The competitive nature of services</li> <li>• A narrow specialization</li> <li>• Targeting to the future profession</li> </ul>
Higher education service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delayed manifestation of performance and dependence of result on future high school graduate's work</li> <li>• Need to consume education services further</li> <li>• High level of intellectual activity is required</li> <li>• Scientific methods of operation are mastered and applied</li> <li>• Critical thinking is developed</li> <li>• Education services consumption depends on areas of education service provision and potential students residential areas</li> <li>• Higher education services focus more on theoretical matters less on practical</li> <li>• Scientific and professional orientation</li> <li>• Short higher education services result in storage period, if the work does not start immediately</li> <li>• High complexity of consumption Simultaneous participation and high degree of contact of service provider and consumer Long service provision period (4-6 years)</li> <li>• Service consumers create their own part of the service, at the same time – its quality</li> <li>• The acquisition of contemporary knowledges and technological level and needs of the economy in line with a higher education qualification</li> <li>• Implements cultural process specialization and actualization</li> <li>• Service consumer is prepared for an active professional, social and cultural activities</li> </ul>

**Source:** composed by the author according to Pankruchin (1995, 1997); Barannik (1998); Vengerienė (1998); Juceviciene et al. (2000); Guščinskienė and Čiburienė (2001); Kraujutaityte (2002); Kotler and Armstrong (2006), Soutar and McNeil (1996), Ksenofontova (2006); Lifanova (2008); Tsinidou et al. (2010); Skorobogatova (2010); Grigorash (2014); Blinova (2015).

## Conclusions

To summarise, higher education – is an economic category equivalent to the service, which is characterized not only by service generic properties (characteristics), but also by specific properties inherent to education, vocational training and higher education services. The general list of properties of higher education services consist of 45 characteristics that reveal the complexity of higher education services, uniqueness and specificity. However this list is not exhaustive. Properties of higher education services are necessary phenomenon which helps better understand the nature of higher education. Higher education services characteristics assist in other research areas of higher education. Understanding and assessment of the higher education services properties affect better quality of research in such research areas as higher education funding model development, higher education service pricing, higher education finance management, marketing, higher education service quality assessment and improvement, and etc.

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