

The Higher Education Quality Survey – Contents, Design, & Perspectives

*Workshop on „Quality and Equity in Higher Education –
International Experiences and Comparisons“*

University of Konstanz, 2008 November 25th

Kai Mühleck, HIS
Janka Willige, HIS

The Higher Education Quality Survey (Studienqualitätsmonitor) – Overview

- Joint project of the working group on higher education of the University of Konstanz (AG Hochschulforschung) and HIS (Higher Education Information System, Hanover)
- Student opinion survey on the quality of higher education in Germany
- Nationwide, representative online survey
- First survey in 2007, repeated annually
- Financed by HIS, AG Hochschulforschung, and the participating universities

The Higher Education Quality Survey

Outline

1. Topic of the Study
2. Survey Schedule
3. Method
4. Output & Publications
5. Some Results
6. Prospects

1. Topic: Quality of Higher Education

- **Background:** Higher education in Europe and Germany is changing e. g.
 - Comparable degrees (Bologna process): Restructuring of courses
 - Expansion of higher education (Lisbon strategy): Demand for new sources of funding (e. g. tuition fees)

→ *Changes in the quality of studies?*
- Base line survey in 2007, repeated annually, and establishment of a time series study
- ~30 questions based on tested instruments of AG Hochschulforschung and HIS; interview length ~20 min.
- Fixed and variable parts of the questionnaire

1. Contents: Quality of Higher Education

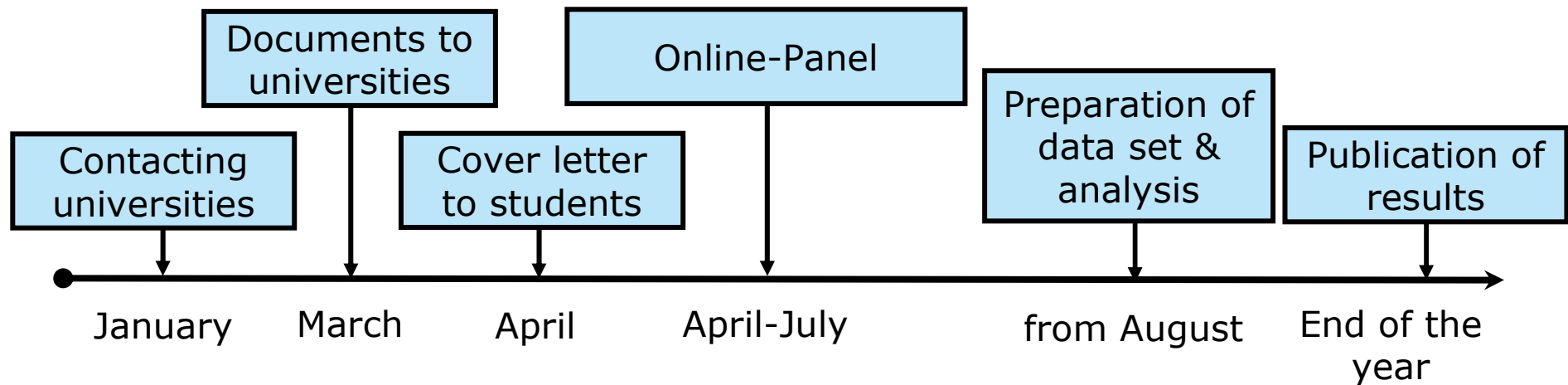
Dimensions of Quality in the Questionnaire:

Importance & Evaluation of...

- **Assistance from Teaching Staff:** Accessibility and helpfulness
- **Curriculum:** (1) structure & organization of courses, (2) didactics, (3) quality & content of courses
- **Course of Study:** e.g. compliance with schedule, skill enhancement, adequacy of requirements, difficulties
- **Facilities:** e.g. rooms, computers, library, equipment
- **Counselling & Service:** e.g. student advisory service, service of student offices, career service
- **Tuition Fees:** Existence, evaluation, usage, and consequences

2. Schedule of the Annual Survey

- Contacting of universities (nationwide) with request to participate;
- Universities send cover letter to sampled students;
- Exclusive results for their own university in return.



3. Method – Access to the Survey

1. Letter of invitation (paper)
2. Homepage of survey (online)
3. Online questionnaire

The image shows two overlapping screenshots from a Mozilla Firefox browser. The top screenshot displays the HIS logo (Hochschul Informations System GmbH) and a welcome message: "Herzlich willkommen zum Studienqualitätsmonitor 2008". The bottom screenshot shows a questionnaire titled "Betreuungssituation" (Supervision Situation). The questionnaire asks respondents to rate the quality of supervision by lecturers on a scale from "sehr schlecht" (very bad) to "sehr gut" (very good), with an additional "kann ich nicht beurteilen" (cannot judge) option. The survey items include:

- Kontaktmöglichkeiten/Zugänglichkeit zu den Lehrenden (außerhalb von Sprechstunden)
- Erreichbarkeit der Lehrenden in Sprechstunden
- Betreuung von Praktika
- Hilfestellung bei der Vermittlung von Auslandsaufenthalten
- Vorbereitung auf Klausuren und Prüfungen
- Rückmeldung/Feedback zu Ihren Hausarbeiten, Klausuren, Übungen
- Sonstige Rückmeldungen/Feedback zu Ihren Lernfortschritten
- Engagement der Lehrenden für die Studierenden

At the bottom of the questionnaire, there is a "Hinweise" (Notes) section with a text input field and "zurück" (back) and "weiter" (next) buttons. The browser address bar shows the URL: https://hisbus.his.de/hisbus/s/8692/ospe.php?act=start&syid=8692&preview_node=1&closebtn=vorschau+schließen&pid=17045.

3. Method - Sampling

- Random selection of students at each participating university
- Universities are free to choose their sample size
- Samples should allow for analysis at the level of subject groups (sciences, law, social sciences, etc.)
- Recommended sample size dependent on size of university (min. 10%; min. 2000 students; all students; average sample size ~2000)
- Sample control by individual invitation letter & access code
- Balancing of the sample: Adjustment for different coverage rates and weighting (with regard to sex, semester, type of university, region, subject)

3. Method – Coverage & Participation

	2007	2008
Number of participating universities	102	120
Coverage	36%	43%
Response rate	14%	~14%
Ø respondents per university	215	250
Respondents (total)	22,000	30,000

- Good representation of German higher education area
- Good regional dispersion (all 16 German States covered)
- Increasing participation and stable sample of universities
- But: Further expansion difficult (survey overload)

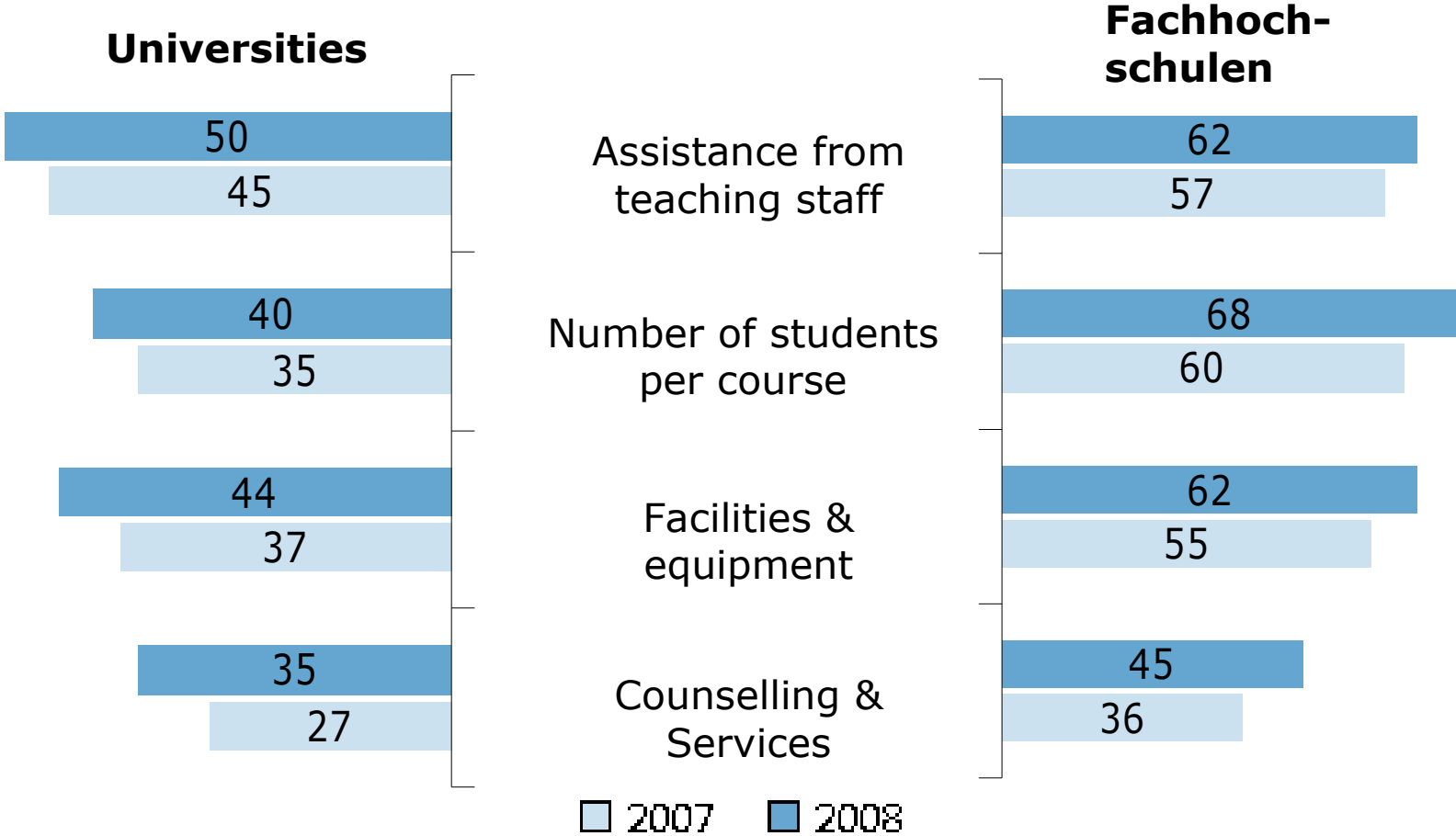
4. Output & Publications

- Annual report on nationwide results
- Technical reports on method and quality
- Exclusively for the participating universities: Results on the respective university and comparison with nationwide figures (free of charge)
- Special reports for single universities
- Special reports for single states

→ More information: www.his.de/sqm

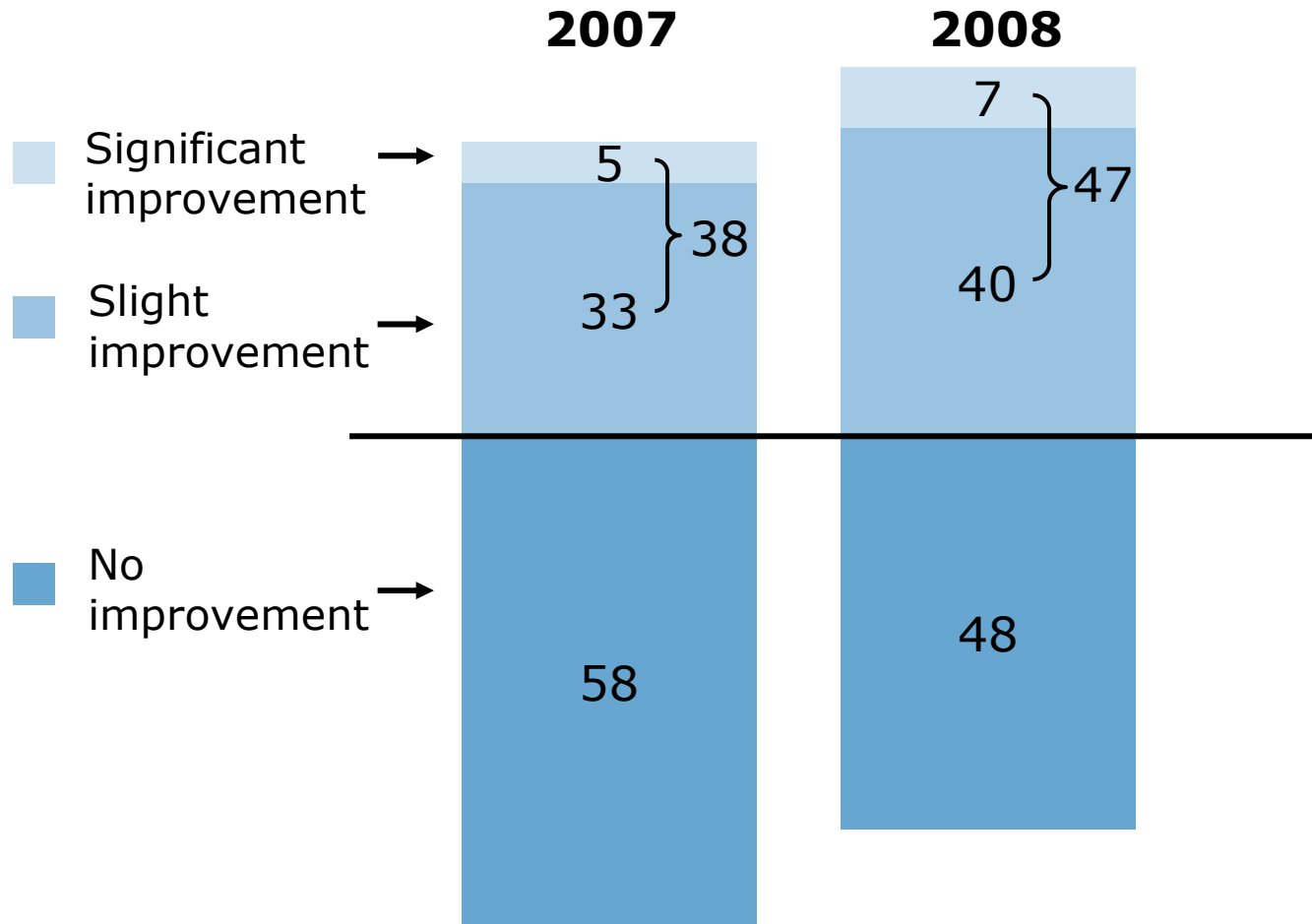
5. Some Results

- “Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with...?”
 5-point scale (1 – not at all satisfied, ..., 5 – very satisfied)
 Percentage of affirmative categories 4 + 5

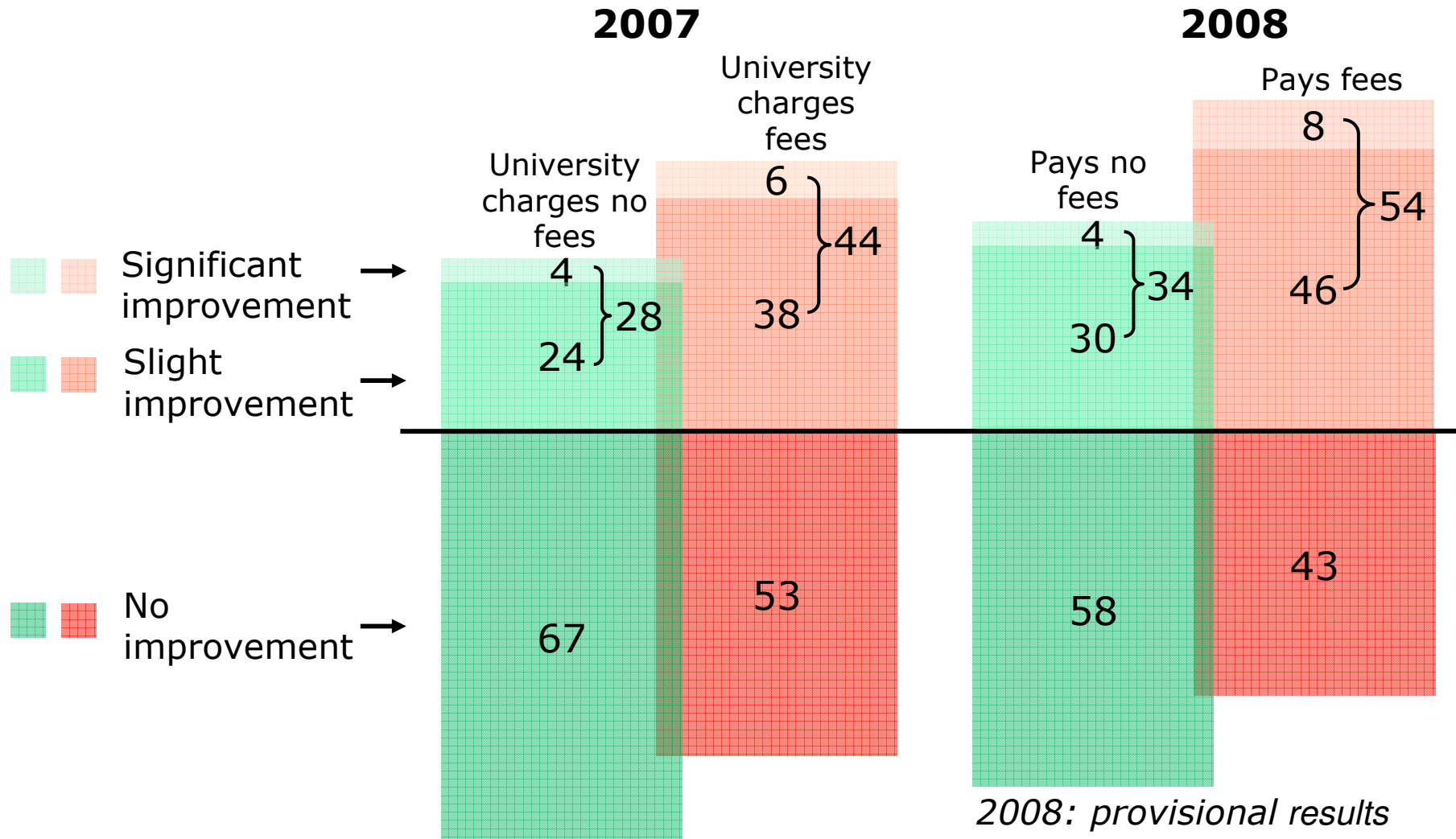


5. Some Results

- “Do you expect that the introduction of tuition fees will lead to an improvement of teaching standards and studying conditions?” (3 categories)



- “Do you expect that the introduction of tuition fees will lead to an improvement of teaching standards and studying conditions?” (3 categories)



6. Prospects

- Attract more universities; enhance response rate
- Keep participating universities in the sample
- Modify for current topics of higher education
- Special reports at regional & institutional level
- International cooperation

Thank you!