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**EDITOR:
ZOLTÁN VERES**

PANNON MANAGEMENT REVIEW

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ZOLTÁN VERES

EDITORIAL: THERE IS NOT ANOTHER WAY OUT IN HIGHER EDUCATION THAN INTERNATIONALIZATION

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this first issue of Pannon Management Review in the year of 2021. After the long 2020 year of pandemic we are on the way of rebuilding. The live relationship between the scientific communities, the international links and the former, free mobility, these all have to be rebuilt. Yes, although communication between the scientific teams has not been suspended during the last months, live exchange of ideas, stimulating discussions were unfortunately paralyzed. It is time to return back to our traditional scientific life, not neglecting, of course, the learnings of the period of pandemic.

In this double issue an international research project, called STRANGER, has given a chance to present the results to the Reader. Not surprisingly the focus of the project is internationalization in the university sphere. An evergreen theme in the regional or even global cooperations of the educational institutions. The topic is multifaceted with special accent on management of international relations, and mobility, international competitiveness and cross-cultural aspects.

Strengthening international cooperation is an essential condition for a competitive higher education. There is a close relationship between competitiveness of a country's economy and its higher education. The article *Internationalization in higher education and its role in the mobility of foreign university students* written by Anita Veres and Ildikó Virág-Neumann examines international student flows, and also scholarship opportunities that could enhance the flow. The next article of Dorota Kwiatkowska-Ciotucha, Urszula Załuska and Cyprian Kozyra discusses also mobility but from the viewpoint of leverages and braking forces. Under the title of *International mobility – opportunities and problems* the authors develop universal solutions which would make it possible to properly organise activities in terms of formal preparation of universities for receiving foreign students. The analyses revealed both the existence of numerous issues connected with the broadly understood internationalisation of universities, as well as the diversification of the perception of the situation.

Similarly the third, fourth and fifth papers' research problem is mobility, namely students' experiences during their mobility program. In the article *Individual Interview Scenario with foreign students in Greece* of Christos Akrivos research aims and objectives were identification of factors that impede the students' full and effective adaptation in the new academic environment to make it possible to prepare a manual. In the next article of Andriy Krysovatty, Yuriy Hayda, Olha Sobko and Oleh Chukhnii under the title of *International mobility of students: good practices from other universities* the Reader can have an insight into the intensity and character of the process of international mobility of students in various European countries and the results of the classification of these countries by a set of indicators. And in this group of articles we can also find the work *Studying together with international students* from Ildikó

Virág-Neumann, Anita Veres and Tünde Vajda where purpose of the article was to identify important elements that the Polish, Ukrainian, Greek and Hungarian students had experienced while studying together with international students.

The same author team conducted a research on the reception of foreign students. Their article under the title of *Focus group discussion with Hungarian university academic staff about receiving international student* presents the results of how to identify all potential problems in the new environment that might be eliminated if students were properly prepared before embarking upon studying in a foreign university. The paper of Agnieszka Pietrus-Rajman on *Effective methods for shaping cross-cultural competence of university administrative employees* focuses on their crucial role in the implementation of the internationalization process. The article presents selected models of cross-cultural competence, and the methods that can be used to shape it. With a similar focus Eirini Arvanitaki, Christodoulos K. Akrivos and George M. Agiomirgianakis present a paper under the title of *Intercultural competence: didactic material, practical applications and training* aiming through the development of a didactic material to bridge the cultural differences often arising between a host university administrative staff and its foreign students.

Finally the article *International academic mobility of youth in Ukraine as a manifestation of globalization processes in the modern world* written by Olena Poradenko and Ihor Krysovaty provides a case study of the accomplishments made and pitfalls Ukrainian universities encounter on their integration into the common European educational area. A really interesting panorama of the difficulties in the process of internationalization which is equally well known in other countries even if it has a different emphasis.

That is it now, and it is not enough. We do hope, Dear Reader, that the articles of this issue will give you a positive experience, and you can realize what are the points worth thinking more about.



Zoltán Veres, Professor of Marketing, at the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary, Head of Research Centre of the Faculty of Business and Economics and the Department of Marketing. He was born in Hungary and he received his university degrees from the Technical University of Budapest (Masters degree in Electrical Engineering) and the Budapest University of Economic Sciences (Masters degree in International Business). He obtained his PhD in economics, at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. More recently, he obtained his habilitation degree at University of Szeged, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

He worked as project manager of numerous international industrial projects in the Mediterranean region (e.g. Greece, Middle East, North Africa) between 1977 and '90. Since 1990, he actively participates in the higher education. Among others he taught at the College for Foreign Trades; at the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce d'Angers and between 2004 and 2009 he was Head of Institute of Business Studies at the University of Szeged. In 2011 he was appointed professor of marketing at the Budapest Business School (BBS), Hungary, and between 2010 and 2014 he was also Head of Research Centre at BBS. Since 2014 he is Head of Department

of Marketing at the Faculty of Business & Economics of the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary and the editor-in-chief of the Pannon Management Review.

Zoltán Veres has had consultancy practice and conducted numerous research projects on services marketing and project marketing. In 2001 and 2002 he was Head of Service Research Department at the multinational GfK Market Research Agency. He is a member of the research group of the European Network for Project Marketing and Systems Selling (Lyon); Advisory Board member of Academy of World Business, Marketing and Management Development, Perth (Australia); member of Comité Científico del Academia Europea de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa (Spain); Advisory Board member of the Nepalese Academy of Management; member of Association for Marketing Education and Research (Hungary) and of the Committee on Business Administration at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Advisory Board member of McMillan & Baneth Management Consulting Agency (Hungary) and consultant of Consact Quality Management Ltd. (Hungary).

He has nearly 300 scientific publications, including the books of *Introduction to Market Research*, *Foundations of Services Marketing* and *Nonbusiness Marketing*. He has been editor of series to Academy Publishing House (Wolters Kluwer Group), Budapest. Besides Zoltán Veres has been editorial board member of the journals *Revista Internacional de Marketing Público y No Lucrativo* (Spain), *Вестник Красноярского государственного аграрного университета* (Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation), *Tér-Gazdaság-Ember and Marketing & Menedzsment* (Hungary); member of Социально-экономический и гуманитарный журнал Красноярского ГАУ, member of *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, Advisory Board and Review Committee; member of *Asian Journal of Business Research*, Editorial Review.

DOROTA KWIATKOWSKA-CIOTUCHA

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE STRANGER PROJECT

To whom it may concern

The phenomenon of internationalization is one of the greatest challenges faced by universities in the 21st century. Whether this challenge can be met depends not only on the substantive preparation and commitment of scientific and teaching staff, but also on the formal preparation of universities for accepting foreign lecturers and students, including their administrative staff. The ability to communicate and act effectively, to understand different norms, attitudes and values, often determines whether academic teachers and students arriving at a given university will find themselves in a culturally different environment. Will they receive the necessary support and will they complete the curriculum agreed upon before departure, or conduct planned lectures and classes without major obstacles? Still, when travelling as a student or employee to a foreign university, it is worth having the necessary knowledge about the standards and rules in force, at the host university.

The *Stranger* project, which I had the opportunity to manage for nearly three years, was dedicated to the development of universal solutions allowing the proper organisation of activities in the field of formal preparation of universities for accepting foreign students and lecturers, and the preparation of own students and academic staff for studying and working at a foreign university. Our project is an example of a strategic partnership in the area of higher education in the Erasmus+ Programme and was implemented from September 2018 to June 2021 in a partnership of four entities from Poland, Hungary, Greece and Ukraine. The initiator and leader of the project was Wrocław University of Economics and Business which invited partner universities – the University of Pannonia, Hellenic Open University and West Ukrainian National University – to cooperate. The organisational unit responsible for the coordination and proper implementation of the project was the WUEB Development Projects Service Section.

As part of the project, we conducted extensive primary research among students and employees of partner universities. Analysing the opinions of representatives of target groups, we wanted to learn as much as possible about expectations and potential obstacles to international mobility. As for the group of students, we were particularly interested in foreign students deciding on a full cycle of studies at one of the partner universities or participating in international mobility in the Erasmus+ Programme. As far as the group of employees is concerned, we collected the opinions of both administrative workers and scientific and teaching staff of the university. Based on an in-depth diagnosis of needs, we have developed three results: Manual for the University “How to prepare for the reception of foreign students?”, Manual for the students “What should I know before I go to study abroad?” and a set of training courses for administrative staff, the purpose of which is to ensure effective communication and adequate activities in a multicultural environment. We managed to carry the project out, although nearly half of it was implemented during the pandemic.

By courtesy of the University of Pannonia, we had the opportunity to present the effects of our activities in the Pannon Management Review. In the following chapters of the monograph,

we present the main conclusions and recommendations following the results of the research conducted in the project. We also point to ready-to-use solutions in the field of formal preparation of universities for international mobility.

Work on the Stranger project appeared to be very interesting for the entire project team, although not always everything went our way. It was an opportunity to delve into the area of cultural differences as well as to get to know and like each other. I hope that the materials we have developed will be interesting for you and, above all, useful at work, while studying or in the process of planning trips to other countries.

We cordially invite you to read the articles.



Dorota Kwiatkowska-Ciotucha. PhD in Economics, professor at Wroclaw University of Economics and Business in the Department of Logistics (lectures in the field of forecasting and data analysis), certified adult trainer. Since September 2009, Head of the Department for Development Projects, a special unit of WUEB established to obtain EU funds in the area of broadly understood LLL. Co-author and manager of over 20 projects financed by the European Social Fund and the Erasmus+ Programme for the amount of over EUR 25 million. Extensive research experience, author and co-author of numerous scientific publications. Research interests: people with disabilities in the open labour market, Sandwich Generation, the skills gap of employees. Additionally, since 2006 President of the Board of Dobre Kadry Training and Research Center Ltd., a company that deals with acquiring funds from the European Union for social and professional support for people with disabilities.

ORCID: 0000-0002-0116-4600

Contact: dorota.kwiatkowska@ue.wroc.pl

ANITA VERES – ILDIKÓ VIRÁG-NEUMANN

INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE IN THE MOBILITY OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

International market for higher education is characterized by an increasing level of globalization and the acceleration of the international integration process. The increase in the number of collaborations and the formation of networks play an increasingly important role in higher education. The institutional strategies for the competitiveness of higher education's competition in the market today transcend national markets and justify the development of international / global strategies. The training of a workforce with the appropriate level of higher education can be implemented with the involvement of domestic and foreign institutions. In the case of higher education institutions, the focus of the process of internationalization is primarily on exploiting the opportunities for student mobility.

Since the 1960s higher education in the world has undergone one of the greatest transformations in its history. By the beginning of the 20th century, the growth of the number of people in higher education had reached the upper limit. By the turn of the millennium, the participation rate in higher education in the 18-24 age group was 50 per cent. Although this expansion process is primarily characteristic of universities in developed countries, the transformation of higher education is also proceeding at a rapid pace in emerging countries (Hrubos, 2014).

The traditional supply and demand functions of higher education have changed, thus the aspects determining competitiveness have also been re-evaluated and can be interpreted in several ways (Török, 2006). As stated by Lengyel, the competitiveness of higher education defines the ability to compete in the international market, the ability to acquire a position in the rankings, and its long-term viability (Lengyel, 2000).

The competitiveness of higher education in a given nation and the position of its institutions in higher education rankings greatly influence the flow of international students. International university rankings provide a significant support basis for the decisions of international students. Although critical remarks about their usefulness and judgment are significant, the ranking of higher education institutions are playing an increasingly important role in the strategy development of higher education institutions, due to the expansion of higher education across borders (Buela-Casal et al., 2007); (Marginson et al., 2007a, 2007b); (Boyadzhieva et al., 2010); (Fabri, 2014).

Strengthening international cooperation and exploiting the potential of international relations is an essential condition for a competitive higher education presence and improvement in its rankings. There is a close relationship between the competitiveness of a country's economy and its higher education, therefore due to their impact on each other, the two should be examined together (Chikán, 2014).

	Time	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Country						
Greece		677429	..	709488	735027	766874
Hungary		329455	307729	295328	287018	283350
Poland		1762666	1665305	1600208	1550203	1492899
Ukraine		2146028	1776190	1689724	1667288	1614636

Figure 1 Enrolment in tertiary education, all programmes, both sexes (number)
Source: UIS.Stat

In Hungary, the number of students in higher education has been steadily declining since 2006. The number of foreign students in 2014 was 23,000, which was 8.1 per cent of the total number of students in Hungarian higher education (Ministry of Human Resources, 2014). This ratio increased to 11.41 per cent by 2018.

A similar decrease in the total number of students can be observed in Poland and Ukraine. In Poland, the number of foreign students in 2014 was almost 35 thousand, which was 2 per cent of the total number of students in Polish higher education. This ratio increased to 3.64 per cent by 2018. In 2014 the number of foreign students in higher education in Ukraine was 60,000, which was 2.8 per cent of the total number of students. This ratio rose to 3.1 per cent by 2018.

In Greece, the number of students in higher education increased steadily between 2014 and 2018. The proportion of international students has increased only slightly from 3.34 per cent in 2016 to 3.43 per cent (Derived from Figures 1 and 3).

Given these data, it can be concluded that it is important for the countries participating in the Stranger research to map the market for potential international students, to create an appropriate quality of education for international students and to create an open atmosphere conducive to internationalization.

The process of internationalization has a positive effect on the process of getting to know different cultures better and on strengthening openness and acceptance. Learning abroad and expanding language skills, as well as the experience gained from learning about other cultures and the resulting additional skills gained are becoming more and more important in the labour market. Universities incorporate part-time study abroad into the curricula for their own students as recommended or compulsory.

Significant changes of student mobility have taken place in the classic target countries. The popularity of American higher education is declining, while more and more people are going to study in the Far East (OECD, 2015).

In their 2014 study, Beine and co-authors examined the decisions of students from nearly 180 countries that attended higher education institutions in thirteen OECD countries during the years 2004–7. It was found that international student flows are strongly influenced by cost of living and network factors. Distance, language use and the role of similar ethnic groups in host countries had minimal to no impact on student decisions (Beine et al., 2014).

The process of internationalization of higher education is summarized by Kovács and co-authors in terms of higher education policy strategies and transnational relations. They pointed out that the number of students studying abroad had doubled in the decades before

the turn of the millennium, and since then the growth has accelerated further. This process is largely due to increased demand from emerging countries (Kovács et al., 2015).

In their 2012 research, Choudaha and his research fellows examined the change in the enrolment of Indian and Chinese students coming to the four most important host countries (USA, UK, Australia and Canada). It was found that the host country, in this case the USA, which provides better employment opportunities for foreign students, is the most popular destination country. In their study, the authors pointed out that the UK's strict immigration policy has a deflecting effect on international students towards other target countries, mainly the US, Australia and Canada (Choudaha et al., 2012).

In their 2007 study, Verbik and co-authors found that countries that facilitate the integration of foreign students, including employment opportunities after graduation, i.e. gaining work experience abroad, are more likely to be more competitive in the race to attract international students, compared to their competitors. In their analysis they pointed out that countries that can offer a competitive programme teaching foreign students in English can more easily make their other programmes appealing as well. In their study they highlighted the prominent role of the Anglo-Saxon countries (USA, UK and Australia) and Germany and France in teaching English to foreign students. They pointed out that there is a strong link between the availability and appropriate quality of teaching programmes for foreign students in the English language, and the popularity of other higher education programmes in the host country (Verbik et al., 2007).

Vögtle and Windzio examined student mobility through a social-based network and exponential random graph model. They sought to understand how the Bologna process in the European Union affected the flow of students between 2000 and 2010 in OECD and non-OECD countries. Based on the analyses, it was concluded that student exchange networks between countries are stable over time. The main host countries in these networks are the United States, Britain, France and Germany (Vögtle et al., 2016).

The study by Bhandari and co-authors aimed to map the flow of international students in the United States, Canada, China, India, South Africa, Mexico, Australia, Britain and Germany. In their analysis they pointed out that new and multidirectional student flow, "brain circulation" (Xiaonan, 1996) and "brain exchange" replaced "brain drain" (Morano-Foadi et al., 2004). Analyses showed that a significant number of students coming to the U.S. from Asian countries, particularly India and China, return to their home countries (Bhandari et al., 2011).

Among the positive effects of admitting international students that should be highlighted are the long-term effect of promoting relations between countries while also improving the economy. According to a NAFSA analysis, the 1 million foreign students who studied in U.S. higher education institutions in the 2015/16 school year generated nearly USD 33 billion in revenue and 400,000 jobs for the country (NAFSA, 2015). According to Deloitte's analysis, in the 2014/15 school year, 500,000 international students studying in Australia generated nearly USD 17 billion in revenue and created 130,000 jobs for the country (Deloitte, 2015). The economic stimulus effect of admitting international students is also supported by Canadian analyses. In the 2010/11 school year, nearly 220,000 international students studying in the country for more than six months contributed USD 4.2 billion to the GDP and created 81,000 jobs in Canada (Global Affairs Canada, 2012).

Brooks and co-authors pointed out that fundamental and decisive changes have taken place in the field of the internationalization of the Australian and Anglo-Saxon higher education over the past two decades. Tuition fees from foreign students no longer only complement, but make a significant contribution to university revenues. The analysis points out, on the one hand, that in the competition for international students, “brand image” and “global positioning” are decisive factors. International students are primarily accepted by Western countries, however, rapid growth is also observed in East and Southeast Asian countries (Brooks et al., 2011).

The European Union has adopted a number of strategic documents to promote the internationalization of higher education. In 2009 the European Commission published a document titled “GREEN PAPER, promoting the learning mobility of young people” (EC, 2009).

	Time	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Country						
Greece		36012	37175	35711	37964	39096
Hungary		9566	10643	11634	12397	12865
Poland		23821	23866	24238	25164	26351
Ukraine		49928	68209	77421	77878	72063

Figure 2 Total outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying abroad, all countries, both sexes (number)
Source: UIS.Stat

The numbers of Greek, Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian students studying abroad in higher education increased steadily between 2014 and 2018 (Figure 2). The most popular university destinations for Hungarian students are Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark. For the time being, there is a high level of interest in UK universities, similar to the trends of recent years, but the uncertainty surrounding Brexit may lead Hungarian students to higher education in the UK to other popular destinations in the coming years (EduLine, 2017).

Poland is an attractive destination for Ukrainian students not only because of its geographic proximity. The country affords Ukrainians an opportunity to pursue high-quality education, often at lower costs of study and living than in Ukraine. This is an important criterion since the majority of Ukrainian international students are self-funded. More than half of all the international students in Poland come from Ukraine (Wenr, 2019).

EU countries host more than 85 per cent of Greek outbound students, with the UK absorbing over one third of Greek students abroad, followed by Italy, Germany and France (with shares of 11 per cent, eight per cent and six per cent, respectively) (Mylomas, 2017).

The objectives of promoting the internationalization of higher education continued in the European Commission's 2010 Communication “EUROPE 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. It identified the development of an economy based on knowledge and innovation (smart growth) as one of its priorities. “Youth on the Move” has launched an initiative to increase the performance and international appeal of European higher education institutions by encouraging the mobility of young people and improving their employment

opportunities (EC, 2010). With these objectives, international mobility in higher education has become one of the EU's highest strategic priorities.

The transformation of international higher education and the study of foreign student flows are also important for Hungarian, Polish, Ukrainian and Greek higher education institutions, partly due to the steadily declining number of domestic students enrolled in higher education and partly due to the economic stimulus effect (Figure 3).

	Time	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Country						
Greece		23734	25067	26325
Hungary		23208	21707	26155	28628	32332
Poland		34664	43988	54734	63925	54354
Ukraine		60037	57583	54144	52768	49632

Figure 3 Total inbound internationally mobile students, both sexes (number)
Source: UIS.Stat

A continuous increase in the number of international students has been observed in Hungary, Greece and Poland. In the case of Hungary, there are a large number of foreign students who speak Hungarian, they come from ethnic Hungarian areas within the neighbouring countries. However, the largest number of international students in 2017 came to Hungary from Iran, China, Serbia, Nigeria and Ukraine (EC, 2018).

In Hungary, through the European Union and government programs of the Stipendium Hungaricum, Bilateral State Scholarships, Erasmus+, CEEPUS, EEA Grants Scholarships, almost every Hungarian university has several programmes in English available for foreign students. As the number of students studying in Hungarian higher education is declining due to demographic reasons, universities have the opportunity to accept foreign students to fill these vacancies (Study in Hungary, 2021). Active recruitment of foreign students is becoming more and more common, by participating in foreign student forums and fairs, using the services of specialized agencies, but there are also universities that have established their own international recruitment network and opened representative offices in several places (Derényi, 2018).

The majority of foreign students in Greece are enrolled in the tuition-free undergraduate programmes either through bilateral country agreements (mainly with Cyprus) or are children of immigrants (mainly from Albania) and Greek diaspora youths (mainly from Germany) (Mylonas, 2017).

Greece has plenty of scholarship opportunities offered to both local and foreign students such as Fulbright Greece Awards Program, Graduate Student Research Grants, Greece–Turkey and Bulgaria–Greece Fulbright Joint Research Award, Aristotle University Scholarships, ACT Scholarships, Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF) Program, Eugenides Foundation Scholarships, Bodossaki Foundation Scholarships (Scholarships in Greece, 2021).

The international competitiveness of Ukraine's education system appears to have declined in recent years due to the decreased level of post-Soviet enrolment. Ukraine is an education

destination for students from Asia and Africa, particularly among medical students. Also, Ukrainian universities are not very well represented in international rankings (Wenr, 2019).

The Ukrainian government provides scholarships for foreign students to ensure their studies at national universities. The Boren Awards include scholarships for undergraduates and fellowships for graduate students who want to study abroad in countries designated as vital to national security but is less often chosen by students. Also, scholarships from private organizations are offered (Ukraine Scholarships, 2021).

Students from Ukraine and Belarus are the dominant group at Polish universities. More than half of all the international students in Poland come from Ukraine. The number of students from Asia increased in Poland, however, students from Europe continue to be the main group studying at Polish universities (Wenr, 2019).

Poland offers scholarships to students through the government, various foundations and the universities themselves. They are available to students of Polish origin including disabled applicants as well as to international students both from within the EU itself and from countries outside the EU. CEEPUS exchange programme – It involves 16 Central and Eastern European countries whose exchanged students are exempt from paying tuition fees plus grants funded by the hosting country. Eastern Partnership and Post-Soviet countries scholarships – these scholarships are offered especially to Belarusian students for BA, MA and PhD studies and funded by the Konstanty Kalinowski Foundation. Scholarships for citizens from developing countries – these scholarships assist students at PhD level of studies in technical fields in Poland. They are funded by the Polish government. Fulbright Programme – these are essentially grants for funding an exchange programme between the United States and Poland to enable students, trainees, scholars, teachers, instructors and professors for training in both countries. Funding is administered by the Polish-US Fulbright Commission Visegrad Scholarship Programme – these are 1-4 semester scholarships for Master and Post-Master Degrees. The programme is administered by the heads of the international Visegrad fund (Study in Poland, 2021).

Examining 130 countries, Böhm and co-authors made a forecast of expected international student numbers for 2020 and 2025. For their analysis, they used changes in per capita income expected in countries around the world, demographic projections, country-specific statistics on national and international higher education, and the extent of projected change in participation. In addition, the quality of education in the host country, labour market opportunities, the cost of living and personal security factors were taken into account. In their forecast, the global demand for the international student market in higher education by 2020 is on the order of 5.8 million students, and by 2025 the global demand is estimated to be 7.2 million (Böhm, 2002, 2003).

Factors driving the internationalization and the quality of the development of higher education affect institutional-level pillars such as curriculum revisions, the development of training, the development of student services, and the strengthening of local approaches to internationalization (Tempus, 2015). Within higher education, there is a clear tendency for issues related to internationalization to be addressed at a strategic level by the leaders of the institutions. Internationalization and quality development are linked together in shaping the vision of universities.

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Anita Veres. PhD in Economics. Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Economics of the University of Pannonia since July 2017. She teaches in the Bachelor's and the Master's Degree Programmes in the Faculty of Business and Economics. As a Mentor in the "Pentor Program", she supports and involves students in the preparation of works through the National Conference of Scientific Students' Associations (TDK). Research interests: International Economics, Globalization, International Student Mobility.

Contact: veres.anita@gtk.uni-pannon.hu



Ildikó Virág-Neumann, PhD is Associate Professor and the Head of Department of International Economics (Institute of Economics) at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia. She is also the Head of International Business Economics undergraduate programme (BSc) and International Economics MSc course. She worked as a research fellow at Institute of Advanced Studies (iASK), KRAFT Social Innovation Lab and also at MTA-PE (Hungarian Academy of Sciences – University of Pannonia) Networked Research Group on Regional Innovation and Development Studies.

Her research fields are European Integration, International Economics and International Trade and their statistical analysis and modelling like the gravity model which has empirical success in explaining various types of flows, including migration, tourism and international trade. She got her PhD in Economics, at the University of Pannonia, Doctoral School of Management Sciences and Business Administration focusing on the impacts of the integration on trade of EU members – a gravity model approach. Besides these themes she researched other fields such as circular economy, climate change and the determinants of tourism and migration flows to the main regions of Hungary with special respect to Lake Balaton region.

Contact: virag.ildiko@gtk.uni-pannon.hu

DOROTA KWIATKOWSKA-CIOTUCHA – URSZULA ZAŁUSKA –
CYPRIAN KOZYRA

INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY – OPPORTUNITIES AND PROBLEMS

The article is dedicated to the evaluation of universities participating in the Stranger project in terms of the level of preparation for accepting foreign students and lecturers. It contains the most important results of quantitative primary research conducted using the PAPI questionnaire interview method and the recommendations for universities based on them. The research was conducted in the period of December 2018 – March 2019 at all partner universities of the project in two target groups: foreign students and university employees representing both scientists and teachers as well as the university administrative staff. In total, the research covered 366 students and 224 employees. While performing the analyses of the research results we focused on finding possible differences in terms of characteristics such as the country of origin, country of exchange, gender or the character of studies in the case of a group of students, and features such as country, gender, type of work performed, and seniority in the case of university employees. The results of the conducted analyses showed the existence of statistically significant differences, mainly in the case of such characteristics as country, type of studies and type of work performed.

Introduction

International mobility of students and lecturers is a phenomenon desirable both by the above-mentioned individuals and universities involved in this process. However, its effectiveness requires preparation of universities and people intending to travel as well. Cultural differences may constitute an additional barrier, whereas the lack of knowledge and skills in this area might cause considerable tension and unnecessary stressful situations (Hofstede, 2011); (Hofstede et al., 2010); (Bielinis et al., 2018). Universities are now interested in expanding the offer and accepting a growing number of foreign students, universities' authorities also strive to maintain contacts with foreign universities and conduct foreign mobility of their employees and students. Activities in the area of internationalization are highly positioned in all rankings indicating the place of a given university on the domestic or international market (OECD, 2020); (Brandenburg et al., 2014); (Martyniuk, 2011). Hence, there is an intensive interest of the university in the subject and undertaking many actions to provide an interesting offer for potential foreign students. In the literature on the subject, it is possible to find many publications presenting various aspects of academic mobility, mainly in the field of exchange in the Erasmus+ programme, as well as relating to future trends in the area of mobility (Marciniak – Winnicki, 2019); (Berg, 2014); (Knight, 2012); (Demange et al., 2020); (Teichler, 2017); (Bridger, 2015); (Curaj et al., 2015); (Bracht et al., 2006).

However, when preparing to receive foreign students, universities mainly undertake activities in the area of tangible preparation of the study offer – to improve the subject matter, to adapt it to current trends, an increasing proportion of courses offered in foreign languages, most often in English. Universities' authorities tend to neglect the formal preparation of the university in the sense of administrative procedures, and the preparation of administrative staff dedicated to students' support such as dean's offices, student hostels, libraries etc. An extremely important issue, which usually does not receive proper attention, is taking measures to ensure full inclusion of foreign students into the academic community of a given university. The consequences of lack of preparation of the university to receive international students are manifesting themselves in a decrease of the quality of teaching and leads to the frustration on the part of foreign students and university staff.

Our project, with the perverse acronym *Stranger*, was dedicated to better formal preparation of universities for accepting foreign students. Speaking of foreign students, we refer to two situations:

- International mobility in the Erasmus+ Programme (usually for one semester) – the so-called horizontal/credit mobility.
- The whole cycle of tertiary education carried out at a foreign university – the so-called vertical/programme mobility.

Our aim was to develop universal solutions which would make it possible to properly organise activities in terms of formal preparation of universities for receiving foreign students. We have conducted an in-depth diagnosis of the needs in this area, among others, based on quantitative primary research conducted with the use of the PAPI questionnaire (Paper & Pen Personal Interview). What we were particularly interested in was finding possible differences and similarities in situations, factors and issues related to various aspects of international mobility. We conducted research at all partner universities of the *Stranger* project within two target groups: foreign students and university employees representing both scientists and teachers as well as the university administrative staff. In this publication, we present the most important research results and the recommendations for universities based on them. In order to structure the conducted analyses, we asked four research questions:

- Question 1: Are there any differences in the perception of foreign universities and the process of studying there among students participating in the Erasmus+ exchange programme and full-cycle students?
- Question 2: Are there any differences in the evaluations made by foreign students concerning the preparation of universities participating in the *Stranger* project for accepting them?
- Question 3: According to employees, what is the level of formal preparation of universities for international student mobility?
- Question 4: What are the strengths of preparing partner universities for international mobility and what should be improved in the first place?

Data and Methods

Data collection and research sample

Primary research using the PAPI method was conducted in two research groups in the period of December 2018 – March 2019. The first group included foreigners studying at four universities participating in the *Stranger* project and students of those universities who participated in the Erasmus+ exchange programme. The second group consisted of university employees – scientists and teachers as well as administrative staff having contact with students. The research questionnaires designed for both groups contained mostly closed-ended questions with a cafeteria of answers. The questionnaire meant for students was divided into five sections: before the start of studies, during studies, plans after graduation, own proposals, comments/suggestions and personal characteristics. The main aim of the research was to collect students' opinions on drivers motivating them to study at the foreign university, assistance obtained from the university while preparing for studying and integrating during studies, possible problems and solutions, plans connected with staying in the country of studying and related information needs. The questionnaire also included open-ended questions, where the respondents could provide their own suggestions for changes/improvements to the activities undertaken by the university in supporting foreign students, and clarify various issues, for example, those related to problem situations. Employees evaluated the formal preparation of universities for accepting foreign students and sending their own students to other countries as part of the exchange programme. The questions were formulated in such a way that it was possible to draw conclusions about the extent to which academic staff were familiar with procedures. The issues raised also concerned the evaluation of language skills, the possibility of improving one's competencies in this area and in the area of intercultural differences, possible problems in contact with foreign students or activities undertaken by the university in order to better prepare academic and administrative staff for cooperation with students from various countries/cultures. Like students, university employees could specify their expectations and suggest new solutions as part of open questions included in the questionnaire.

The structure of the research samples according to the selected characteristics is presented in Table 1. The research covered 366 students and 224 employees.

Feature	Feature categories	Frequency	Percentage of respondents (%)
Sample of students, n = 366			
Country	Greece	102	27.9
	Hungary	62	16.9
	Poland	102	27.9
	Ukraine	100	27.3
Sex	Female	205	56.0
	Male	158	43.2
	No data	3	0.8
Level of studies	Bachelor degree	204	55.7
	Master degree	149	40.7
	No data	13	3.6
Type of studies	international exchange	206	56.3
	regular studies	160	46.7
Sample of employees, n = 224			
Country	Greece	51	22.8
	Hungary	40	17.8
	Poland	83	37.1
	Ukraine	50	22.3
Sex	Female	143	63.8
	Male	74	33.0
	No data	7	3.2
Type of work	Administrative	105	46.9
	Research-teaching	113	50.5
	No data	6	2.6
Work experience	Up to 5 years	53	23.7
	6-10 years	39	17.4
	11-15 years	41	18.3
	16+ years	84	37.5
	No data	7	3.1

Table 1 Structure of the sample of students and employees in the PAPI research
 Source: own elaboration

As far as the student sample is concerned, the distribution of respondents among countries was balanced except for Hungary, where the number of fully completed questionnaires was lower than anywhere else. The share of women and men was consistent with the structure of people studying at universities of an economic profile. Similarly, the structure corresponding to the overall size for the *Stranger* partner countries was noted for those studying at the first (Bachelor's) and second (Master's) degree. From the point of view of the character of the studies

(exchange, full-cycle studies), the sample of students was also diversified, while the size and share of the representation of both subgroups allows us to generalise the research conclusions.

In the case of employees, in the entire sample women were the majority, which corresponds to the sample of the population employed at universities in partner countries, especially in the administrative area. Academic teachers, as well as administrative staff, were represented by approx. 50 per cent of respondents. In such a situation, the conclusions from the research can be considered adequate at the level of functioning of the entire university. It is worth noting that the majority of the respondents in the group of employees are people with extensive professional experience (more than ten years of work). This allows us to draw conclusions and generalise the results based on the opinions of people who have many observations and thoughts concerning serving foreign students and preparing their own students to study abroad.

Methods of analysis

During the analysis of the research results we used the methods based on descriptive statistics of selected questionnaire results, frequency of responses, correlation relationships between respondents' answers and external conditions, and factor analysis making it possible to develop summative scales. Statistical analysis included Pearson's chi-square tests in crosstabs when examining the dependence of categorical characteristics (Aczel, 2012), and one-way analysis of variance when checking quantitative features with respect to categorical characteristics. While creating measurement scales, we relied on factor analysis (Hair et al., 2014); (DeVellis, 2017) and reliability analysis using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, equivalent in the case of features binary to the Kuder-Richardson coefficient KR-20 (DeVellis, 2017). Statistical analyses were performed using Statistica 12.5 and IBM SPSS 26 programmes.

Results of Analyses

Results of the analyses were broken down into two target groups, namely foreign students and university employees (including academic teachers and administrative staff). The questionnaire for students consisted of 29 questions, including eight open-ended ones. Personal characteristics questions concerned, among others, the country of origin, the country of exchange, sex and nature of studies. The questionnaire meant for university employees consisted of 32 questions, including four open-ended ones. Personal characteristics questions concerned issues such as the place of employment, gender, type of work performed and seniority. Due to the volume of the publication and usefulness for developing solutions in the area of preparing the university for international mobility, in the subsequent subsections we are going to present the selected and – in our opinion – the most interesting research results for both groups covered by the research.

Results of the questionnaire research on foreign students

First, we asked students about the factors that motivate them to study abroad. They were supposed to choose up to three from those listed in the cafeteria. The obtained results indicate that the most common driver is the desire to improve language skills and social as well as intercultural competencies (see Figure 1).

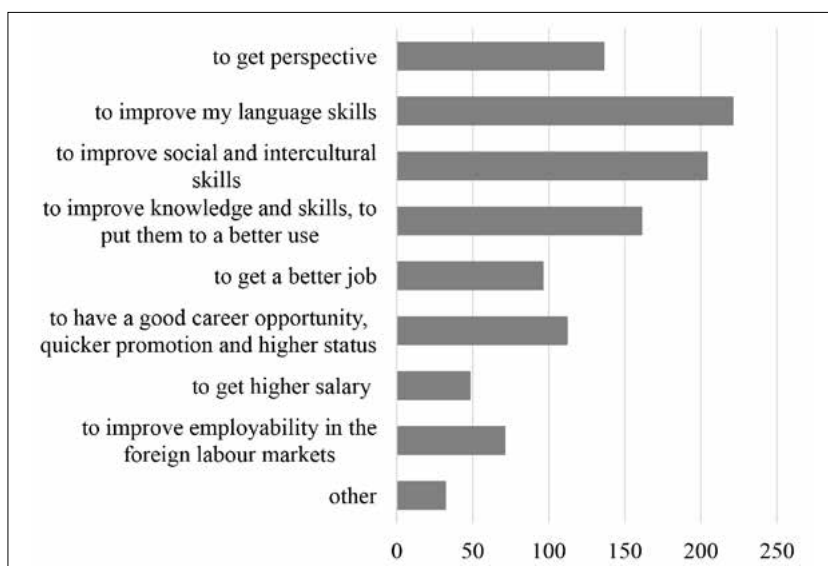


Figure 1 Factors motivating people to study abroad
Source: own elaboration

The analysis of the results due to personal characteristics indicated the existence of statistically significant differences due to the nature of studies (see Table 2). For international exchange students, it is more important to improve their language, social and intercultural skills, whereas the answers of respondents completing regular studies at a foreign university were dominated by issues related to increasing the chances of employment, better career opportunities or higher salary.

Factor	% of answer “yes”		χ^2	p-value
	International exchange	Regular studies		
to improve my language skills	65.05	54.38	4.29	0.038
to improve social and intercultural skills	65.05	43.75	16.56	0.000
to get a better job	20.87	33.13	6.99	0.008
to have a good career opportunity, quicker promotion and higher status	26.21	36.25	4.27	0.039
to get higher salary	9.22	18.13	6.26	0.012

Table 2 Significant differences in the factors motivating people to study abroad – students participating in international exchange and regular studies

Source: own elaboration

Interestingly enough, while performing the analyses we discovered the coexistence of specific factors. For example, people who chose the option “to improve my language skills” very often also selected “to improve social and intercultural skills”. In contrast, respondents who chose the option “to get perspective” often combined it with the answer “to improve knowledge and skills, to put them to a better use”.

The next question concerned the selection of a specific foreign university. In our research, we asked about four partner universities. Due to the fact that each university is in a different country, and each country was represented by only one university, the obtained results can be partially related to the factors motivating people to study in a given country, that is, in Poland, Hungary, Greece and Ukraine, respectively. As before, the respondents could select three possible answers, and the obtained answer frequency is shown in Figure 2. One should note that, according to the respondents, two factors prevailed – the location of the university (an interesting city and its surroundings) and positive opinions about it.

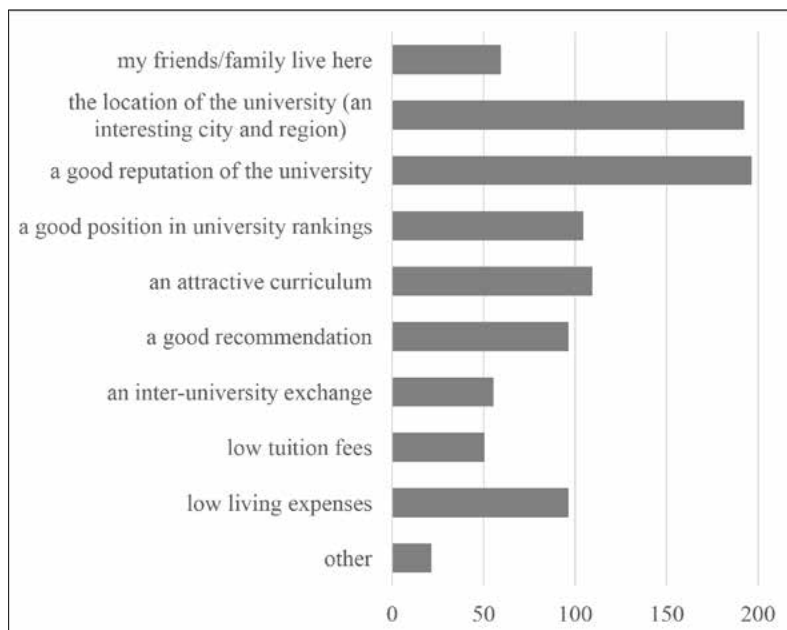


Figure 2 Factors motivating people to study in the countries covered by the research
Source: own elaboration

Table 3 shows significant differences in factors motivating people to study in the countries covered by the research. It is worth noting that there were essential differences in the frequency of choosing answers between specific countries. For example, the factor related to the proximity of family or friends' place of living was of great importance for respondents from Ukraine (32 per cent of them responded "yes") whereas of minimum significance for those studying in Greece (4.9 per cent). On the other hand, respondents from Greece paid much more attention to the reputation of the university, its ranking position or the attractiveness of curriculum than respondents from Poland, Hungary or Ukraine.

Factor	% of answer “yes”		χ^2
	Min / Country	Max / Country	
my friends/family live in this place	4.90 / GR	32.00 / UA	32.60*
the location of the university (an interesting city and region)	27.42 / HU	61.76 / PL	20.33*
a good reputation of the university	39.22 / PL	65.69 / GR	18.45*
a good position in university rankings	16.13 / HU	43.14 / GR	23.42*
an attractive curriculum	14.00 / UA	49.02 / GR	30.88*
a good recommendation	14.00 / UA	45.16 / HU	21.75*
low tuition fees	2.00 / UA	33.87 / HU	35.07*
low living expenses	14.71 / GR	42.16 / PL	30.67*

*p-value < 0.001; GR – Greece, HU – Hungary, PL – Poland, UA – Ukraine

Table 3 Significant differences in factors motivating people to study in the countries covered by the research
Source: own elaboration

Another issue raised in the questionnaire for students was the issue of obtaining information about the university and the process of studying there. According to the research results, on average 80 per cent of students obtained such information before going abroad, and there were no differences due to the analysed characteristics such as gender, character of studies or destination country. When asked about problems with obtaining satisfactory information, there were significant differences (p-value < 0.001) in the case of target countries. Such problems were experienced by 5.9 per cent of respondents who decided to study in Greece and 36.8 per cent in the case of Hungary. For those who chose to study in Poland this percentage equalled 25.5 per cent, and in Ukraine – 14.0 per cent. Significant differences also appeared in the case of the question about the occurrence of problems during the stay at foreign universities. Figure 3 shows the distribution of responses in considered countries.

Most often, problems were indicated by people studying in Hungary (75.8 per cent answered “yes”), whereas in other countries this percentage oscillated around 53.0–55.9 per cent. We also observed significant differences in the indications of problems experienced by students from the Erasmus+ exchange programme (53.2 per cent) and regular studies (67.1 per cent).

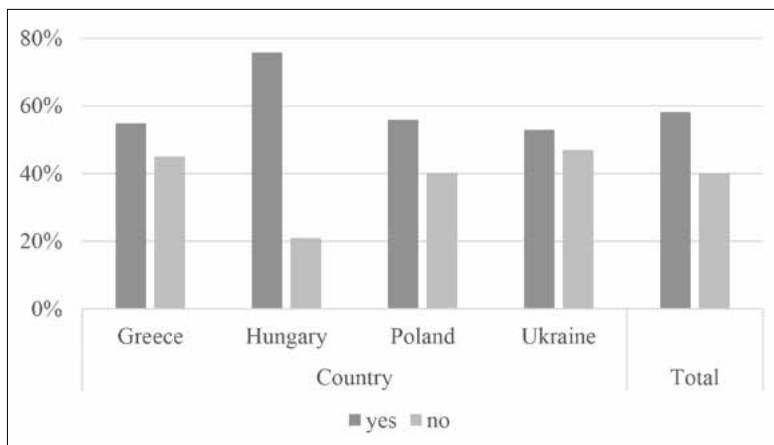


Figure 3 Frequency of answers to the question about problems while studying in the countries covered by the research
Source: own elaboration

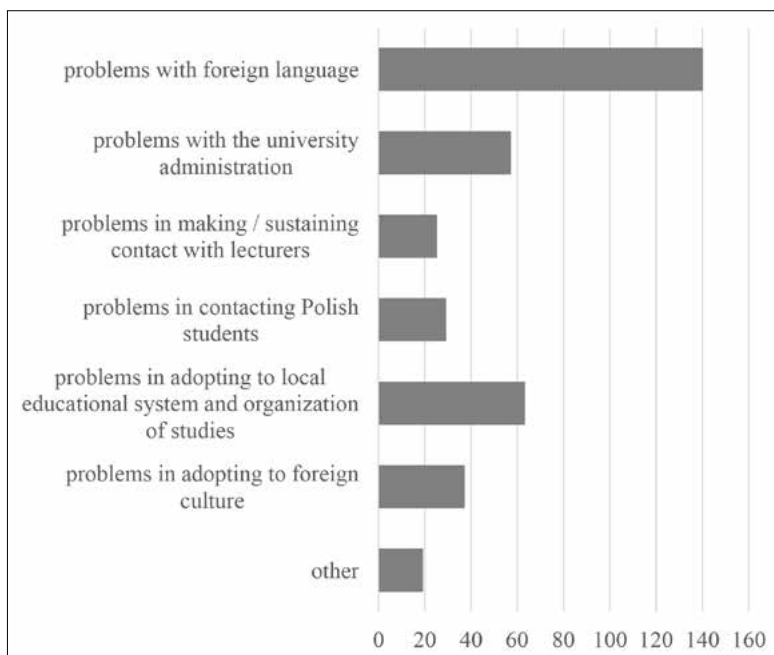


Figure 4 Number of answers to the question about the type of problems experienced while studying
Source: own elaboration

An in-depth analysis of the types of problems experienced by foreign students (see Figure 4) shows that the biggest one concerned communication in a foreign language – both on the part of the respondent and people they contacted. Looking at the types of problems due to the

personal characteristics, we observed significant differences between countries and in the character of studies. For example, problems with a foreign language were mainly reported by people studying in Hungary. People studying in Poland pointed to issues connected with university administrative staff, whereas those studying in Hungary – to problems with establishing/maintaining contact with lecturers and adapting to a new culture. Moreover, students of regular studies appeared to have greater problems with communication, with university administrative staff and adapting to a new culture than those participating in the Erasmus+ exchange programme.

A crucial issue raised in the research was the importance of aspects such as the transparency of academic and student affairs, the course of studies, administrative services for foreign students, availability of lecturers, individual approach and counselling, and availability of information for respondents from different countries. The respondents used a five-point scale from one to five, where one meant not important at all, whereas five is very important. Figure 5 shows average evaluations for the analysed aspects.

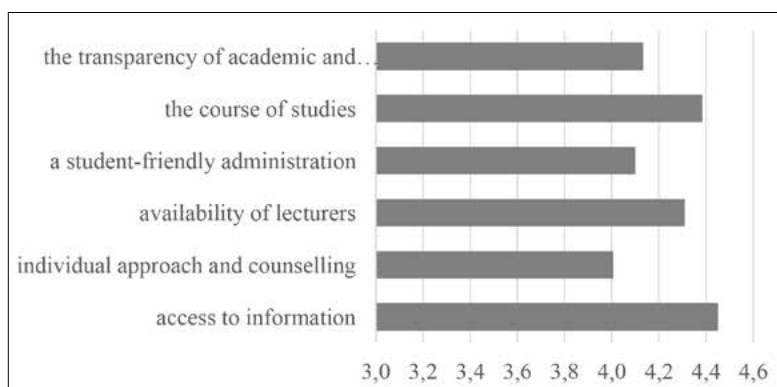


Figure 5 Importance of selected aspects related to the process of studying
Source: own elaboration

The research results showed that the most important for foreign students is access to information and the course of studies. At the same time, it should be pointed out that all the analysed issues were considered by the students as important or very important. This has been proven by the average evaluation of importance for individual aspects from 4.00 to 4.45 on a 5-point scale.

Considering the obtained results due to personal characteristics, significant differences were found in the country and type of studies (see Table 4).

Aspect	Country		Type of studies	
	F stat.	p-value	F stat.	p-value
the transparency of academic and student affairs	3.32	0.020	2.49	0.116
the course of studies	1.82	0.143	3.84	0.051
a student-friendly administration	24.05	0.000	13.00	0.000
availability of lecturers	9.88	0.000	5.59	0.019
individual approach and counselling	3.72	0.012	2.87	0.091
access to information	1.03	0.378	1.12	0.291

Table 4 Differences in the evaluation of the importance of specific aspects of studying process due to the country and type of studies
Source: own elaboration

With significant differences in specific countries, the greatest importance was noted for transparency and availability of lecturers for people studying in Greece, friendly administration for students in Hungary, whereas individual approach and counselling – for those studying in Ukraine. On the other hand, the aspects which noted the lowest significance included transparency for people studying in Ukraine, friendly administration for students in Greece and availability of lecturers and individual approach and counselling for those studying in Poland. Taking into account significant differences for the type of studies, issues such as friendly administration and availability of lecturers turned out to be much more important for students of regular studies than for the participants of the Erasmus+ programme.

The answers to this question were also analysed in terms of geographical regions which foreign students came from.¹

Aspect	Region of the world		Region UE	
	F stat.	p-value	F stat.	p-value
the transparency of academic and student affairs	1.84	0.139	5.77	0.004
the course of studies	2.65	0.049	1.81	0.167
a student-friendly administration	10.85	0.000	5.40	0.005
availability of lecturers	2.01	0.112	4.03	0.020
individual approach and counselling	1.27	0.284	0.83	0.438
access to information	1.59	0.192	1.86	0.159

Table 5 Differences in the evaluation of the importance of specific aspects of the studying process depending on the foreign students' regions of origin
Source: own elaboration

¹ Due to the fact that respondents were from 38 countries, we decided to aggregate the country of origin variable into the following regions: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, European Union, and in further analysis to divide the EU countries into three regions: central-east, south and west.

In the case of the analysis at the level of world regions, significant differences were noted in the evaluation of importance for two aspects. The course of studies appeared to be the most important for students from Africa and the least important for those from the EU, whereas friendly administration again turned out to be the most important for students from Africa and the least important for those from Asia and the EU (comparable values of average evaluations). As for the analysis at the level of EU regions, three significant differences were noted in the evaluation of the importance of these aspects. The transparency appeared to be the most essential for students from Southern Europe, and less important for other student groups; friendly administration is the most important for students from Central-East Europe, and the least important for those from Southern Europe; the availability of lecturers is the most important for students from Southern Europe and the least important for those from Western Europe.

In addition to evaluating the importance of the above-mentioned aspects of the studying process, foreign students were also asked to assess their satisfaction with meeting their expectations in this regard at the foreign university. The analysis of the obtained results showed that the evaluations of satisfaction with specific aspects were significantly correlated with each other, whereas the reliability analysis (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$) indicated the legitimacy of creating one general scale of satisfaction and further calculations using this scale. The overall scale of satisfaction was determined by calculating the mean values of the evaluations of individual aspects. The use of the summative scale showed significant differences in satisfaction evaluations for both countries accepting foreign students and type of studies. In the case of countries, the lowest satisfaction was reported by respondents studying in Poland. Taking into account the type of studies, significantly lower values were noted for students of regular studies than for those participating in international exchange.

While analysing this area, we tried to compare evaluations of importance of various aspects connected with the process of studying to satisfaction with their implementation at the foreign university (see Figure 6). The obtained results showed much higher expectations compared to the extent in which they are satisfied. All analysed aspects received much poorer satisfaction evaluations, with the biggest difference in "access to information".

At the end of the analysis of questionnaire research results in the group of students it is worth comparing the evaluations of respondents in three time points: before the beginning of their studies, within the first days of studying and in later period. The evaluation of the way the university is prepared to receive foreign students, to provide necessary information at the beginning of their education and to ensure support in the course of studies shows that in all cases there were significant differences between the target countries (p -value < 0.001 for the analysis of variance). The results of the comparison are presented in Figure 7.

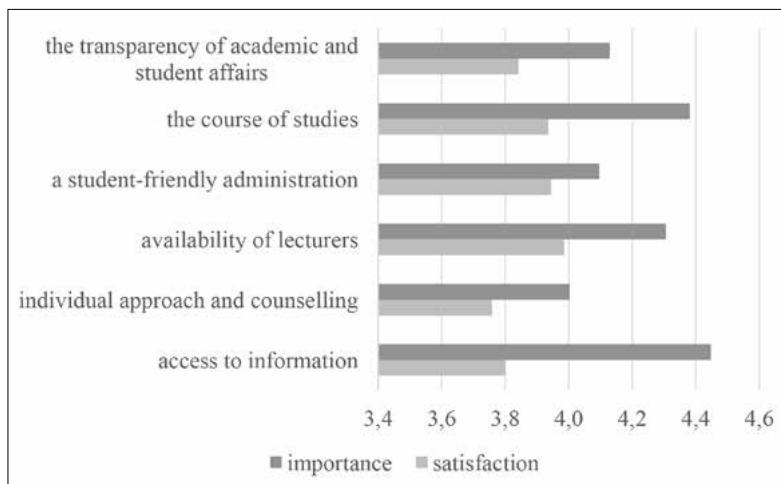


Figure 6 Importance of specific aspects of the studying process vs. satisfaction with their implementation at the foreign university – comparison of evaluations
Source: own elaboration

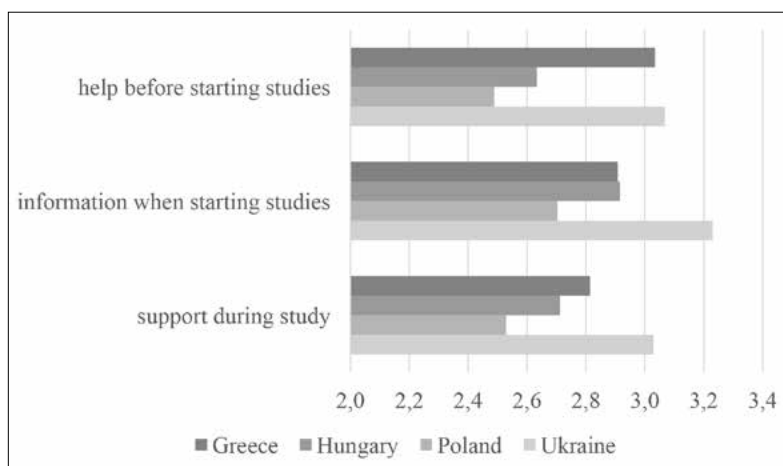
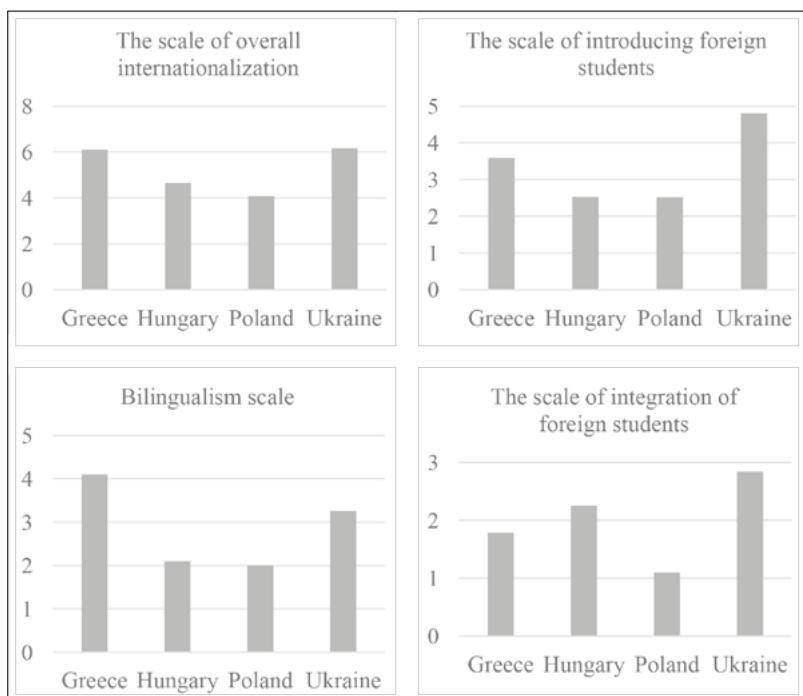


Figure 7 Involvement of the university in subsequent stages of the course of studies completed by foreign students – comparison of evaluations
Source: own elaboration

The comparison of students' evaluations at three time points revealed certain regularities. The first one shows that the Polish university obtained the poorest assessments in all cases. The second one is associated with higher evaluations in the first period of studying for all countries except for Greece in comparison to both the pre-study period and support obtained during the course of studies. In the case of Greece, we observed a slight downward trend in students' evaluations at the subsequent points of time.

Results of the questionnaire research conducted among university employees

The first thing we asked about in the questionnaire for university employees was their evaluation of readiness of educational institutions to accept foreign students. Due to the large number of questions, we used summative scales to evaluate various areas, which allowed us to include multiple criteria in the evaluation. Eventually, we created four summative scales (see Figure 8), but due to the adopted method of encoding the answers higher values obtained on the summative scale mean more positive evaluations of the situation in a given area.



Note: maximum possible values for summative scales: 8 (top left), 6 (top right), 5 (bottom left and right)

Figure 8 Evaluation of preparation of university for accepting foreign students according to summative scales – differentiation by country

Source: own elaboration

The first summative scale concerns the formal preparation of universities in the area of internationalization, including the knowledge of relevant documents and procedures by employees. The second was composed of questions about the activities that the university is taking to facilitate the integration of foreign students into the new academic environment. In the third summative scale, answers to questions about the use of subtitles / messages not only in the official language of a given country, but also in English were used. The fourth takes into account various activities of universities aimed at integrating foreign students with local students and

the offer of spending free time. All the constructed scales were characterized by high values of statistical measures confirming their reliability, which made it possible to check on their basis possible differentiation of the situation assessment due to personal characteristics. We found statistically significant differences for the characteristic of a country for all four summative scales, whereas the worst situation in all fields was noted for the Polish university. Additionally, for the scale of bilingualism, statistically significant differences were also found for the type of work performed (administrative employees/scientific and educational staff), whereas the administrative staff assessed this area in a much more positive manner. In any case, no statistically significant differences were found in terms of respondent's gender or seniority.

Another set of questions concerned the evaluation of the substantive preparation of university employees for taking care of foreign students and the possibility of receiving support in difficult situations. We asked whether employees had an opportunity to participate in training on intercultural differences and the specificity of intercultural communication at the university, and whether they had an opportunity to improve their language skills during training. We asked about formal matters related to obtaining information before the beginning of the academic year about what foreign students they would cooperate with, if any (during didactic classes or as part of administrative services). Eventually, we asked whether they could report problems arising in contact with foreign students in order to find solutions and whether they could count on any support in this regard. We also wanted to know whether they were informed about possible problems which might occur on a daily basis while cooperating with foreign students. Table 6 shows the percentages of "yes" answers to subsequent questions in the group of employees at specific partner universities.

Activity	% of answer "yes"				χ^2	p-value
	GR	HU	PL	UA		
workshop on intercultural differences	7.84	22.50	2.41	38.00	35.34	0.000
language courses	2.00	32.43	45.12	60.00	40.47	0.000
information about the foreign students	62.75	25.00	21.69	16.00	45.57	0.000
opportunity to report problems in dealing with foreign students	70.59	47.50	43.37	42.00	11.48	0.009
opportunity to receive support in problematic situations	62.00	35.90	28.40	50.00	20.38	0.002
information related to everyday functioning	12.00	27.50	8.43	54.00	41.11	0.000

Table 6 Preparation of employees for taking care of and cooperating with foreign students according to the analysed countries

Source: own elaboration

The tests revealed statistically significant differences between the answers of employees from specific universities, the biggest of which concerned the first three questions. In the area of participation in training on cultural differences, the worst situation was definitely noted at the Polish university – 2.5 per cent of the answers were “yes” compared to 22.5 per cent in Hungary or 38 per cent in Ukraine. In the case of language training, only two per cent of answers were “yes” in Greece, compared to several dozen per cent at other universities. On the other hand, receiving formal information about foreign students before the beginning of the academic year was confirmed by over 60 per cent of Greek employees, whereas at other universities this percentage amounted to 25 per cent. Significant differences were also noted in the case of formal knowledge about possible problems – in Poland “yes” answers amounted to 8.43 per cent, whereas in Ukraine – 54 per cent.

In the further part of the questionnaire, we concentrated on the types of everyday problems related to the service and cooperation with foreign students. At this point, statistically significant differences occurred in the area of type of work performed and country. Much more often than scientific and educational staff, administrative employees indicated problems resulting from the language barrier (57 per cent vs. 43 per cent), while academic teachers more frequently pointed to problems resulting from being used to a different system of teaching and grading (33 per cent vs. 22 per cent). As far as country is concerned, differences appeared for the inappropriate flow of information (66 per cent in Poland vs. 28 per cent in Ukraine) and cultural differences (56 per cent in Ukraine vs. 27 per cent in Poland). Another question concerned the identification of the areas of university functioning, which, according to the respondents, require re-examination and adjustment so that they could better meet the needs of foreign students. The results of indications in specific countries are presented in Figure 9. What is worth emphasising is a very high percentage of indications for specific answer options, as well as the existence of statistically significant differences in this field between countries.



Figure 9 Fields requiring re-examination and adaptation to the needs of foreign students – differentiation by country
Source: own elaboration

The last section of the questionnaire for university employees was devoted to the general evaluation of the involvement of administrative staff in taking care of foreign students (see Figure 10).

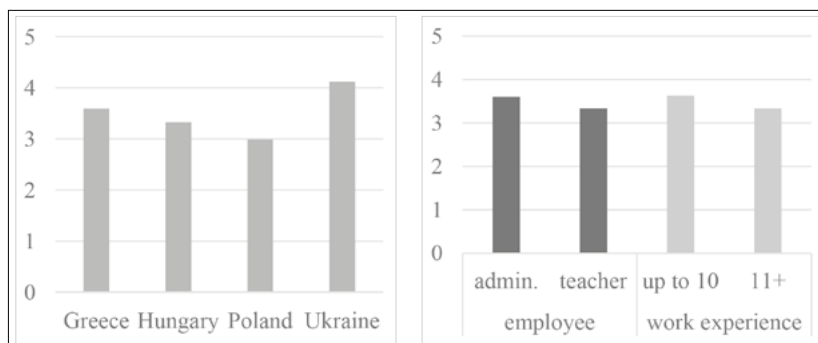


Figure 10 Evaluation of involvement in taking care of foreign students by administrative staff – differentiation according to metrics characteristics

Source: own elaboration

The respondents expressed their opinions using a five-point scale, where one meant “very bad”, whereas five – “very good”. We observed statistically significant differences for characteristics such as country (the lowest score in Poland 2.99 whereas the highest in Ukraine – 4.12), the type of work performed (average evaluation – administrative staff 3.60 vs. academic teachers 3.34) and seniority (up to 10 years – 3.63 vs. 3.33 others).

Conclusions

In the article, we presented the results of international comparative research in the field of preparation of universities for international mobility carried out under the *Stranger* project in the group of foreign students and university employees. The conducted analyses revealed both the existence of numerous issues connected with the broadly understood internationalisation of universities, as well as the diversification of the perception of the situation due to the target groups participating in the research and the characteristics of the respondents. However, it is worth noting that in the case of both target groups, no significant differences in responses were found in terms of gender of the people participating in the research.

Referring directly to the research questions, it should be noted that there are differences in the perception of foreign universities and the process of studying there among students participating in the Erasmus+ exchange programme and those choosing the full cycle of studies. Significant differences were already found in drivers motivating people to study abroad – for students participating in the Erasmus+ programme, particularly important is the opportunity to improve their own competencies, while students from regular studies focus on improving their own position on the labour market and obtaining more attractive employment. Students

taking part in the Erasmus+ programme reported significantly fewer problems during their studies than those from regular studies. In the case of the latter group, these problems mainly concerned contact with university administrative staff and adaptation to a different culture, as well as contact with academic teachers. Students from regular studies also evaluated the fulfilment of expectations at a foreign university lower in relation to the aspects important to them. The observed differences between groups of foreign students and their direction indicate that universities are less prepared to accept students for regular studies. Probably, it results from the lack of international standards applied to organised groups in Erasmus+ programmes.

The results of the analyses also confirmed the occurrence of differences in the evaluation of the preparation of universities participating in the Stranger project for accepting foreign students. For example, much more often than in other universities, students raised the issues of communication problems in Hungary and problem situations with administrative staff in Poland. In this field, very interesting were also the answers to questions about the importance of the indicated aspects of studying for respondents from different regions of the world/Europe, as well as the evaluation of their fulfilment at foreign universities. The research results showed that the access to information and the organisation of studies are the most important for foreign students. In terms of meeting the expectations, the lowest satisfaction was reported by the respondents studying in Poland.

According to the research results, the evaluation performed by employees regarding the formal preparation of universities for international student mobility does not look good. While answering the questions, both academic teachers and university administration staff criticised the current formal solutions, possible support in the event of problems, and preparation in terms of cultural differences, with employees from Poland being the most critical of all. It is also worth noting that in many cases, the evaluations given by administrative staff and respondents with shorter professional experience were significantly higher than those of academic teachers. Looking for something positive, however, it is possible to indicate the strengths of preparing partner universities for international mobility – these include undoubtedly good solutions in terms of reporting possible problems in cooperation with foreign students in Greece, or preparation of university employees in the field of cultural differences in Ukraine.

It seems that the obtained results should be interesting for university authorities and people responsible for preparing universities to take care of foreign students. They could also contribute to a broader discussion of problems related to the formal adaptation of universities to the requirements of the internationalisation process, especially that the issues of managing culturally diverse groups fit into the currently important issues of diversity management (Thomas – Ely, 1996); (Mor Barak, 2017); (Gross-Golacka, 2018). Of course, it is worth taking a detailed look at the reasons for the observed differences, visible mainly among the countries participating in the research. For sure, they are partly due to the different student groups (e.g. in Hungary, the majority of students come from Africa, whereas in Poland – from Ukraine). Nevertheless, the problems observed in the research in the field of formal preparation of universities for the process of internationalisation require reflection and specific action.

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Dorota Kwiatkowska-Ciotucha. PhD in Economics, professor at Wrocław University of Economics and Business in the Department of Logistics (lectures in the field of forecasting and data analysis), certified adult trainer. Since September 2009, Head of the Department for Development Projects, a special unit of WUEB established to obtain EU funds in the area of broadly understood LLL. Co-author and manager of over 20 projects financed by the European Social Fund and the Erasmus+ Programme for the amount of over EUR 25 million. Extensive research experience, author and co-author of numerous scientific publications. Research interests: people with disabilities in the open labour market, Sandwich Generation, the skills gap of employees. Additionally, since 2006 President of the Board of Dobre Kadry Training and Research Center Ltd., a company that deals with acquiring funds from the European Union for social and professional support for people with disabilities.

ORCID: 0000-0002-0116-4600

Contact: dorota.kwiatkowska@ue.wroc.pl



Urszula Załuska. PhD in Economics, assistant professor in the Department of Logistics at Wrocław University of Economics and Business (lectures in the field of data analysis, forecasting and logistics management). Since September 2009, expert at the Department for Development Projects, a special unit of WUEB established to obtain EU funds in the area of broadly understood LLL. Co-author and manager of over 15 projects financed by the European Social Fund and the Erasmus+ Programme for the amount of over EUR 20 million. Participation in many research projects, author and co-author of numerous publications, certified adult trainer. Since 2006 responsible in

Dobre Kadry Training and Research Center Ltd. for the implementation of projects for people with sensory disabilities, especially deaf people. Main areas of research interests: perception of people with disabilities in society and in the workplace, employee competences today and in the future, mature people on the labour market.

ORCID: 0000-0001-5305-8087

Contact: urszula.zaluska@ue.wroc.pl



Cyprian Kozyra. PhD in Economics, assistant professor at Wrocław University of Economics and Business in Department of Statistics (lectures in the field of statistics, survey data methodology and multidimensional analysis). Research experience, author and co-author of numerous scientific publications in many fields with usage of various statistical methods. Research interests: persons with disabilities in the labour market, statistical process control, service quality management, subjective well-being measurement.

ORCID: 0000-0002-8500-6836

Contact: cyprian.kozyra@ue.wroc.pl

CHRISTOS AKRIVOS

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCENARIO WITH FOREIGN STUDENTS IN GREECE

The research is to identify all potential barriers that result from the lack of proper preparation of students before studying at a foreign university and make full and effective adaptation in the new environment difficult. One of the research tools is in-depth interview. The objectives are the identification of factors that impede the students' full and effective adaptation in the new academic environment. These factors are: communication in a foreign language; different teaching and evaluation system; incorrect flow of information and cultural differences. The findings confirm the project's main hypothesis about the students' difficulties when going international for their studies. The problems are more or less the same no matter the nationality and the sex of the students. The basic problems have to do with the communication, culture and everyday arrangements at home and at the university, e.g. secretariat or academic staff announcements and course organization.

Introduction

The main goal of the *Stranger* project is to improve the university readiness for the internationalization process. Due to the globalization and the increase of students' mobility, especially within the EU, the universities need to open up to receiving an increasing number of students. This project intends to minimize the problems that students who decide to go abroad face in the host country's university and the teachers who receive and teach those students.

For the purposes of the project, we have prepared a manual for the foreign students where answers to the following questions are included: What should I know before I go to a foreign study/foreign exchange? The result includes the development and publication of a guide for students who want to study at a foreign university. It will be a guidebook, which will propose actions that should be taken to better prepare for studying in another country.

The preparation of the manual was also preceded by initial research carried out in three groups of respondents: university administration having contact with foreign students, research and didactic staff conducting classes with foreign students and students from a given country who study together with foreign students.

The research will identify all potential barriers that result from the lack of proper preparation of students before studying at a foreign university and make full and effective adaptation in the new environment difficult.

One of the research tools will be an in-depth interview – IDI of the students in order to identify the main problems that the students face when going abroad for studies in a foreign University.

Research Method and Data Collection

The in-depth interview (IDI) is a qualitative research method (Shrivastava et al., 2014) that gathers comprehensive information from respondents. This research is often conducted in-person, over the phone, or via the web as it is critical for the respondent and interviewer to be able to converse in real-time. An IDI project often includes a series of interviews which lasts between 15 minutes and an hour. Results from IDIs point organizations in the right direction and give critical feedback for their next move.

IDIs are ideal for detailed exploration of specific ideas, or evaluation of concepts and materials that require thorough focus and concentration. This mode of interviewing is very useful for executive interviews where participants may be reluctant to express their true feelings in a focus group, and for interviews to assess individual comprehension/attitudes toward a new concept. IDI's can also be the most appropriate technique for research covering more emotional topics, when the relationship between moderator and participant is essential to a successful outcome.

Some qualitative researchers contend that IDI's can be conducted online, via diaries, electronic bulletin boards, webcam interviews, etc. However, at its core, it is crucial to conduct IDI's with an individual in real time, without the distraction of the digital environment or the influence of other participants. Using mobile devices for conducting IDI's is seldom productive because respondents will be reluctant to participate long enough for the requirements of an in-depth interview. Nor will they give the undivided attention necessary when on their smartphones or tablets for thoughtful responses to a moderator. Digital platforms provide opportunities for participants to share/post photos and videos of their environment or activity, but the time to probe will be limited by the length of time the participant is engaged in a two-way conversation with a researcher. Webcam IDI's, however, are becoming increasingly popular; they may be the next frontier in IDI's and allow for successful incorporation of laddering techniques as well.

Still, each technique or methodology has its place. It's not about digital or in-person research; it's about designing a research study using all the tools in the researcher's tool box to get the best insights regardless of methodology. In fact, telephone, digital and in-person research each have different strengths that can be combined and leveraged to get better insights than either would provide alone.

Specific guidelines (Jamshed, 2014) for a successful IDI could be:

1. Know when to go off script

An IDI guide is developed as a first step, to clarify and organize information the organization needs to gather. When conducting an IDI, researchers look for opportunities to probe for more information. IDI guides often include reminders to probe for more information; however, skilled researchers go beyond these cues and look for clues in respondents' answers to dig deeper.

2. Get smart on your respondents

This varies from project to project, but the premise stays the same. Get smart on your respondents, and the qualities of the stakeholder group. This provides insight prior to the IDI which will help the researcher know when to probe further. One way to do this could be to

review an interviewee's LinkedIn profile to see their current job title and responsibilities before conducting an IDI e.g., about smooth induction of a foreign student.

3. Include quantitative questions

Ask a few quantitative questions, such as Likert scaled questions, that are insightful. As an added bonus, these responses are useful when supporting key takeaways in the report. Including quantitative questions can help the researcher introduce a topic during the interview, allow respondents to assign meaning to a concept/product/service, and provide the client with a touch of quantitative data. Once a researcher has posed the Likert scaled question, it's an ideal time to probe by asking respondents to explain the reasoning behind their answer.

4. Be strategic with incentives

Some industries and companies have strict rules for accepting research incentives, so it is important to do some preliminary investigation prior to the interview. If the interviewee is not allowed to accept an honorarium you can offer to donate the incentive to a charity of their choice. Lastly, it is important to know an amount which will entice respondents to participate.

This IDI had a sample of five foreign students who study in Greece with the following characteristics:

Nationality	Number of Students	Sex	Studies
French	1	Female	Business
Polish	1	Male	Business
Russian	2	Male	Business
Chinese	1	male	Business

The research questions assume that building intercultural competence involves increasing cultural self-awareness; deepening understanding of the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviours of people from diverse cultural communities; and expanding the capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behaviour to bridge across cultural differences (Hammer, 2009; 2010; 2011).

Research Outcomes

This research aims and objectives are the identification of factors that impede the students' full and effective adaptation in the new academic environment. These factors are:

1. Communication in a foreign language

It is a common problem for any student going abroad even though he/she has "good knowledge" before going abroad. As it is mentioned by the French student "By studying Greek culture and language and living in Greece, I gain a better understanding of the many similarities that we share and learn to respect our differences. The relationships that are formed between individuals from different countries in Greece, as part of international education programmes and exchanges, can also foster goodwill that develops into vibrant, mutually beneficial partnerships among students".

2. Different teaching and evaluation system

Every University in Greece has its own students' evaluation system which can vary in some details even within the same University. This happens as a result of the personal evaluation system that a course or the professor of the course selects as appropriate.

3. Incorrect flow of information

Communication errors can occur even within a group of people who belong to the same nationality and culture. This means that international students risk more than the locals failing to find the right information and to understand the information correctly.

4. Cultural differences

This is the most often mentioned obstacle that impede students' ability to adapt effectively to the Greek university. Students mention that some international students are not willing to change or deny changing the way they understand what is happening at the university as they insist on using only their own culture. Other students are open from the first day of their arrival to adapt and use Greek culture in their understanding and communication in the University. The same happens with the Greek students and professors. The groups can be categorized as Monocultural or Denial Mindsets and Multicultural group or persons. Individuals with a Denial orientation (Triandis, 1994) often do not recognize differences in perceptions and behaviour as "cultural". A Denial orientation is characteristic of individuals who have limited experience with other cultural groups and therefore tend to operate with broad stereotypes and generalizations about the cultural "otherness". Those at Denial may also maintain a distance from other cultural groups and express little interest in learning about the cultural values and practices of diverse communities.

After elaborating the factors mentioned by the students that assist them to a full and effective adaptation in the new academic environment the following parameters came up as the most important to take into consideration by all foreign students who study in Greece:

Fitting In

Students suddenly find themselves in a completely different culture. The people behave differently, the food is different, and they have some socialization or induction problems.

Isolation

They spend a period of time alone or the whole period of their studies living together only with their compatriots e.g., Cyprian students in Greece.

Feeling Homesick

After the first flow of excitement, they start feeling homesick.

The Language Barrier

The majority of foreign students do not speak Greek and they are obliged to speak at least English or another language which is not the language they have enough confidence to use when talking to people.

Academic writing

At least during the first years of their studies their papers are not at the level of an academic writing format.

Roommates

It is not easy to live with people you have just met. They will have their own lifestyle that may collide with your habits.

Finances

Greece is in a period of economic crisis but foreign students do not face the same bank restrictions as Greeks do. On the other hand, the country is very attractive for travelling but students do not have the amount of money needed to visit the places they wish to.

Disorganization

When they have so many new places to see and friends to make, it is easy to neglect the most important thing: studying. They believe that there is enough time for everything, but there is not.

University lecture attendance

Students fail to be in the class on the right time e.g. due to misinformation or a number of reasons. Also, even though they are in the class they cannot make complete notes as the locals do.

Conclusions

The above findings confirm the project's main hypothesis about the students' difficulties when going international for their studies. The problems are more or less the same no matter the nationality and the sex of the students.

The basic problems have to do with the communication, culture and everyday arrangements at home and at the university, e.g. secretariat or academic staff announcements and course organization.

The findings are useful both for the international students and the university academic and administrative staff. All of them have to start with a change of attitude towards any different element in their activities. For example, foreign students must abandon their culture of origin if they wish to adapt easily and fast to the local society and university norms. The same applies to local students, academic and administrative staff if they wish to develop a win-win relation with the foreign students.

The desired result can be achieved faster and easier if both sides (international students and local agents) move in the right direction that could lead to better understanding and co-operation.

A future research could be to find out how Covid has influenced the logistics of international students, as to the target countries and the results in learning and communication.

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Christodoulos K. Akrivos. PhD in Management. Adjunct Professor at the School of Economics and Business of the Neapolis University in Cyprus and External Academic at the Hellenic Open University. His research interests relate to Management, Human Resources and Quality Management.

ORCID: 0000-0003-3443-0853

Contact: akrivos.christodoulos@ac.eap.gr

ANDRIY KRYSOVATYY – YURIY HAYDA – OLHA SOBKO – OLEH CHUKHNII

INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF STUDENTS: GOOD PRACTICES FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES

This article highlights the results of research carried out by partner universities as part of the Erasmus+ project “International mobility – opportunity and problem. Proper preparation of the university for international students” in 2019. This article provides data on the intensity and character of the process of international mobility of students in various European countries and the results of the classification of these countries by a set of indicators. Desk research analyses on problems in various universities in EU countries mainly in terms of searching for good practices was applied. Information from study portals, webpages of universities in 24 European countries was collected and analysed. A list of good practices used by European universities to assist international students by choice of university, majors and courses of study, provision of accommodation, adapting to the new cultural and language environment and by other organizational and educational situations was compiled. Existing experience and insights of European universities were used during the preparation of the project document “Manual for the university. How to prepare for the reception of international students”.

Introduction

The current market for educational services is becoming both more and more competitive and globalised (Altbach, 2006). “Globalization is now the most important contextual factor shaping the internationalization of higher education [...]. Irrespective of contextual differences within and between countries, nearly all higher education institutions worldwide are engaged in international activities and are seeking to expand them” (International Association of Universities, 2012). The internationalisation of universities and other educational institutions nowadays provides them with a new competitive characteristic (Baumgratz – Gangl, 1996). One of the key ways of internationalization of universities is the international mobility of all educational process participants – students, faculty and administrative staff. International student mobility has been consistently on the rise since the 1970s (Fonseca et al., 2016), reaching a significant scale in the 21st century. In the early stages, the intensity of mobility of students was low and limited to their movement within continents and countries. Later it became global and in 2004 reached a figure of two million students (Altbach, 2004). Findings of the empirical study, which was conducted by researchers from Lithuania, reveal that Erasmus studies is the most popular means of partial mobility among the young people of Europe (Vaicekauska et al., 2013). Researchers have identified a whole list of factors that motivate students to study abroad. These include gaining international experience, improving knowledge of a foreign language, exposure to a new cultural environment, recommendations from relatives, friends, university professors, better employment opportunities after graduation and others. Research conducted

in Slovenia found that the possibility of gaining international study experience was the main motivator for studying in Germany and Norway (Novak et al., 2013).

Most countries are declaring education hub aspiration with the ambition of signalling the excellence of their education systems to international students (Ilieva et al., 2017). Good practices in universities correlate with the national educational policy regarding internationalization of higher education. The following are necessary within this policy: a strategy of internationalization; creation of a corresponding national body and foreign representation; bilateral agreements; monitoring of internationalization processes; removal of visa restrictions and simplification of visa procedures; creation of a favourable living and working environment; exemption from various fees which foreign students are obliged to pay.

The phenomenon of international student mobility has gradually become an important factor that necessitated changes in the organisational, legal and financial resource frameworks for the functioning of universities and other institutions of higher education. Consistently the university, national and regional approaches to the extent, depth and intensity, scale of these changes were formed. Therefore, today the universities of different countries use different practices regarding organizational, legal and regulatory, informational support, promotion and implementation of international mobility of students. In view of this, it is valuable and useful to study the experience of universities and institutes in the European countries in terms of good management practices of international mobility of students. That is why the aim of our research was to assess the readiness of European universities to accept international students and to find good practices in this regard.

Material and Methods

In our study we applied desk research analyses on problems in various universities in the EU countries mainly in terms of searching for good practices. We analysed information collected from study portals, webpages of universities in 24 European countries (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia). During the information collection process, particular attention was paid to the simplicity and ease of searching the web-site of the university; the ease of browsing the website for tabs of the departments of international relations or international cooperation; the availability of data on the number of international students in the university (including the number of students, who study within the framework of exchange programmes); information on the number of signed bilateral and multilateral international cooperation agreements; the number of Erasmus partners among universities in different countries; the integration of the university into international networks and the association of educational institutions. Particular attention was paid to the availability and completeness of information about the documents submission; the academic calendar; courses schedule; the content and structure of training courses; tuition fees; time and the content of Orientation Days (Week); language courses; access to accommodation in the residence halls; instructions for students before and after arrival at the host university; details of visa procedures; availability

of information leaflets; details of health insurance; contact details of Institutional Erasmus+ Coordinators at the university; information on the mentor programme; the Erasmus Student Network; student benefits on public transport; preventing sexual violence and discrimination. However, the main focus was on identifying good practices in universities in welcoming international students and sending local students abroad.

Data on the number of international students enrolled in European countries both in long-term and short-term studies, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees was used to assess the level of international mobility of students in different countries. In addition, the values of low specific indicators – net flow of mobile students, inbound mobility rate, outbound mobility ratio – were analysed.

According to the definition of UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the net flow of mobile students is the number of tertiary students from abroad (inbound students) studying in a given country minus the number of students at the same level from a given country studying abroad (outbound students). Inbound mobility rate is the number of international students in a given country in percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country. Outbound mobility ratio is a number of students from a given country studying abroad in percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country.

The classification analysis was carried out using the STATISTICA package of applied statistical programs.

Results

The European educational space dates back to the early middle ages. Nowadays it is represented by a wide range of universities and institutes. According to the uniRank database in Europe in 2020 there were currently 2,725 higher-education institutions with over 20 million local and international students.

Currently we are witnessing a worldwide increasing trend in the number of students (about three million per year) and host universities involved the international mobility process. Similar trends are intrinsic to the European educational landscape. According to Eurostat, a total of 1.8 million international students studied in the European Union countries in 2018, most of them in Germany, the UK and Austria (Table 1). Also, several other countries – the Netherlands, Italy, France and Poland – are attractive for foreign students. Table 2 gives a detailed illustration of the directions and intensity of international student mobility in the European countries. We can see that 22 countries out of 35 are characterized by a positive net flow of mobile students, with the highest values of this indicator in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Turkey and Austria.

The highest absolute value of negative balance of inbound and outbound students is attributed to such countries as Slovakia, Cyprus and Greece. As for relative indicators (a percentage of the number of students in national institutions of higher education), the highest degree of internationalization of the universities is in Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Cyprus, the UK, Switzerland, Austria and the Czech Republic. The highest intensity of outbound student mobility ratio is identified for Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Slovakia, Ireland and Bulgaria.

The results of the cluster analysis (Figure 1) show that European countries can be classified into three groups, each of which in turn is divided into a number of sub-groups based on a set of indicators of international mobility of students. A separate cluster is formed by Luxembourg and Liechtenstein. The second cluster comprises several European countries - the United Kingdom, Turkey, the Netherlands, France and Germany. The third cluster is the largest in terms of the number of members and is divided into four sub-groups. The first subgroup is represented by countries with relatively high positive values of net flow of mobile students, the second one with medium and low values of this indicator, and the third one with high values of net flow of mobile students. The fourth sub-cluster includes only Cyprus, which stands out among others by a high degree of internationalization of local universities, and on the other hand by a large number of outbound students.

Country	Short-cycle tertiary education	Bachelor's or equivalent level	Master's or equivalent level	Doctoral or equivalent level	Tertiary education level 5-8
Belgium	1154	14253	7984	1169	24560
Bulgaria	n.a.	4070	9157	368	13595
Czechia	44	19099	14770	3078	36991
Denmark	4100	10140	11057	2034	27331
Germany	0	53019	61962	14700	129681
Estonia	n.a.	1441	1060	243	2743
Ireland	209	2902	1456	1005	5572
Greece	n.a.	18444	284	282	19010
Spain	1586	10113	12076	3919	27694
France	2345	12923	19908	6326	41502
Croatia	0	2372	1924	300	4596
Italy	522	28801	16870	1636	47829
Cyprus	123	2453	1592	175	4343
Latvia	63	1117	2526	158	3864
Lithuania	n.a.	1612	1210	45	2867
Luxembourg	75	653	1526	398	2652
Hungary	106	9267	7550	662	17585
Malta	76	241	482	21	820
Netherlands	0	40695	17116	3315	61126
Austria	668	33237	25521	5178	64603
Poland	0	25234	16373	528	42135
Portugal	34	1380	2732	803	4949

Romania	n.a.	8792	10462	413	19667
Slovenia	223	1554	1191	204	3172
Slovakia	31	4917	4844	594	10386
Finland	n.a.	3393	2251	1544	7188
Sweden	24	3065	6401	2809	12299
United Kingdom	3759	100265	35294	16205	155523
Iceland	46	396	247	143	832
Liechtenstein	0	337	236	146	719
Norway	46	3161	1942	921	6070
Switzerland	0	16222	12853	10404	39479
North Macedonia	n.a.	2439	449	148	3036
Serbia	n.a.	7347	2620	628	10595
Turkey	1571	12399	3876	842	18688

Table 1 International mobile students enrolled in European countries in 2018 (Note: n.a. – data is not available)
 Source: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_mobs02&lang=en

Country	Code	Net flow of mobile students	Inbound mobility rate	Outbound mobility ratio
Belgium	BE	30028	10,49	3,08
Bulgaria	BG	-9938	6,41	10,62
Czechia	CZ	32433	13,61	3,75
Denmark	DK	27353	10,71	1,91
Germany	DE	189200	9,97	3,92
Estonia	EE	725	9,59	8,01
Ireland	IE	7309	9,64	6,48
Greece	EL	-12771	3,43	5,10
Spain	ES	28878	3,46	2,05
France	FR	130135	8,77	3,80
Croatia	HR	-4740	3,04	5,92
Italy	IT	30657	5,62	4,01
Cyprus	CY	-15221	23,90	56,17
Latvia	LV	2453	9,27	6,26
Lithuania	LT	-4095	5,33	8,79
Luxembourg	LU	-8220	47,74	164,45

Hungary	HU	19467	11,41	4,54
Malta	MT	374	9,95	7,50
Netherlands	NL	86455	11,69	1,97
Austria	AT	53745	17,49	5,00
Poland	PL	28003	3,64	1,77
Portugal	PT	13048	7,89	4,23
Romania	RO	-8422	5,40	6,97
Slovenia	SL	255	4,47	4,17
Slovakia	SK	-19875	8,03	21,79
Finland	FI	12356	8,05	3,86
Sweden	SE	14939	7,17	3,71
United Kingdom	UK	413093	18,32	1,58
Iceland	IS	-1872	8,02	18,51
Liechtenstein	LI	-334	88,4	127,68
Norway	NO	-4999	4,23	5,96
Switzerland	CH	37809	17,70	5,37
North Macedonia	MK	-2608	5,15	9,49
Serbia	RS	-4388	4,61	6,15
Turkey	TR	77592	1,66	0,63

Table 2 Net flow and rates of international mobile students
 in European countries in 2018
 Source: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

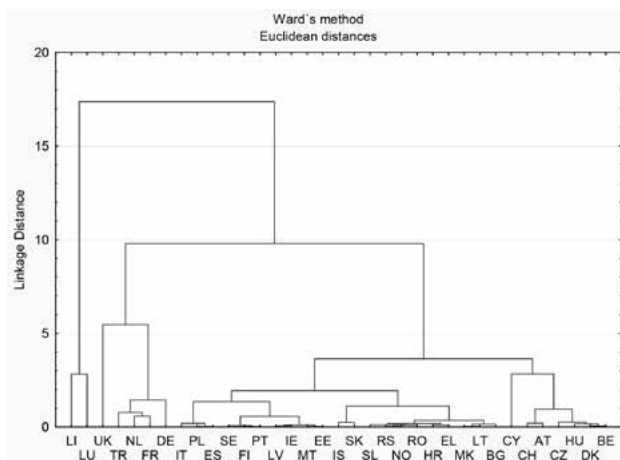


Figure 1 Dendrogram of a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis of European countries in terms of international student mobility

The results of our cross-country analysis of the state of international student flows in Europe are taken into account in the desk search for good practice in facilitating international students' mobility. When looking for good practices of welcoming international students our attention was primarily focused on the universities in countries with a positive balance of the international student flow, and when identifying good practices of sending local students to study abroad, we paid attention to the countries with a negative balance of the international student flow.

The desk research has identified a variety of good practices in terms of purpose, scope and required resources that are used in European universities to facilitate international students' mobility. A small part of them is shown in Table 3.

Country	University	Good practices
1. Arrival of a student from abroad		
Austria	FH Vorarberg	“Film about experiences of foreign students”
Belgium	University Antwerp	“Ice Breaking Week”
Croatia	VERN University of Applied Sciences	Brochure “Welcome to Zagreb. Incoming Students’ Information Guide”
Germany	Georg-August University in Gottingen	“Virtual guide to the university”
Serbia	University of Belgrade	Online software platform “MobiOn”
2. Language adaptation within the university		
Lithuania	Vilnius University	“Lithuanian Language Summer Course”
Luxembourg	University of Luxembourg	“Learning in tandem”
Serbia	University of Kragujevac	“Centre for Serbian as a Foreign Language”
3. Integration in a new environment, well-being in the local community		
Croatia	Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek	“Internet Portal Study in Croatia”
Germany	Freie University in Berlin	“International Club”
Serbia	University of Kragujevac	“Buddy Network”
4. Student service process – organizational aspect		
Netherlands	Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences	“Open Doors’ system”
Sweden	Stockholm University	“Coordinator for special pedagogical support”
5. Preparation of students’ travel by the university		
Lithuania	Kaunas University of Technology	“Go Abroad Fair 2021”
Netherlands	University of Leiden	“Very intuitive and information equipped website”
6. Training and other forms of improving the competences of faculty and administrative staff		
United Kingdom	The university of Edinburgh	“Student Support Professional Development Framework”
Germany	Freie University in Berlin	“International Employees Week”
Serbia	UNION University	“Language Policy”

Table 3 Good practices at European universities, which facilitate the international student mobility

For example, Vorarberg High School (Austria) website features a ten-minute film about international students’ experiences which describes benefits of studying at this institution, pro-

vides some special features of life and culture of the new country. For the quick and smooth adaptation of students to the new learning environment, University Antwerp (Belgium) conducts the “Ice Breaking Week”, which aims to familiarize foreign students with the educational process, campus, university’s authorities and local students. During this week students can get to know student facilities, learn about life in Antwerp and Belgium and get the first basics of learning Dutch language. Georg-August University in Gottingen (Germany) has a virtual guide to the university in order to familiarise international students with the faculties before their arrival. The University of Belgrade (Serbia) created an online software platform “MobiOn” which aims to facilitate the application procedure for the international students. The foreign students must use this platform in order to apply for students exchange programmes.

For a quick integration into the new environment, better communication within the university and beyond, it is useful for international students to have a basic knowledge of the local language and to improve their skills of the taught language. The Vilnius University (Lithuania) offers Lithuanian Language Summer Course for this purpose for a period of two or four weeks. Most of the courses are offered in the old campus of Vilnius University thus allowing the students to enjoy medieval courtyards and get glimpses of the Vilnius old town life during the breaks between the lectures and seminars. The Foreign Language Centre at the University of Luxembourg offers learning language in tandem. Such initiatives allow students to improve language skills of both international and local students through communication in an informal environment. The University of Kragujevac has created the Centre for Serbian as a Foreign Language. It was founded with the aim of providing an opportunity for international students participating in Erasmus+ exchange programmes who come to Kragujevac to learn and perfect their Serbian skills.

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek (Croatia) launched the Internet Portal *Study in Croatia* to provide international students with general information about their stay in Croatia. The portal offers interesting and useful information for foreign students under the headings: study in Croatia, about Croatia, peculiarities of living in Croatia, learning the Croatian language. Freie University in Berlin launched the International Club, which organises interesting events and meetings (movie nights, Christmas parties etc.) for foreign students and helps international students in their integration with local ones. A calendar of events and conventions is available at the university’s website. A very popular and often effective tool for assisting and supporting students in their studies abroad is the Buddy Network established by many European universities such as Technical University Wien (Austria), Aalborg University (Denmark) and University of Kragujevac (Serbia) etc.

Open Doors’ system was established at the Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences. It helps international students have easy access to the Lecture Rooms to conduct shorts talks with the faculty. Such system favours to create a very positive, open and friendly atmosphere of learning at the University. Good practice in the student service process at Stockholm University is providing various forms of special pedagogical support to students with long-term disabilities. Exchange students can contact the coordinator for special pedagogical support as soon as they have been accepted to the University.

Many European Universities have started interesting practices preparing students for their overseas travels. Kaunas University of Technology is organizing *Eighth Virtual Go*

Abroad Fair 2021. 41 universities from 22 countries and the companies will introduce on Zoom their opportunities and advantages. During the fair alumni exchange students can share their good practices and answer the questions. University of Leiden (Netherlands) created very informative and user-friendly website, which provides necessary information for student interested in international exchange programmes.

An electronic Student Support Professional Development Framework for staff delivering student support was developed at the University of Edinburgh by multi-disciplinary working groups. It was designed as a training suite for people working within professional services and academic roles delivering a student support function within the University. The training suite consists of both online resources and training (including face-to-face training opportunities).

Faculty from all over Europe each year take part in “International Employees Week” organized by Freie University of Berlin. During the convention current and future administrative issues (exchange of insights and good practices) are discussed. Union University (Serbia) adopted the Language Policy. The purpose of the document is to enhance language competences of both its students and faculty and administrative staff. The strategy emphasises that foreign language proficiency is a precondition for the exchange of ideas, students, faculty and researchers with partners across the globe, making it the focus of the Strategy for the Internationalization of the University.

Conclusion

Nowadays international students’ mobility is one of the most important tools for the internationalization of universities, which contributes to the development and strengthening of their competitive advantages. In recent years, the intensity of the international mobility of students has significantly increased both globally and in Europe in particular. A total of 1.8 million students from abroad studied in the European Union countries in 2018, most of them in Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria. Also, the universities of the Netherlands, Italy, France and Poland were attractive for international students.

With the help of cluster analysis European countries were classified into three groups based on a set of indicators of international students’ mobility (net flow of mobile students, inbound mobility rate, outbound mobility ratio) by the method of a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis. A separate cluster is formed by Luxembourg and Liechtenstein. The second cluster comprises the United Kingdom, Turkey, the Netherlands, France and Germany. The third cluster is the largest in terms of the number of members and is in turn divided into four subgroups. 22 European countries out of 35 are characterized by a positive net flow of mobile students.

On the basis of desk research analyses of European universities’ web pages, the list of good practices used by universities to assist international students by choice of university, direction and courses of study, provision of accommodations, adapting to the new cultural and language environment and by other organizational and educational situations was compiled. Existing experience and insights of European universities were used during the preparation of the project “Manual for the university. How to prepare for the reception of foreign students”.

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Andriy Krysovatty. Doctor hab. in Economics, Rector of West Ukrainian National University, founder of Ternopil Business School (in partnership with Estonian Business School), «Doctor Honoris Causa» D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics (Svishtov, Bulgaria). Dr. Krysovatty participated in a several-month internship in InHolland University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands), WIFI Wien (Austria), Technische Universität Dresden (Germany), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (USA), University of NORD (Norway). Andriy Krysovatty has got some extensive research experience, is an author and co-author of numerous scientific publications on problems of legal regulation and organizational support for the formation and implementation of tax policy of the state.

Research interests: tax policy, fiscal policy, internationalization of education, digitization economy, sustainable development

ORCID: 0000-0002-5850-8224

Contact: rektor@wunu.edu.ua



Yuriy Hayda. Doctor hab. in Agriculture, professor at West Ukrainian National University at the Department of Economics (delivers lectures in Microeconomic, Project analysis, Ecological Management). 2010-2014 – Dean of the Ukrainian-German Economic Faculty. Dr. Hayda possesses extensive research experience and is the author and co-author of numerous scientific publications.

Research interests: ecology and welfare state, forestry and sustainable development.

ORCID: 0000-0001-6019-9654

Contact: haydshn@ua.fm



Olha Sobko. Doctor hab. in Economics, Professor, Head of Department for Entrepreneurship and Trade at West Ukrainian National University (delivers lectures in Ecological Entrepreneurship and Eco-Logistics, Intellectual Capital Management, Innovation Project Management). 2009-2013 – Director of the Ukrainian-Polish Programme at West Ukrainian National University. She participated in the Lane Scholarship Program (2007-2008). Dr. Sobko participated in a two-week internship at the University Centre of Innovation and Technology Transfer at the University of Adam Mickiewicz (Poland), which specializes in implementing activities related to the creation of innovative and entrepreneurial attitudes of the academic community. She is an active participant in the staff mobility Erasmus+ Programme at the Wroclaw University of Economics and

Business. Dr. Sobko is the author of dozens of articles and scientific papers published in monographs, peer-reviewed scientific journals, and national and international conference materials.

Research interests: business digitization, intellectual capital, innovation economy, corporate social responsibility, sustainable ecological entrepreneurship.

ORCID: 0000-0001-8317-0563

Contact: o.sobko@wunu.edu.ua



Oleh Chukhnii. MA in Chinese and English (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv), Public Administration (Shanghai Jiao Tong University) and International Law (Ternopil National Economic University). Fluent in Chinese (HSK 6), English (CAE, IELTS, CELTA) and German. Mr. Chukhnii participated in international conferences and conventions (Yenching Global Symposium 2019, Beijing, China), leadership school – Asian Youth Leaders (National University of Singapore, 2019, Singapore) Mr. Chukhnii did internship at the Coordination Unit of the UN OCHA and Consulate General of Ukraine in Shanghai. He is a graduate of the Public Management and Leadership in the Age of Disruption program at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore (2020). Mr. Chukhnii is the author of articles and scientific papers in monographs and national and international conference materials.

Research interests: Asian studies, Chinese strategic culture, international relations and politics, integration and adaptation of IDPs, sustainable development in smart cities, and internationalization of education.

ORCID: 0000-0002-4512-8388

Contact: o.chukhnii@wunu.edu.ua



ILDIKÓ VIRÁG-NEUMANN – ANITA VERES – TÜNDE VAJDA

STUDYING TOGETHER WITH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Due to globalisation and the fast growing number of international projects and assignments companies are in some way involved in international negotiations and therefore they have to deal with intercultural issues. In recent years, for students and teachers alike, the main goals of mobility have been learning and teaching in different environments as well as learning languages and benefiting from cross-cultural experiences. The paper is based on research which analyses the instance of meeting individuals from different cultures as a source of conflict; it looks into the interactions concerned, the values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviour of the parties involved. The purpose of this study was to identify important elements that the Polish, Ukrainian, Greek and Hungarian students experienced while studying together with international students. This is based on a quantitative (online questionnaire) primary research, conducted at universities in Poland, Hungary, Greece and Ukraine. Based on the results of the research we can gain information in order to prepare to reduce cultural shock and adaptation time for foreign students in their new environment.

Introduction

In today's world the importance of international cooperation, competitiveness and marketing activities are steadily increasing. Intercultural awareness means that people are shaped by their own cultural background, and this influences how people interpret the world around them and other people's behaviour through their own standards of culture (Welzer et al., 2010).

It is increasingly important to train staff and workers in intercultural awareness and skills additionally to professional qualifications. Moreover, the mobility of students and teachers at a university plays an important role in the higher-level education process (Welzer et al., 2010). International student mobility is changing the global higher education landscape.

The majority of studies on international student mobility are concentrated on the following areas: migration, education, sociology of higher education and intercultural interactions and multicultural phenomena (Tong, 2020).

Most of the research studies on international student mobility are concentrated on the issue of migration (Wells, 2012). The aim of these studies is to understand the principles of student flows and examine the influences of the "push and pull" factors (King et al., 2010). Traditionally, pull factors are the students' desire to move abroad, while push factors are associated with those things that make them want to leave their home countries (Mazzarol et al., 2002). Li and Bray (2007) stated that home countries may also have strong pull factors to hold some students back; such as linguistic and cultural security, social and family ties, lower cost of living.

At the University of Pannonia we became conscious of the process of internationalisation in 2006 when we joined the Bologna system. Foreign students had also arrived before, but they only had participated in Hungarian courses. The university has gained significant experience in the field of internationalization over the past 14 years. The first full English language course at the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) started in 2006. For the past 14 years, FBE has also been consciously preparing to increase the satisfaction of foreign students in the field of education and to develop European-quality services. The community of foreign students is currently composed of three major areas: Individual, fee paying students; Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship owners and Erasmus+ exchange students.

The most common intercultural situation is the meeting of people socialised in different cultures, whose behaviour is determined by the values and norms that are typical of their own cultural backgrounds (Thomas, 1996).

Culture means the various ways of living, including behavioural norms, linguistic expressions, styles of communication, patterns of thinking, and beliefs (Jandt, 2004). Culture is the complexity of those transmitted value patterns, notions and other symbol systems which affect the behaviour" (Kluckhohn, 1951). Many factors play a role in understanding the meeting of cultures. Such behaviour patterns become visible when an outsider driven by different cultural norms enters the cultural community (Hall, 1960). According to Hofstede, culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes people belonging to the same group or category from the members of other groups or categories" (Hofstede et al., 2008).

The situations where people from different cultures interact impact on behaviour like perception, evaluation, decision-making and emotions. As Topcu (2005) describes, when individuals join a foreign culture as outsiders, their differences in their approach and value hierarchy become apparent (Mazzarol et al., 2002). The conflicts and communication problems may arise with difficulties of integration and with the occurrence of unusual events in the new environment (Hatch et al., 2003). The main feature of intercultural situations is that people are socialised in different cultures, so their acts are determined by the values and norms that are typical of their culture, but unknown to the other party.

There are also differences in the factors hindering integration such as the attitude and actions of the sender or host workplace organisations and universities, administrative and official issues, family relationships (or lack of those), eating and drinking habits or the everyday customs of the new medium.

A very significant aspect in the intercultural issues is the culture shock. The term culture shock was first mentioned by Kalervo Oberg in 1960 in his article as follows: "Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life". Culture shock is one of the means to understand foreign cultures. The extent of adjustment does not only depend on the negative symptoms experienced but also how they are coped with.

After arriving in a given country, foreign students find themselves in a new environment, and they must become, at least for some time, a member of a new academic community which might be different from the one they have known so far. To some extent, their well-being, problem-free existence and acceptance by an academic community will depend on an open, flexible,

tolerant and respectful attitude towards new and different things. What is also important is the proper preparation for the trip and sufficient knowledge about the culture of a given country.

Survey

This chapter presents the empirical part of the research. The main aim of the research was to explore the differences in the way of thinking and interpretation patterns of host students studying together with students of different cultural origin. The issues raised concerned the evaluation of language barriers, the possibility of improving the host students' competencies in this area, cultural differences, possible problems in contact with foreign students, clothing, culinary experience, timeliness, personal hygiene in order to better prepare academic and administrative staff for cooperation with students from various countries.

Based on a record of the students' opinions, the research questionnaires contained mostly closed-ended questions with a cafeteria of answers. The questionnaire also included open-ended questions, where the respondents could provide their own suggestions for changes/improvements to the activities undertaken by the university in supporting foreign students, and clarify various issues, for example, those related to problem situations.

Data collection process and analysis

The aim was to explore and understand how the students interpret the cultural differences they experienced in interactive situations, and what factors and values they attribute them to. In accordance with the research goals, the primary data collection method was questionnaire survey. In this research the students that took part in the survey were from the partner countries who in the past have studied together with international students.

Sample size and sample structure

Participants in the survey were the following representatives from each partner country: Hungarian (57), Polish (75), Ukrainian (54), and Greek (56). As far as the student sample is concerned, the distribution of respondents among countries was balanced but the number of fully completed questionnaires was lower (152) than the original (total) number of students surveyed (242). Partially completed questionnaires could not be taken into account in the analyses. We used descriptive statistics of selected questionnaire results, frequency of responses on the basis of collecting data from the on-line questionnaire.

The first thing we asked about in the questionnaire was the nationality of the students. As the graph shows, the number of Hungarian students who completed the survey is 34 per cent, while the second place is taken by Ukraine with 30 per cent, then comes Poland with 18 per cent of the respondents and Greece with 18 per cent of the applicants (see Figure 1).

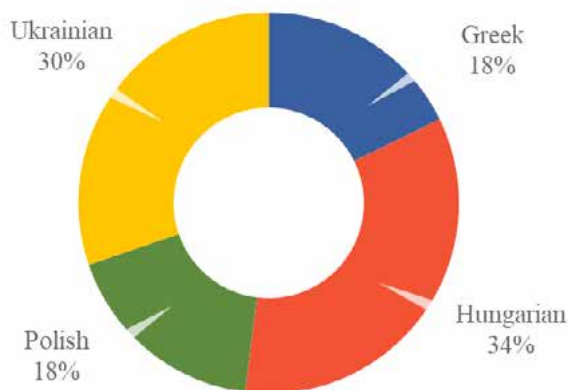


Figure 1 Nationality

Source: own compilation based on the survey

We asked the local students about their mother tongue because they may become more sensitive to communication if they study in a language different from what they speak at home in their family and their immediate environment.

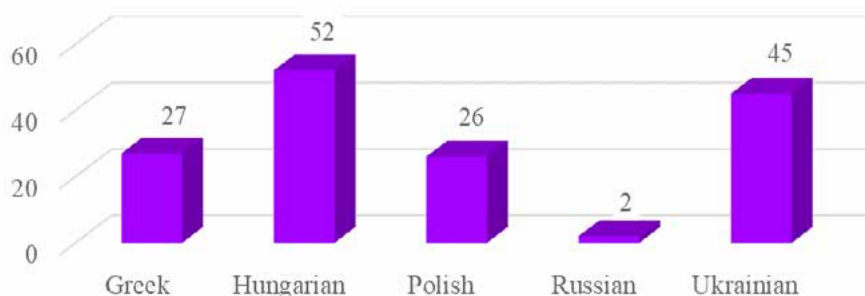


Figure 2 Mother tongue (language)

Source: own compilation based on the survey

As the descriptive frequency diagrams shows, when asked about their mother tongue 52 students answered that their mother tongue was Hungarian, while 26 students were Polish, 27 students mentioned that theirs was Greek, while 45 of the Ukrainian students recorded that their mother language was Ukrainian and also two of the Ukrainians mentioned that their mother language was Russian. It was not typical in the surveyed communities that local students spoke different mother tongues (see Figure 2).

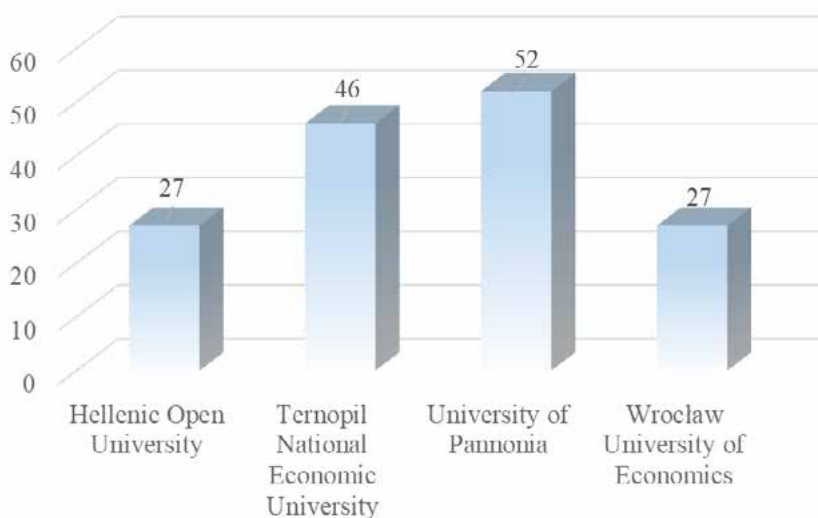


Figure 3 Home universities
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The obtained results indicate that the distribution of the students who totally completed the questionnaire from the four universities is as follows: most of them, 52 students are from the University of Pannonia in Hungary, followed by the Ternopil National Economic University (currently the West Ukrainian National University) in Ukraine with 46 students, then the Hellenic Open University in Greece with 27 students and finally the Wroclaw University of Economics in Poland with 26 students (see Figure 3).

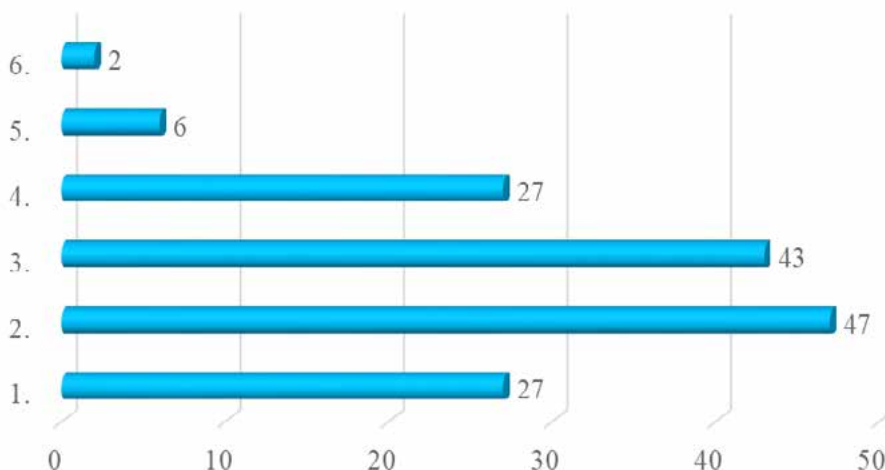


Figure 4 Year of study

Source: own compilation based on the survey

The next question concerned the distribution of students with respect to the year of study: the number of the first year students was 27, the second year students was 47, the third year students was 43, the fourth year students was 27, the fifth year students was 6 and finally the sixth year students was only 2 (see Figure 4).

For the question "Do you have personal experience or interactions with foreign students as a local student?" the answers were the following: 73.8 per cent of the students responded with a "yes" to this question and 24.2 per cent of the students had no personal experience or interactions with international students.

According to the statistics regarding the distribution of the students who took or did not take a course with international students: 57 per cent of all the students have taken courses with international students in the past and 43 per cent did not. The proportion of Hungarian students who took a course with international students was 78 per cent, while those who did not take a course with international students recorded 22 per cent. The Polish students recorded that 60 per cent of them did not take a course with international students, while the proportion of the students who took a course with international students was 40 per cent. Ukrainian students recorded 53 per cent of those who did not take a course with international students, while the proportion of those who took a course with international students was 47 per cent. Greece recorded that 56 per cent of the students did not have a course with international students, while 46 per cent of them recorded that they took a course with international students. The result shows that the Hungarian students have the greatest experience in the field of activities with foreign students in classes.

The graph of frequency (see Figure 5) shows the distribution of the students who were or were not in the same class with international students.

According to the respondents 47.3 per cent of the students were in the same class with international students, but 27.7 per cent of the students were not. 25 per cent of those surveyed did not respond to this question.

As the statistics shows, the distribution of the students who lived in a dormitory with international students was 66 per cent and 34 per cent of students did not live together with international students in a dormitory.

We were looking for the answer regarding the distribution of the students who were or were not in an extracurricular activity with international students. The majority of the students (73 per cent) did not have any extracurricular activity with international students and 27 per cent of the students did.

Several respondents (57 per cent) mentioned that they had an international student as a friend, but 43 per cent had not.

The majority of the students (93 per cent) did not interact with international students as their mentor at all.

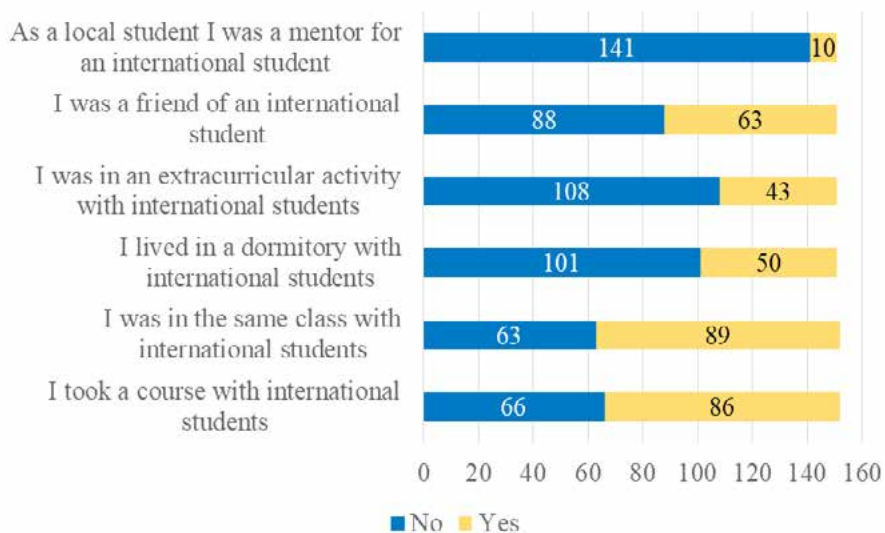


Figure 5 Type of experience or interaction
Source: own compilation

It is worth noting that 73.4 per cent of the students have interacted with foreign students at least one semester, and up to three semesters (see Figure 6).

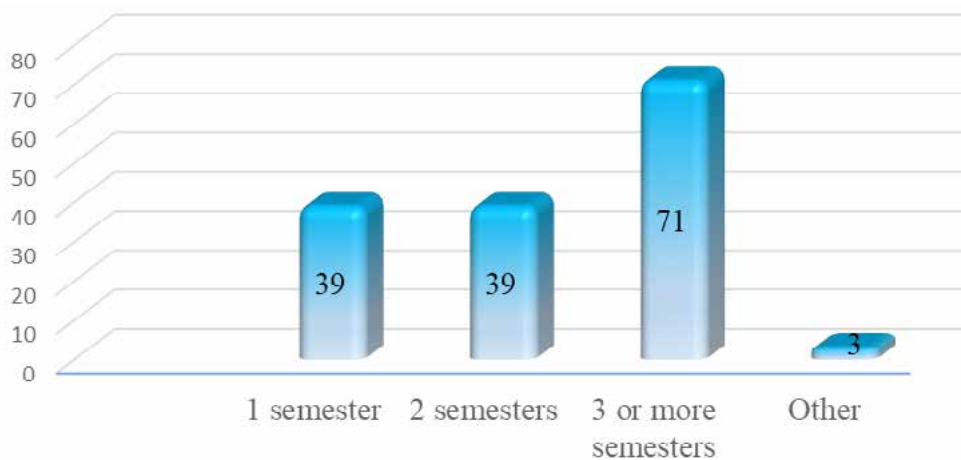


Figure 6 Interaction with foreign students (in semesters)
Source: own compilation

After examining and analysing the general data of the students who took part in the survey, we were curious about the types of interactions that local and foreign students encountered and what the meeting points were where cultural differences can be most perceptible or, in some cases, confusing. In the following, we analyse the questions answered in the questionnaire, divided into special topics.

Culinary Experience

Meals are one of the most important issues among students. The Hungarian cuisine is very tasty but heavy and not too varied according to the students. Some universities highlight this question and write chapters about it in student guides. This question is not so personal and easy to talk about so we could find many written materials.

Local gastronomy is one part of the question but we also have to talk about how the international students can follow their traditional cuisine and buy the ingredients in a foreign country. It is rather unlikely that students complain about not being able to find their national flavours or ingredients in European countries. There are international food shops where food and ingredients from other countries can be found and purchased. In some cities the local service providers try to adapt to the needs of foreigners with various restaurants and street food kitchens offering oriental and other special flavours. Attention should be drawn to the fact that certain spices and ingredients that require a special process are more difficult to obtain in a small European town (kosher, halal meats, vegetables, spices).

The universities should organize joint programs where students can cook their national dishes and offer it to other students and their hosts. These are the most popular events. At the same time, in many cases, there is a serious source of conflict, both in terms of the smell of the spices used, the awareness of the ingredients and the cooking habits. Purity depends on personality, but in many cases, kitchen use also stems from culture. We must respect each other's customs here, and at the same time respect the living space of others.

Another issue that we looked at in the questionnaire was the distribution of the students' answers related to how open or close the international students are to try the local food. Altogether 70 per cent of the local students surveyed mentioned that they were willing to taste the food prepared by an international student (see Figure 7).



Figure 7 Foreign students openness to trying the local foods
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The host students considered that the majority of the foreign students were completely open and willing to try the local cuisine. 24 Hungarian students recorded that international students were completely open and willing to try local food, three Hungarian students recorded that international students were not open at all to taste the local food, and 25 Hungarian students recorded that trying the local food varied with the culture of international students. We observed that 24 Polish students recorded that international students were completely open or willing to try local food, while one student recorded that international students were not open at all to taste the local food, and three Polish students recorded that trying the local food varied with the culture of international students. According to the results we observed that 36 Ukrainian students recorded that international students were completely open and willing to try local food, while two students recorded that international students were not open at all to taste local food, and eight students recorded that trying the local food varied with the culture of international students. In the fourth group it was observed that 20 Greek students recorded that international students were completely open and willing to try local food, while three students recorded that international students were not open at all to try local food, and four students recorded that trying the local food varied with the culture of international students.

Eating brings people closer in some ways, even from different cultures. Respect for the gastronomic habits of international students is an important factor in adapting them to the new environment.

According to our results 77 per cent of the respondents stated that he/she was willing to taste food prepared by an international student (see Figure 8).

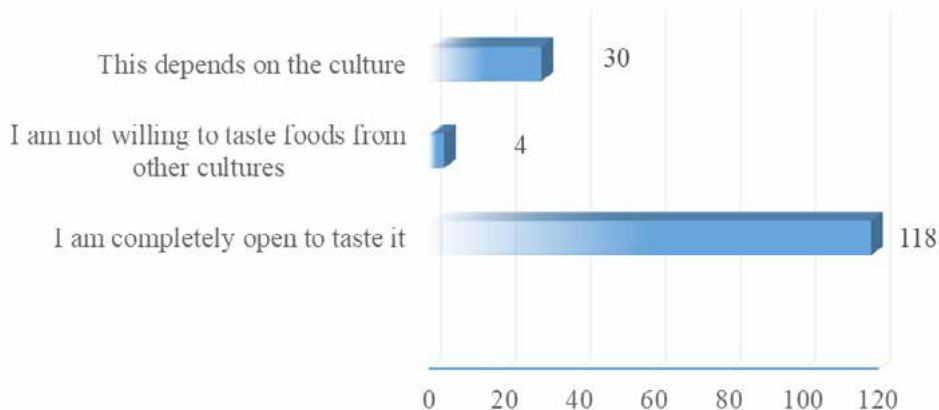


Figure 8 Willingness to taste food prepared by an international student
Source: own compilation based on the survey

Questions about the relationship between eating and time management were also included in the questionnaire. We looked for a relation in terms of how flexibly international students managed time in community life. The questionnaire included questions referring to social relationship and manifestations between the local and international students.

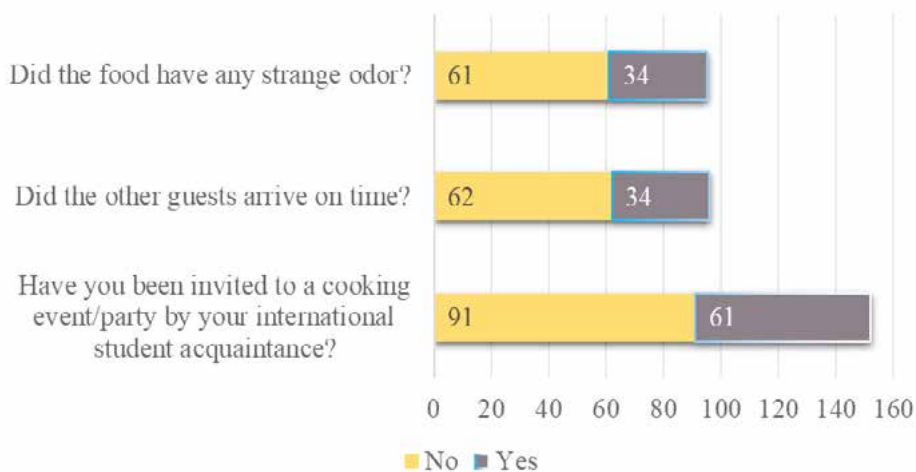


Figure 9 Invitations to a cooking event/party by the international student acquaintances
Source: own compilation based on the survey

Of those that responded to the survey, 60 per cent of the local students never experienced any cooking events, or parties with an international student. 64 per cent of the respondents did not notice any kind of strange odour of the food (see Figure 9). To the question of when the guests turned up for the event, 65 per cent of the local students stated that the international students did not arrive on time.

Clothing / Dress Styles

Dress codes regarding certain religions are prescribed by the norms of one's own community, so this topic should only be treated with great care. In any case, it is worth mentioning that Europe is inclusive in this respect as well. In a small town, people can be expected to sneer at someone who behaves out of the ordinary but they do not condemn them. Those who dress according to their national expectations should know that the European style is different, trends can be followed via Internet. The media are available all over the world.

According to the respondents, they were not confronted with a situation where a foreign student complained about the oddity of European norms in clothing, or were shocked by the democratic style. The adaptation usually takes several weeks. Those students who are planning to study abroad should be informed about the host university's dress code and clothing culture in the new country.

According to the respondents, a strange outfit is a sign of fashion trends rather than cultural issues (e.g. weird colour dyed hair, wearing a hat when entering a room). Before leaving for a foreign university, students should be prepared to follow the standards of the country where they would like to study.

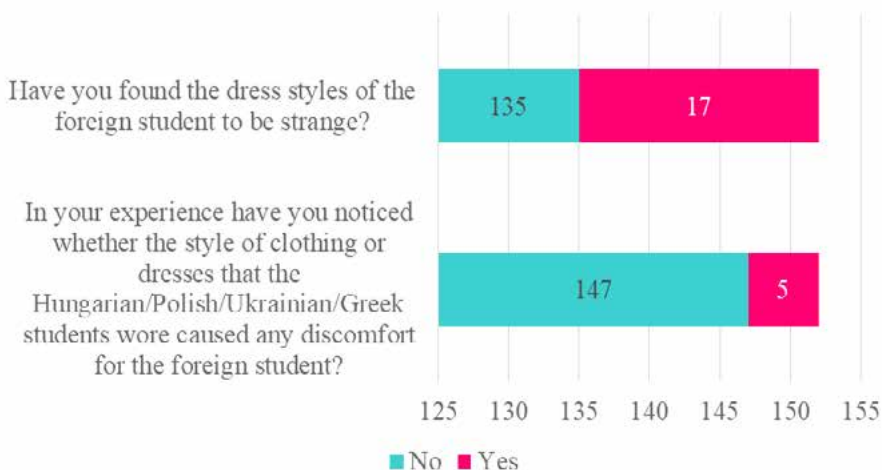


Figure 10 Discomfort in clothing
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The statistics shows the distribution of students who have noticed or have not noticed whether the style of clothing or dresses that local students wore caused any discomfort for the foreign students. Of those local students surveyed, the majority of them did not experience any problems with the clothing or the dress styles of the foreign students. In their experience, they also felt that the foreign students did not have any issues with their clothing either (see Figure 10).

The participants have not encountered extreme cases. Working in a multicultural environment with students from many different backgrounds and cultures signifies being accustomed to the odd haircut or outfit every now and then. The participants are of the opinion that one's choice of way of dressing or look is more of a personal rather than a cultural aspect.

Timeliness/Tardiness

The sense of time varies greatly in different cultures and it seems to be a critical point in communication with international students. It must be pointed out that those who study at a European university must meet the deadlines, otherwise they have to face different conflicts. They may even be left out of the education system because European culture does not allow for too lax perceptions of time. This is difficult to accept in some cultures, why this difference needs to be emphasized, as it causes the most inconvenience. People from different countries may have different perceptions of time. For some people, being a bit late is not a problem, time does not seem to matter while others greatly value punctuality and thus it is a sign of good manners.

It is crucial for students to understand that they need to pay attention to the information coming from the lecturers and study organisers at the university in the given country and take it seriously. Differences in time management should be taken seriously by students in order not to fall short of strict deadlines, but communication in this regard is the responsibility of host institutions, which is generally a major challenge. Doing things on time results in matters functioning properly and so emphasis should be given on punctuality (arriving to class on time, submitting an essay on the given date). There have been many occasions where students fail to submit their work on time due to other activities such as lectures or other course assignments. To stress the importance of time, a strict timeline should be kept, and measures should be taken – for example, penalties for late submission of work. At the same time, one should be understanding and empathic if punctuality cannot be kept due to important reasons (i.e. health reasons, family/personal emergency, etc.). Many students tend to visit different offices after their opening hours, and they do not read the information on the door or on the website. The problem of adherence to punctuality and time limits is extremely important when organizing internships/semester study processes for students. Students who have passed the compulsory selection must be informed of the inadmissibility of delays in class or in private meetings. We have been looking for the answer if the host students have experienced any instances of differences in attitude towards “timeliness”, either funny or serious, by students from various other cultures? The first question was if the students were late for class (see Figure 11). A great majority of the respondents think that has never or occurred only a few times.

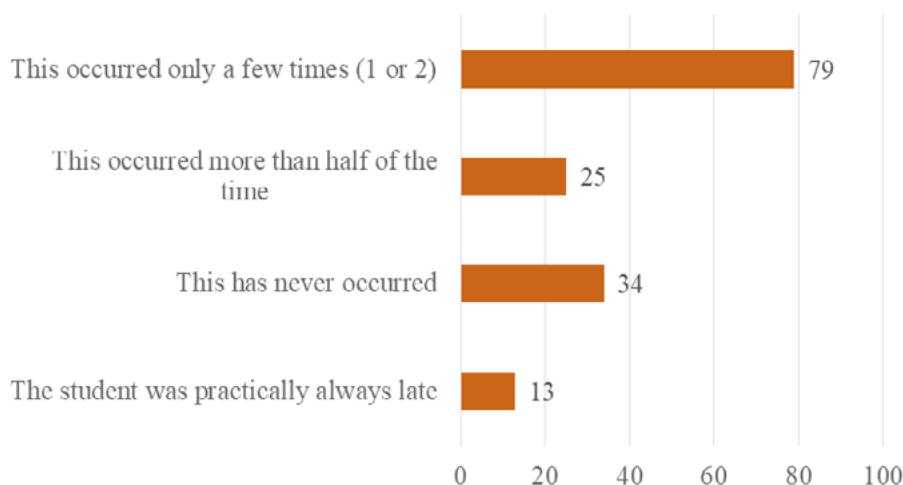


Figure 11 Attitude towards “timeliness” – late for class
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The students’ response to the question whether the students were late in handing in their assignments was that these events rarely occurred. 82 student said that it was not frequent at all that international students were late with their assignment. Only five student stated that they were always late but these bad experiences were rare and might be due to a less conscientious group composition (see Figure 12).

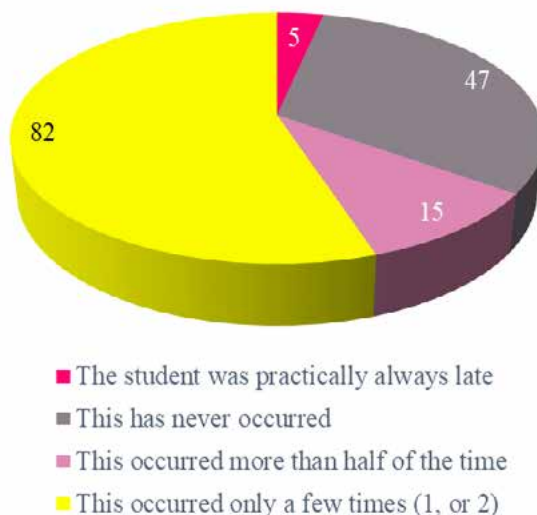


Figure 12 Attitude towards “timeliness” – late with assignments
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The students' response to the next question was that these events rarely occurred.

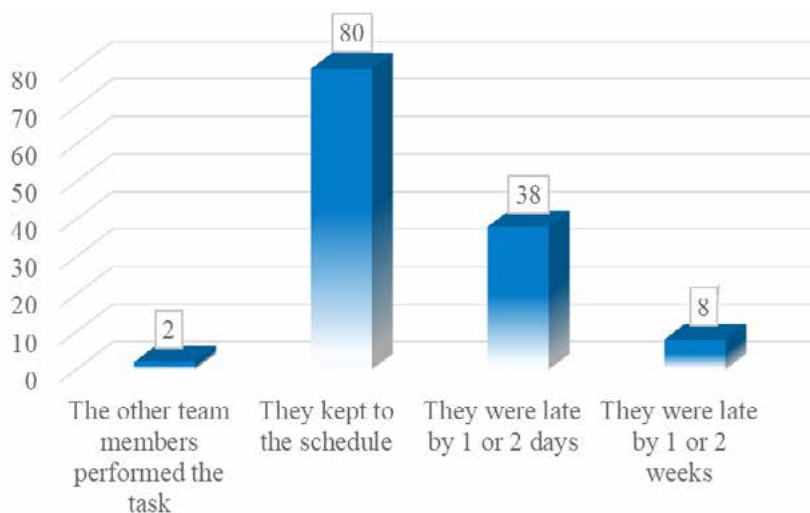


Figure 13 Attitude towards “timeliness” – keeping the schedule
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The research results showed that of those surveyed, 66.9 per cent experienced (see Figure 13) that the international students kept to the schedule imposed by the team they were part of.

Personal Space/Religion

In different cultures there are different notions about personal space (e.g. shaking hands) and students should be informed about them before their arrival. It is widely known that southern European nations are a lot more direct than others. Thinking about personal space, it is not only about the physical distance, but also about language semantics. For example, someone may say one thing, do another one, or say something which in a given culture is perceived differently. The use of personal space varies even within Europe and is highly personality-dependent. Only a fraction of the colleagues felt disturbed if someone came too close to them.

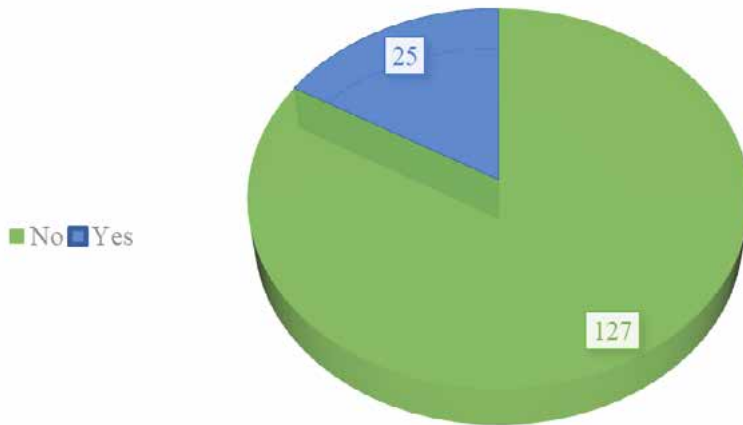


Figure 14 Personal space
Source: own compilation based on the survey

We hypothesized that one of the inconveniences when encountering foreign cultures was caused by different personal spaces. We were curious about what respondents experienced about this issue and whether non-adherence to their personal space caused them discomfort. Considering the obtained results, 83 per cent of the students had no uncomfortable feelings about their personal space being violated by an international student (see Figure 14). We further asked respondents who felt uncomfortable because of the different personal space. Of these, 16 considered the personal space designated by foreign students to be too small (see Figure 15).

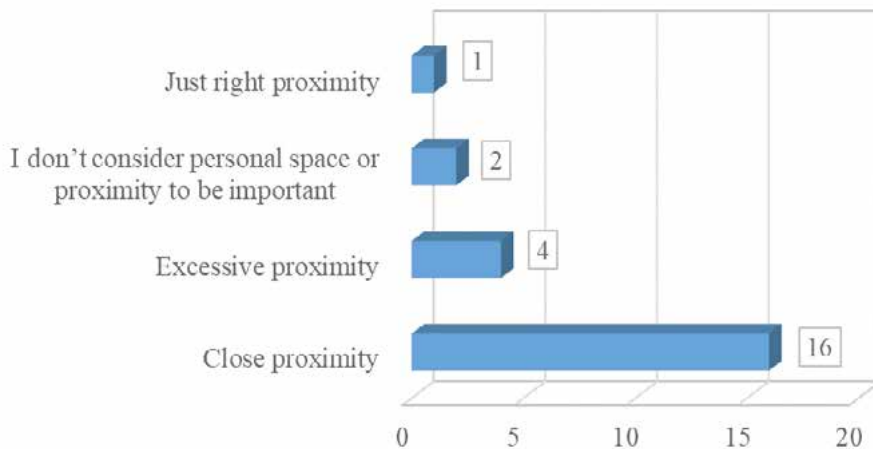


Figure 15 Proximity
Source: own compilation based on the survey

This is also a very delicate question how people relate to other religions and how the devotees find a way to practice their religion and what differences they really prepare for. Religious issues are very sensitive and subtle. Therefore, it is sufficient to inform all foreign students about the freedom of religion in the host country, as well as about the tolerance of the university staff to students' religious feelings. Most of the universities put an emphasis on that issue because the differences can cause great stress in people so they try to give an opportunity to pray and help to find a religious community for the students.

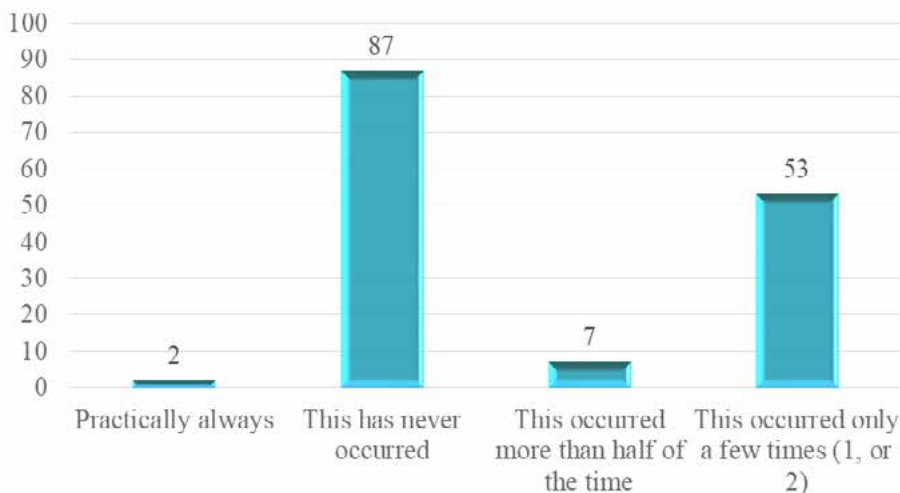


Figure 16 Religion as a topic of discussion
Source: own compilation based on the survey

Regarding the topic of religion, 87 (58 per cent of the) students said that it was never a topic of discussion. However, 53 (35 per cent) said that the topic of religion had occurred only a few times (see Figure 16).

Students arrive prepared for alternative solutions. Even if there are no proper places of worship, hostile behaviour cannot be encountered. It is definitely worth drawing attention to what religion is practiced by the majority in a particular area and whether there is a community practicing the required religion in the city. It is worth providing preliminary information.

Experience with Cultural Differences

After arriving in a given country, foreign students find themselves in a new environment, which might be different from theirs. Due to cultural differences they can feel problems, tension or experience culture shock or homesickness.

According to the research results, 95 per cent of the students who had some experience regarding cultural differences answered that they had not experienced any activity than can be considered extreme by the foreign students (see Figure 17).

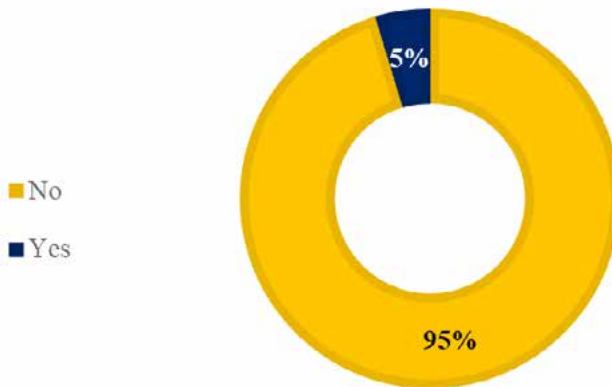


Figure 17 Activities considered extreme
Source: own compilation based on the survey

These figures show that there is no significant conflict over cultural differences. In this research, we do not have data on the extent to which existing conflicts can be attributed to interpersonal tensions and whether their intercultural background can be demonstrated.

As the statistics shows, 78 per cent of students stated that the international students had not caused any tension or conflict (see Figure 18).

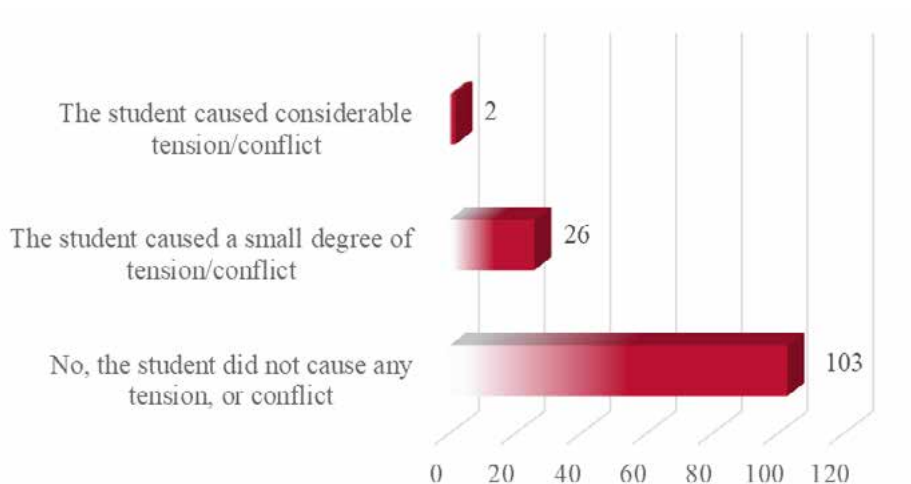


Figure 18 Student caused tension or conflict?
Source: own compilation based on the survey

Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene must have been a very sensitive topic. The next open-ended question was if the host students had any experience with international students based on cultural differences. Some of the comments made by the students are listed below:

“Chinese are very well groomed and take care of their appearance and are slim.” – PL
“They were just not showering enough, and not taking enough care about their personal hygiene.” – PL
“African students have a little different habits about hygiene.” – UA
„Some students don’t get rid of trash regularly.” – UA
“Indian hygiene just does not exist. No washing hands or not being cautious when handling food” – GR
“Some nationalities, like Turkish and Arabian, do not take baths on a regular basis and their home was dirty” – GR
“Chinese always leave a big mess after themselves in the kitchen. In some countries deodorant sprays/roll-ons are not so popular I guess, because some students can have a very unpleasant odour sometimes (mostly Chinese, Pakistani, Indian).” – HU
“Some of them take a shower only once or twice a week and they rarely wash their hands. They leave trash behind, and live in dirty dormitory rooms.” – HU

Table 1 Comments on personal hygiene
Source: own elaboration

It is extremely important to provide information on the various hygienic habits and rules. It is also advisable to give the hostel staff the opportunity to move students with different hygiene habits into separate blocks of rooms in the dormitory.

There are problems with maintaining proper cleanliness, which often results in conflicts e.g. leaving behind a dirty toilet, smoking in a dormitory etc. Students often complain about the lack of hygiene of their peers (who do not wash themselves, leave dirty dishes, or do not take away their rubbish). This problem concerns mainly foreign students, but it is a matter of personality rather than nationality (see Table 1).

There are definitely different standards in different cultures, e.g. throwing used toilet paper into the bucket, standing near the toilet instead of the toilet bowl; throwing sanitary pads in the toilet bowl; specific smells that the body emits, the use of perfumed waters that other people dislike.

Regarding the distribution of local students who had or did not have personal experience with international students based on cultural differences. 47 per cent of the students recorded that they did not have any experience with international students based on cultural differences, while 53 per cent of the students recorded that they did. They noticed in comments for example that some of the foreign students did not have a shower/bath every day or some foreign students always left a big mess after them in the kitchen. In some countries deodorant sprays/roll-

ons are not as popular as they think. 64 per cent of all students experienced some differences in personal hygiene habits and 36 per cent did not (see Figure 19).

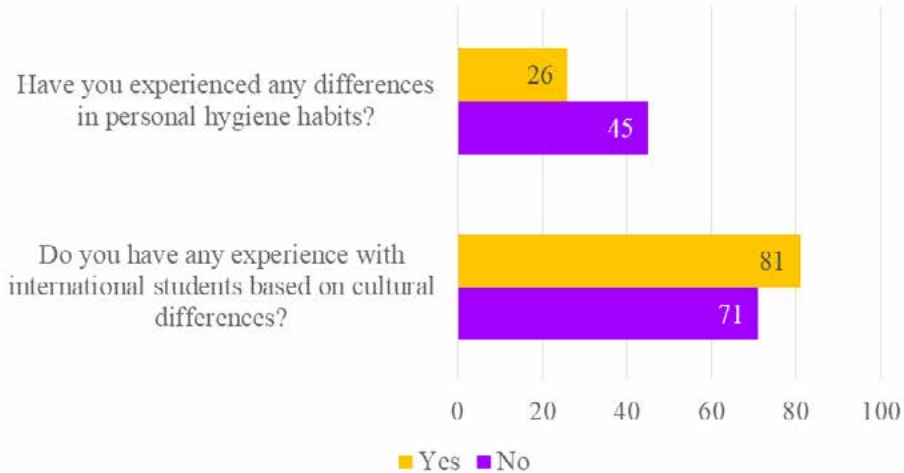


Figure 19 Personal hygiene and cultural differences
Source: own compilation based on the survey

The effect of foreign students on the surveyed students

Another set of questions concerned the effects of foreign students on the surveyed students, if they have or have not noticed any change in culture or if they have or have not become more curious about other cultures or if their openness to other culture has increased or not. Approximately 40 per cent of the students feel that their openness and their curiosity about other cultures did not change and 39 per cent of the students felt that their openness and curiosity increased towards other cultures (see Figure 20).

As the results show, regarding the distribution of local students whether they are more or less or not antagonistic towards foreigners the majority of the students responded with a “no” to both questions.

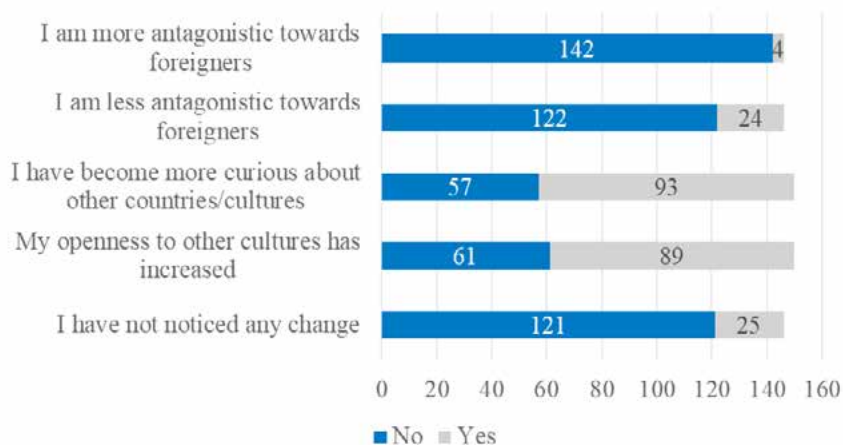


Figure 20 Culture
Source: own compilation based on the survey

Language

40 per cent of the local students recorded that their openness to hearing foreign languages increased and for them being able to speak other languages has grown in importance, while 60 per cent of them answered negatively. Approximately 80 per cent of local students recorded that they had not noticed any changes in language, while 20 per cent of them had noticed some change in language. 43 per cent of the host students recorded that the presence of foreign students at the university provided an excellent opportunity to practice a foreign language, while 57 per cent of the students recorded no (see Figure 21).

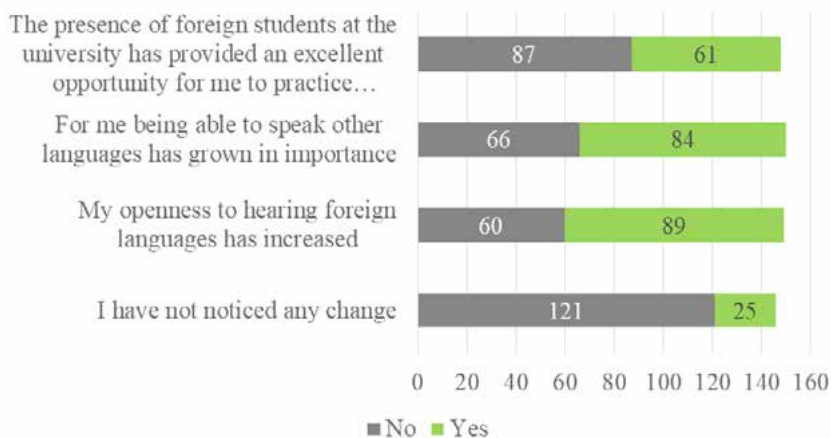


Figure 21 Language
Source: own compilation based on the survey

In addition to evaluating the importance of the above-mentioned aspects of the cultural and language differences, host students were also asked to assess their opinion with building their connections of foreign students (see Figure 22).

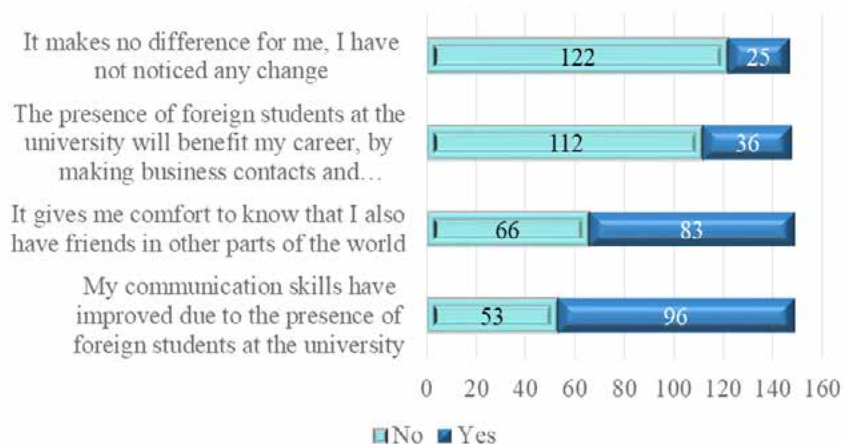


Figure 22 Building connections/Contacts
Source: own compilation based on the survey

About 65 per cent of the host students recorded that their communication skills improved due to the presence of foreign students at the university and 35 per cent answered no. About 57 per cent of the host students recorded that having friends in the other parts of the world would give them comfort, while 43 per cent students did not (see Figure 22). Only 20 per cent of host students recorded that the presence of foreign students at the university would benefit their careers, by making business contacts and connections, while 80 per cent of the respondents recorded no. About 80 per cent of the Hungarian respondents recorded that it made a difference for them and noticed some changes, while 20 per cent of the students recorded that it made no difference.

The next question referred to the feeling about being together with a foreign student in a group or class.

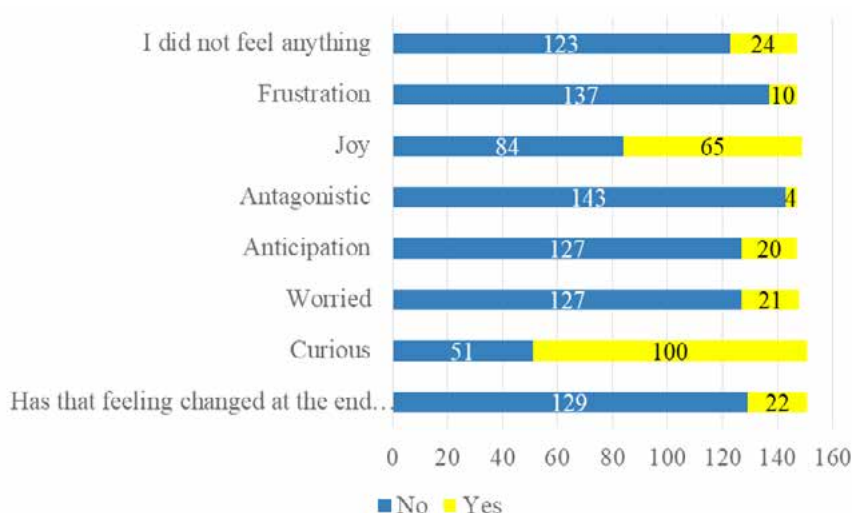


Figure 23 Group forming
Source: own compilation based on the survey

66 per cent of the host students recorded that they were curious, 43 per cent recorded joy, six per cent frustration, 13 per cent recorded worries and anticipation, two per cent felt antagonistic when they heard that there would be international students within their groups or classes. 16 per cent of respondents answered that they did not feel anything. 14 per cent of the host students recorded that their feeling changed at the end of the semester, while 86 per cent of the students recorded that their feeling did not change (Figure 23). Further studies are needed to establish and analyse the direction of the changes and the consequences that were felt.

One of the respondents wrote that before the semester she was happy to be together with foreign student fellows but she was worried because she had thought that her English was too weak to be able to communicate with them. Fortunately, they started to talk to her and they were patient with her when she was slow to express herself. Since that her English skills had improved a lot and she could realise the advantage of the international students' company in her study results also. The other host student thought he became more self-confident to speak with them and his worry disappeared. International meeting proved to be a fruitful experience and it was interesting to learn so many things about a different culture.

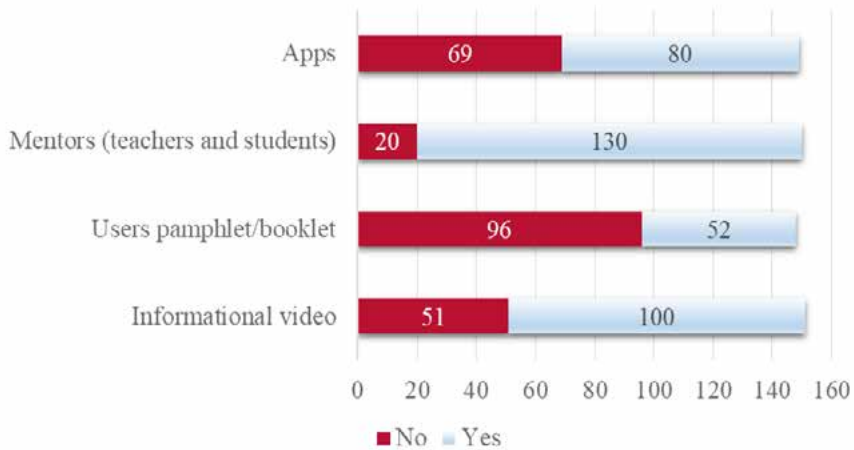


Figure 24 Information channels
Source: own compilation based on the survey

In the process of internationalization, special care must be taken to ensure that the right information reaches applicants and students. We considered it important to ask what kind of communication channels the international students – the foreign young generation – use and how to get information to them directly and most safely. On the basis of the research results 66 per cent of the host students recorded that it was possible to improve foreign students' knowledge by informational video, 55 per cent with apps, 85 per cent with mentors, and 40 per cent mentioned users' pamphlets (see Figure 24).

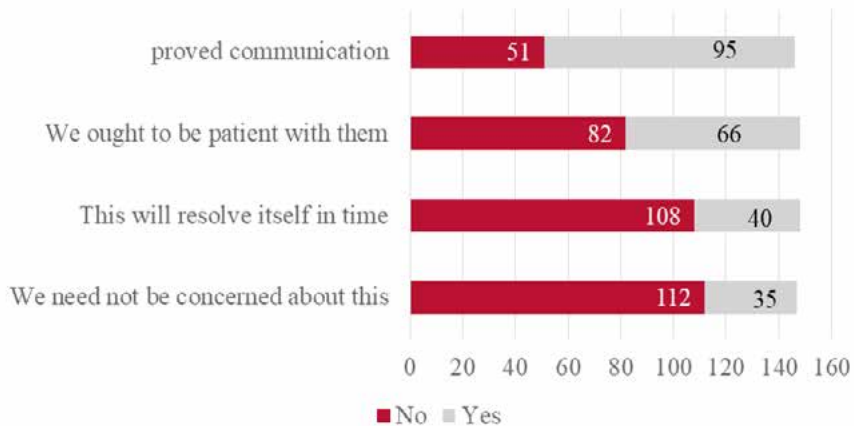


Figure 25 Reducing shock impact
Source: own compilation base

At the end of the analysis of questionnaire research results we got information about the question of how we can be of assistance to reduce the biggest shock impact on international students. 26 per cent of the host students recorded that this would resolve itself in time, while 74 per cent students recorded that this would not resolve itself in time. 43 per cent of the respondents thought that we ought to be patient with them, while 23 per cent of them recorded that we needed to be concerned about how we could be of assistance to reduce the biggest shock impact on international students. In the opinion of 63 per cent of the host students improved communication can help (Figure 25).

At the end of the analysis we consider it to be important to share the answers given to the open question. The first impression is important when we want to explore a new country and decide to choose a new and unknown community for shorter or longer stay. However, the unpleasant surprises ruin the joy of the first days, so it was important for us to know what kind of shocks the foreign students who came to us had to face upon arrival, but these results are not in this report (it has been involved into the PAPI student questionnaire). From another point of view, it should be extremely useful information when preparing a manual for international students – with the aim of helping them in preparation – what the local students feel when meeting the international students in the dormitory, in the classes or community spaces. Due to the fact that students from four countries responded the questionnaire, impressions are also reported by country but many of the opinions are general.

In the following, personal opinions of the host students are listed about the cause of the biggest shock for international students when they arrived in Hungary/Poland/Ukraine/Greece:

- It depends on the culture where they are coming from. The Hungarian language is a shock to every foreigner. Being an Erasmus student in Poland, I felt the new language was also interesting and sometimes difficult, language anyway will be one of those factors;
- The difference in culture, rhythm of life, different ways of being, culture, landscapes, other environment, other habits and traditions. The difference in the laws and rules at the university;
- How small the “cities” are, and that the majority of the population do not speak (proper) English, official online websites are not available in English;
- Firstly it is the lack of communication that international students may have with other students in case they do not know good enough English. Moreover, each of these countries has a difficult language, which could not be learned easily, and then may pose problems in their integration into society;
- Hungary is a very small country compared to China or India where most of our international students come from. People are not so open to everything and need more personal space than what they are used to;
- I don't think they are shocked, just confused because they have no knowledge about that place yet,
- It depends on the origin of the student. As far as Greece is concerned, I suppose it is the openness of the people which may be a problem for students coming from countries with more reserved communities
- Lack of tolerance for different culture.

- The comparison of host students' evaluations can help for the preparation to reduce cultural shock and adaptation time for foreign students in their new environment.

Conclusion

Our project – Stranger – was dedicated to a better formal preparation of universities for accepting foreign students as well. The purpose of this study was to identify important elements that the Polish, Ukrainian, Greek and Hungarian students experienced while studying together with international students. The main goal is to improve the university preparation for the internationalization process when preparing to receive foreign students. We believe that student interactions bring to light a number of facts that help our work with drawing problems to our attention. The Stranger project team is made up of educators who are deeply convinced that in an increasingly globalized world, internationalization is not only inevitable, but a joyful process. Science is a language that is spoken everywhere, and it is one of the primary goals of every university to enable graduates to build successful careers and be able to fit into the job market anywhere, all over the world. We can see that one of the biggest benefits of internationalization is that students learn from each other. They experience different values, behaviours, reasoning techniques, which help them to feel at home anywhere in the world. We wanted to create the planned manuals in the framework of the Stranger project based on experiences in which we can formulate useful advice from the opinions of our local students. We would like to thank all respondents for their participation in the project and for their contribution to the development of our internationalisation process and to helping future students in their adaption.

Based on the results of a quantitative (online questionnaire) primary research, conducted at universities in Poland, Hungary, Greece and Ukraine we will be able to reduce cultural shock and adaptation time for foreign students in their new environment.

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Ildikó Virág-Neumann. PhD is Associate Professor and the Head of the Department of International Economics (Institute of Economics) at the Faculty of Economics Sciences of the University of Pannonia. She is also the Head of the International Economics undergraduate course (BSc) and the International Economics MSc course. She worked as a research fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies (iASK), KRAFT Social Innovation Lab and also at MTA-PE (Hungarian Academy of Sciences – University of Pannonia). Networked Research Group on Regional Innovation and Development Studies. Her research fields are European Integration, International Econom-

ics and International Trade and their statistical analysis and modelling like the gravity model which has empirical success in explaining various types of flows, including migration, tourism and international trade. She got her PhD in Economics, at the University of Pannonia, Doctoral School of Management Sciences and Business Administration focusing on the Impacts of the integration on the trade of EU members-a gravity model approach. In addition to these themes, she researched other fields such as circular economy, climate change and the determinants of tourism and migration flows to the main regions of Hungary with special respect to Lake Balaton region.

Contact: virag.ildiko@gtk.uni-pannon.hu



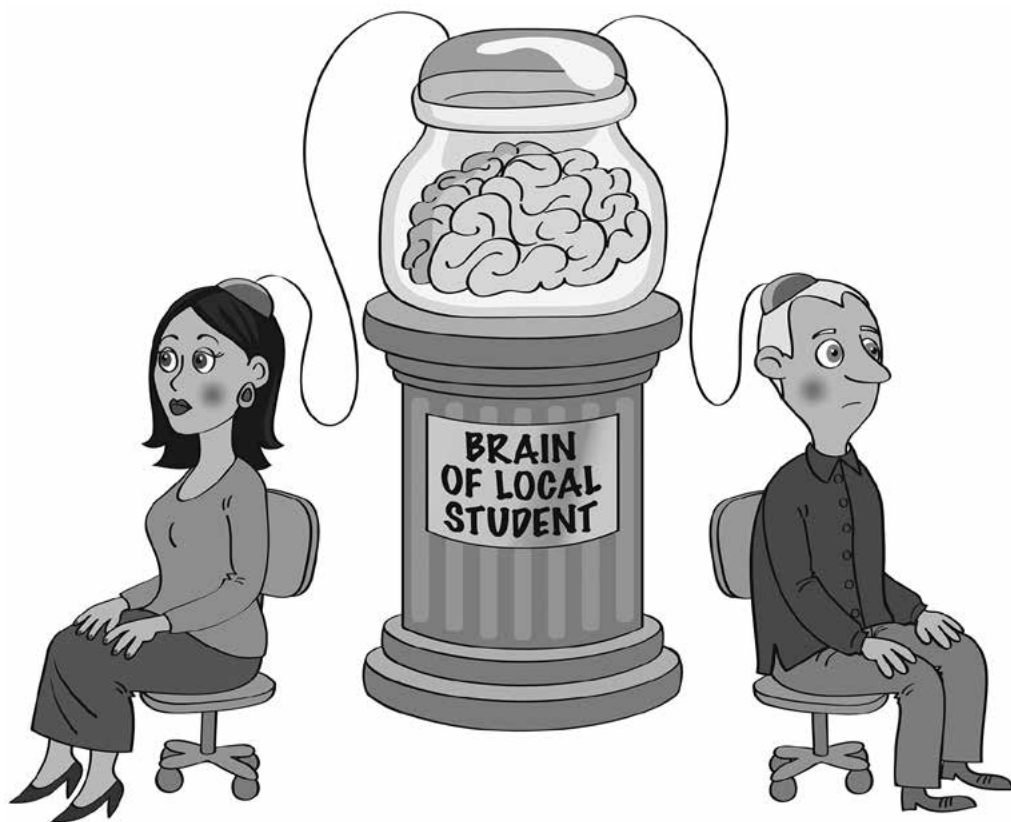
Anita Veres. PhD in Economics. Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Economics of the University of Pannonia since July 2017. She teaches in the Bachelor's and the Master's Degree programmes in the faculty of International Business Economics. As a Mentor in the "Pentor Program", she supports and involves students in the preparation of works through the National Conference of Scientific Students' Associations (TDK). Research interests: International Economics, Globalization, International Student Mobility.

Contact: veres.anita@gtk.uni-pannon.hu



Tünde Vajda, MA Economist in Leadership and Management. She is the international coordinator of the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia. She is responsible for the international recruitment and the international student services. She coordinates the study affairs of the international students as well as the inbound and outbound exchange activities. Her main areas of interest are internationalisation, cultural differences, student recruitment, student services and international marketing. She has been involved in several local and international projects in recent years focusing on internationalisation.

Contact: vajda.tunde@gtk.uni-pannon.hu



ILDIKÓ VIRÁG-NEUMANN – ANITA VERES – TÜNDE VAJDA

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF ABOUT RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The main goal of the focus group discussion is to improve the preparation of the university for the process of internationalisation. The universities need to prepare for receiving an increasing number of international students. During this process we would like to minimize the potential problems that the students and lecturers might encounter. A project – specifically the Stranger – was initiated by a team of educators from Poland, Greece, Hungary and Ukraine. The project team produced booklets to help the various stakeholders of the internationalisation process prepare. One of them is to guide foreign students through the reception process. The title of the booklet is: “What should I know before I go to a foreign study/foreign exchange?” The result of the focus group interviews helped in the development of the guide for students who want to study at a foreign university. The booklet was preceded by initial research carried out in three groups of respondents: university administration having contact with foreign students, research and didactic staff conducting classes with foreign students and students from a host country who study together with foreign students. The results of the focus group interviews were intended to identify all potential problems in the new environment that might be eliminated if students were properly prepared before embarking upon studying in a foreign university.

Focus group discussion is a technique bringing together people with mutual interests to discuss a specific topic through a moderated interaction (Morgan, 1996). It is a means of qualitative data collection. It is a qualitative research method in which a selected group of people discusses a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional, external moderator. The main aim is to understand and explain the meanings, beliefs and cultures that influence the feelings, attitudes and behaviours of individuals, and to enable the researcher to collect profound information. As Bagnoli and Clark (2010) put it “it is in the interaction between participants, rather than between participant and researcher, that generates data.”

This method has a set of ground rules that will be effective throughout the session. These ground rules can include guidelines around participation, respect and confidentiality (Moore et al., 2015). The focus group interview discussions are directed by a moderator who assures participants that their answers are all equally valid and uses an interview guide or script which helps to keep the conversation on track and ensures the topics under study are addressed. However, in moderating focus groups, the professional background is only a necessary condition for success, more important is the insight into the behaviour of people with very different backgrounds, ages, genders, thinking, status (Veres et al., 2016). The moderator typically makes an audio-tape recording of the session. The moderator asks open-ended questions which are used in many areas of the behavioural sciences, ones that cannot be answered with “yes/no”

or another single word, in order to generate as much discussion as possible. Unstructured, open-ended questions allow respondents to give answers from a variety of aspect (Nyumba et al., 2018). Closed-ended questions that require a “yes/no” response should be avoided, since these limit the amount of discussion that might take place. The researcher can start with general questions, and later move to specific questions (Moore et al., 2015). The compilation of the focus group interview questions are suggested to follow the questioning route proposed by Krueger and Casey (2009), in five steps: opening, introductory, transition, key and ending questions.

The facilitator should create an environment that encourages members to share their views and should repeat participants’ answers to make sure that the members of the focus group understand what they are saying. The moderator should ask follow-up questions to get more information about a participants’ answers as well. Generally it is a good idea to give an opportunity to group members to introduce themselves and talk a little about their lives. This method can help “break the ice”. The moderator communicates to participants that the goal of the focus group interview is to hear everyone’s opinions. They can have divergent views, as focus group interviews are not meant to achieve consensus (Nyumba et al., 2018). Participants do not have to agree on all topics discussed, disagreement may reflect some interesting themes to explore further. The moderator needs to keep the conversation in the right channel. The facilitator rephrases a question if it is not clearly understandable and uses prompts to elicit more detailed responses or periodically reflects back a summary to ensure that he/she understands participants correctly. Qualitative research and, in particular, focus-group interviews generate large amounts of data. An interview could easily take five to six hours to transcribe in full. Thus, a central aim of data analysis, according to Robson (1993), is to reduce data and he also points out that data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating and recombining the results.

Data Collection and Analysis

The focus group interviews were preceded by initial research carried out among the research and didactic staff that in the past had conducted classes with foreign students. The research information was collected through focus group interviews throughout January 2020. The participants were split into two groups to ensure adequate diversity. Because the results of this study are derived from focus group discussions, a few words about the focus group methodology are in order. Focus groups refer to a “nondirective technique that results in the controlled production of a discussion of a group of people” (Flores – Alonso, 1995, p. 84); a moderator facilitates the discussion. Participants in focus group discussions constitute a goal-directed sample of the target population (Lederman, 1990), and the number of participants in a focus group can range from six to twelve people. We audiotaped the focus group discussions while taking detailed notes. After each focus group session, we listened to the tapes and expanded our notes independently. We then each examined the notes for major themes/points discussed and coded and categorized the themes/points. The members of the focus group were lecturers at the University of Pannonia, Hungary, who have typically two to three years’ teaching experience

and also other teachers that have at least one semester experience of teaching international students. We used two rounds of focus group discussions in the study with 12 participants. These focus group discussions lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. These faculty members were invited because of the relatively large numbers of international students in their programmes and because of their experience working with international students. We invited faculty members from programmes with robust or growing international student enrolment.

The purpose of the first group of questions was to collect personal and general experiences of the faculty regarding international students. Keep in mind that we are just as interested in negative comments as we are in positive comments. Sometimes the negative comments are the most helpful ones to improve our programmes.

1. For how many years did they work as a teacher with foreign students? Which modules did they teach?
2. Have you heard about the internationalisation process, programmes? What did you think about it? What is your impression of the mobility of students? What do you like, or do not like about the programme? Have you noticed that your university has a new initiative regarding internationalisation?
3. What do you think are the advantages of having foreign students study at our university?
4. Would you like to attend an intercultural training? If you have any notable experience, would you share it with the group?

After summarizing the answers, it can be said that studying at a foreign university can be greatly beneficial for foreign students, because it prepares them to lead an independent life, where they have to solve problems on their own without help from their families. It teaches them how to take on responsibilities, gives them a feeling of autonomy and independence and provides them with a good attitude towards working.

International mobility also benefits instructors indirectly as well as the students through learning, personal development and networking. By taking a trip abroad, the instructors also undergo a change in their attitudes by becoming more open as well as gaining valuable experiences. We can all learn a great deal from our experiences abroad, as well as from the backgrounds and points of view of the international students whom we are hosting. These can contribute significantly to the value of the curriculum and can benefit both the students as well as the instructors. Our way of thinking can change and our horizons can be broadened by getting to know students from another culture.

It is fundamental for the operation of universities to accept foreign students, however, some economic and social problems may arise as a result. (e.g. the pandemic problems arising from Wuhan, China). We need to prepare for the possibility of various events, and react accordingly, with a protocol that can properly remedy potential global problems. Between 1992 and 1997 there were only sporadic occurrences of foreign students at our university. Summer camps were also held in that time period. Since 1999 more and more foreign students have come to the country, and some subjects were also taught in foreign languages (specifically English). The first full English language degree programme was launched in 2006 and since then the role of internationalisation has got a larger emphasis.

A foreign university can become a potential partner both in the education and the development of common subjects. At the moment, we are not exploiting these opportunities adequately. There needs to be more follow-up, contact and liaison need to be developed. Internationalisation is especially important in research, because on the one hand, it can be a potential source of financing, and on the other hand, the methods and form of publications may change in the future. In international projects we can also meet international students while conducting the research.

It would be important to offer intercultural training possibilities for the instructors because they need to know how to cope with the cultural differences. If they know better the main characteristics of the different cultures and recognise the cultural background of the foreign students, they will better understand how they tend to socialize and what attitudes they have. It is not the responsibility of the host to adapt. However, in some cultures there may be very strong barriers that cannot be removed. Educators need information and help to know what techniques they should use. It would be important to provide training in culture, attitudes about knowledge transfer and sensitivity.

The second set of questions targeted the individual experiences of the group members.

1. What are your general feelings about foreign students? When did you first meet foreign students in your life? What words or phrases come to your mind when you think of foreign students? What do you like best about them?
2. Was it your own decision to get into the programme dealing with foreign students? Do you have extensive experience with international students?
3. Think back on all the years that you have participated and tell us your most enjoyable memory.
4. What are your problems or concerns, specific issues, main obstacles you have faced when teaching foreign students? What could be the cause of this problem?
5. Do the students dare to ask questions during classes? Can you provide details?
6. Compared with other teaching materials you may have used, have you felt that you need some different materials or innovative methods for teaching foreign students?
7. Talk about any positive experience you have had with foreign students.
8. Talk about disappointments you have had with foreign students.

One of the highlighted issues that resulted from the focus group interviews was that foreign students arrive at different times of the year. In the United States student orientation days are held at every university, where the students receive information such as local customs and learn about what the expectations are from them. However, in Hungary orientation is held only once per semester, and foreign students that arrive at a late date miss out on it, and in general do not even receive information afterwards about what has been said during the orientation. On the other hand, if this event were held later, foreign students may not be delivered the necessary information in a timely manner. Individual assistance, preparation and employment of host mentors would be the solution for the reception and to provide information, but these host students would therefore need financial compensation, which requires a source of funding. It could be a positive experience if the incoming students were met by the host mentor at the air-

port. Appropriate grace periods should also be given for integration. The group has suggested that the deadline for student enrolment should be specified more clearly and strictly.

Students often do not know what to expect, so it would be important for them if the university developed uniform rules and guidelines. In the case of the Chinese students, the use of spokespersons might be helpful. These would be the people whom their classmates would listen to, who are able to pass on these norms to them outside of class.

Presentation skills can be developed individually and in groups by giving presentations. This can also have a negative consequence, as it has happened that even after the presentation the student did not really know what he was talking about and could not answer the question asked by the teacher. Some students are able to memorize the material, without really understanding it, and therefore do not know what it is about. Or they may ask their fellow students (in their native language) about what question the teacher just asked. It would be important to make a preliminary assessment of learning style and language skills, by means of social media.

It is often difficult to deal with the fact that foreign student participants give no feedback on whether they understand what the instructor is saying. It has happened more than once during exams that the smartest foreign student stood up and dictated the questions in their native language, thereby helping other students who may not have understood the question. Sometimes they even dictated the solution to the questions. Language conflicts are a very serious problem, their communication is difficult to follow as they communicate with each other in their native tongue. If they are asked by the instructor in English whether the material taught is not clear, they may only listen in silence without replying, indicating that they may not have understood it. Others may be more rigid in their education. If asked for feedback about the instruction, they act excessively polite. They would not admit that they don't understand, as they do not want to put the teacher in such a position that they were not able to present the material in an understandable way.

Hungarian and international students learn much more from each other by studying together. It is very important that they work as a team and also practice the English language. Often foreign students congregate in groups and this can also cause problems. For example, in the tourism management class, a very good Chinese group arose, they understood each other well, and they were happy for each other at the graduation ceremony as well. Hungarian students usually enjoy having foreign peers, as they can learn many interesting things from each other.

It is difficult to achieve the same academic level in courses taught to Hungarian students versus foreign students, because their knowledge background can be quite different.

There have been cases where despite years of learning English, some foreign students still have not achieved an adequate knowledge of the language, and it was difficult to understand them. This language difference can be an obstacle and has a negative effect on education and training. The question is how language barriers can exist if there are interviews during student recruitment. It would be important to assess language skills during the interview so that these difficulties could be eliminated. It is worth putting more emphasis on the conversations through social media (Skype, etc.) to help with the proper filtering process.

It has also been noted that some foreign students expect us to make it easier for them to get ahead without putting an effort into it. Expecting the same results from all foreign students can backfire because the attitudes of foreign students are different. Some students can be of-

fended if the teacher gives everyone the same grade. Several problems stem from differences in the education systems abroad. In some cultures the students only listen during the lectures and they accept what is required, they take exams, but do not interact during the classes. However, in the Hungarian higher education system the teachers expect the students to play a more active part in the class.

The third set of questions is regarding the behaviour and habits of international students towards cultural differences.

1. What do you think about the way foreign students dress, their hygiene habits and their eating habits? Have you ever had to talk about these subjects with them? Did the communication cause uncomfortable feelings? How would you prepare a foreigner for different eating and dressing habits they will encounter in a new environment?
2. What is your experience regarding your comfort level with personal space during encounters with foreign students? What could you advise to other teachers and/or foreign students?
3. When you communicate with foreign students, have you noticed any differences or peculiarities in their behaviour?
4. What are your experiences about their attitude regarding time management? What did you specifically notice? E.g. are they late for exams or lectures, do they tend to miss assignment deadlines?
5. Can a foreign student approach you with academic or personal problems?
6. Can you give examples about language barriers you may have encountered?
7. Have you experienced any differences in using social media platforms between what you typically use versus what the foreign students use?
8. Are there any other specific issues, concerns or problems you have faced in behavioural differences that made you feel uncomfortable?

Foreign students are very sensitive, they often get upset if the situation is not what they expect. We need to learn to handle these issues properly. Some foreign students are excessively polite and smile a lot, but it is possible that their smile may not be genuine. They often give gifts, which should be seen as a kind of gesture, not as a “bribe”, especially before the exam.

Some students have a habit of walking in and out of the classroom while the class is in session. This can be confusing and frustrating to the rest of the class and the lecturer, but in some countries it is perfectly permissible and accepted. Some students are very tardy on a regular basis, but they are outraged that they cannot sign the attendance catalogue.

Students would often circumvent the rules, expecting us to solve their problems as regards either communication or shopping. The opportunity is given to the teacher to explain the material or the unclear parts as part of a catch-up discussion.

Life in the dormitory is also a very important issue. What is being cooked, what they eat and what cooking odours are typically encountered. Foreign students often find it difficult to adapt to local customs. Foreign students are often separated from the other students, which makes it difficult for them to adapt. Our university should adopt good practices from other universities where the orientation lasts an entire month. During that time they can be told

where the shops are, where the doctor is [...] and who they can turn to for any reason if it is necessary.

The fourth group of questions focused on cultural differences.

1. Have you felt any problems or tension due to cultural differences? Do you think that you need different teaching methods for foreign student?
2. Have you ever noticed if the foreign students experienced culture shock or homesickness?
3. Describe if in your opinion there are any differences how foreign students relate to other religions? Can they practice their own religion publicly?

Foreigners generally expect Hungarian students and teachers to adapt to their religious ways and holidays. Likewise, they are not familiar with the local religious holidays. For example, a student wanted to meet to discuss some topic on Easter Monday because it was more convenient for him on that day. They are familiar with the local customs and traditions so the host university needs to inform them about the local customs. Likewise, this is quite important in both directions.

In the situations where there is culture shock, the question arose whether there may be a need for a psychologist. To what extent do the changes affect them both physically and emotionally? There was also a case where the student had to be taken to a doctor because he/she could not make him/herself understood, but obviously needed help. It is important that there be a person who can speak English at some level and can communicate with them properly.

International students took the initiative to organize a Holiday celebration for themselves. But also the university provides programmes for them, like for example the “Taste the World” event, where each ethnicity attending the university can introduce their traditional foods. However, besides activities through the local University it would benefit the students if there were also activities through the local community. Another good initiative is the Mentor program, where students can organize programmes for each other. It was suggested that several programmes should be organized where we can involve foreign students as well in programmes originally organized for Hungarian students.

The fifth group of questions was to assess the positive effects of admitting international students.

1. What do you think are the advantages? What do you like best about the international programme?
2. Are you interested in taking part in an international programme? Do you support the idea of incoming short-term students and staff that would provide support to international students at the departmental level?

The reception of foreign students have a noticeable positive effect on the diversity at the university. Further development of an alumni programme would help to identify and endorse talented students who could pave the way for faculty at a foreign university. Further development of the international alumni network would help to promote our programmes on international level and could also help to make them available for other talented students. Graduates can return to their home country as the ambassador of the Hungarian higher education and also the Hungarian culture. They can recruit with sharing their experiences and they can

strengthen the reputation of the Hungarian higher education, focusing on their alma mater. It would be worthwhile to the university and fellow students to keep in touch with former foreign students. Further contacts would also be beneficial for the university and fellow students, as they could contribute to professional development, networking and knowledge sharing and further university contacts could be established as well.

Conclusion

It was determined that the focus group discussions with faculty members allowed us to examine international students' mobility from different perspectives. The results of the discussions and questions during the interviews have been found to be useful for improving the preparation of the university for the process of internationalization. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to explore the gaps that international students face in a foreign environment. We wanted to understand the shortcomings in connection with the international students from the lecturer's perspective, which typically prove that they were not sufficiently prepared to integrate into the university environment abroad. During the focus group interviews, it was clear that the lecturers of the Faculty were open to the issue of internationalisation and that they experience far more benefits from the presence of foreign students than how much they have to deal with hardships in this area. They see an opportunity for development in the education of international groups, both linguistically and culturally. Our instructors reported that they were happy to involve foreign students in the research as they represent a whole new perspective. Instructors believe that it is a brave thing for international students to study and live so far away from their families and are happy to help with their better preparation.

The results from the focus group interviews have helped to prepare a booklet to guide foreign students through the reception and integration process to better prepare them for studying in another country. Further research goals include understanding how the academic staff experience and interpret the cultural discrepancies in the interactions, how to improve their relationship with international students and how to pay more attention to individual needs of the students. It can be also interesting what suggestions they have to improve the working environment relating international students.

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Ildikó Virág-Neumann, PhD is Associate Professor and the Head of Department of International Economics (Institute of Economics) at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia. She is also the Head of the International Economics undergraduate programme (BSc) and the International Economics MSc course. She worked as a research fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies (iASK), KRAFT Social Innovation Lab and also at MTA-PE (Hungarian Academy of Sciences – University of Pannonia) Networked Research Group on Regional Innovation and Development Studies. Her research fields are European Integration, International Economics and International Trade and their statistical analysis and modelling like the gravity model which has empirical success in explaining various types of flows, including migration, tourism and international trade. She got her PhD in Economics, at the University of Pannonia, Doctoral School of Management Sciences and Business Administration focusing on the impacts of the

integration on the trade of EU members – a gravity model approach. Besides these themes she researched other fields such as circular economy, climate change and the determinants of tourism and migration flows to the main regions of Hungary with special respect to Lake Balaton region.

Contact: virag.ildiko@gtk.uni-pannon.hu



Anita Veres, PhD in Economics. Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Economics of the University of Pannonia since July 2017. She teaches in the Bachelor's and the Master's Degree programmes in the faculty of International Business Economics. As a Mentor in the "Pentor Program", she supports and involves students in the preparation of works through the National Conference of Scientific Students' Associations (TDK). Research interests: International Economics, Globalization, International Student Mobility.

Contact: veres.anita@gtk.uni-pannon.hu



Tünde Vajda, MA Economist in Leadership and Management. She is the international coordinator of the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia. She is responsible for the international recruitment and the international student services. She coordinates the study affairs of the international students as well as the inbound and outbound exchange activities. Her main areas of interest are internationalisation, cultural differences, student recruitment, student services and international marketing. She has been involved in several local and international projects in recent years focusing on internationalisation.

Contact: vajda.tunde@gtk.uni-pannon.hu

M. AGNIESZKA PIETRUS-RAJMAN

EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR SHAPING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES

The internationalization of tertiary education is a process inseparably connected with the cross-cultural competence of all its participants. Professional administrative staff of the university, able to provide information in a competent and substantive manner, effectively interacting with both foreign students and lecturers as well as their colleagues, are the backbone of the process. The article presents the definition and selected models of cross-cultural competence, the role it plays in the performance of professional tasks by administrative employees and the methods (off the job and on the job) that can be used to shape it. Based on the analyses, we formulated specific recommendations for universities.

Introduction

The growing degree of internationalization of tertiary education institutions in Europe certainly implies better opportunities for scientific and research cooperation and international exchange of experiences for both employees and students. However, it is also connected with the necessity to provide an appropriate organisational framework for the implementation of planned undertakings, research and teaching activities. In this respect, the decisive factor is the good preparation of university administrative staff to carry out professional tasks in a culturally diverse environment, which is confirmed, among others, by the results of the quantitative research conducted as part of the international *Stranger* project (see Chapter 2). The students who participated in the above-mentioned study, when asked about the most important aspects facilitating the implementation of their foreign educational path, listed student-friendly administration, access to information, individual approach and counselling. Professional university administrative staff, able to provide information in a competent and substantive manner, effectively interacting with both foreign students and lecturers as well as their colleagues, is the backbone of the internationalization process in tertiary education.

The skills of the administrative staff, and especially a high level of cross-cultural competence, are among the most important elements that exert a positive impact on the quality of international academic exchange (both *incoming* and *outgoing*). In a multicultural working environment, cross-cultural competence is a crucial, desirable and valuable factor. It not only facilitates communication with the representatives of other cultures or allows adequate and effective action but also prevents the occurrence of conflicts caused by cross-cultural differences. Therefore, assuming the above-described context, it is important that university internationalization strategies, in addition to creating an appropriate network of partner universities, preparing and implementing a marketing campaign promoting a given university in Europe and

in the world, good preparation of research and teaching staff and students, and developing an appropriate offer of classes for students and the necessary organizational changes, also take into consideration and consistently implement the process of good preparation of administrative employees for the current and future challenges. The article presents effective methods of shaping the cross-cultural competence of university administrative employees. In order to better structure the conducted analyses, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is cross-cultural competence and what are its components?
2. Which of the components of cross-cultural competence have an impact on the effective implementation of professional tasks by administrative employees?
3. What methods are used to shape cross-cultural competence?

Definition and selected models of cross-cultural competence

Cross-cultural competence, in English literature on the subject also referred to as *intercultural effectiveness*, *intercultural sensitivity*, *cross-cultural (communication) effectiveness*, *cross-cultural (communication) competence*, *cross-cultural adjustment*, *cross-cultural adaptation*, *global competence*, *cross-cultural success* or *personal success* (Straub, 2007, p. 35), belongs to the so-called soft skills. Although it is considered one of the key skills in the globalising world, it has not been clearly defined so far. On the one hand, difficulties in defining it are related to many perspectives and research approaches, resulting in the ambiguity of the concepts of “culture” and “competence”. On the other hand, they are related to the comprehensive nature of this competence. The concept of cross-cultural competence is understood very broadly as “the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways” (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 422) as well as “an individual’s effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad” (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 530). Cross-cultural competence also embraces the ability “to shape the process of intercultural interaction in a way that avoids or contextualizes misunderstandings, while creating opportunities for cooperative problem solving in a way that is acceptable and productive for all involved” (Thomas, 2003, p. 141). As already mentioned, it has a practical dimension that allows adequate and effective action in a culturally diverse environment based on integrated individual, professional, social and strategic competences (Bolten, 2002).

In order to better understand the essence of cross-cultural competence and its components it is worth taking a look at the models of this phenomenon. The most frequently used include the calculation, structural and process ones. The calculation models contain a set of partial competences that contribute to the cross-cultural one, and include, among others, communication skills, openness, tolerance, empathy, creativity, flexibility, the ability to resolve conflicts, ambiguity tolerance and readiness to constantly pose questions, verify and expand one’s knowledge (Hiller, 2010, p. 46). Structural models assign skills included in cross-cultural competence to individual areas: affective, cognitive and behavioural / conative (Müller – Gelbrich, 2014). The skills (partial competences) included in the above-mentioned areas are presented in Table 1.

Cross-Cultural Competence		
Cognitive area	Affective area	Behavioural area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-awareness • cultural awareness • knowledge of the country • self-respect • realistic expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • openness to new things • openness to the world • impartiality • empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexibility • respect for otherness • tolerance of ambiguity • success orientation • language skills • adequate self-disclosure • social relaxation

Table 1 Structural model of cross-cultural competence
Source: own elaboration based on Müller – Gelbrich, 2014, p. 29

Process models emphasize the interplay and aspects of the mutual interaction of individual components of cross-cultural competence, with attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, skills, and also internal and external outcomes (Deardorff, 2006, p. 254) among them. Properly shaped attitudes make it possible to acquire the necessary skills of obtaining and processing knowledge. This knowledge allows us to better understand not only our cultural identity but also culturally diverse systems of valuing and understanding the world. According to Bloom's taxonomy, it can be effectively acquired based on the following skills: to listen, to observe, to evaluate, to analyse, to interpret and to relate (Petty, 2010, p. 18). The effect of shaping attitudes, mastering skills and acquiring knowledge is an internal outcome – the achievement of characteristics necessary for cross-cultural competence such as adaptability based on empathy, flexibility and the ability to adopt a different, culturally different perspective of perceiving and understanding reality. The external outcome, on the other hand, is manifested in the behaviour and way of communication displayed by a given person. As a result, intercultural communication is understood as "effective and appropriate communication and behaviour in an intercultural situation" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 256). The specific components of the process model of cross-cultural competence are presented in Figure 1.

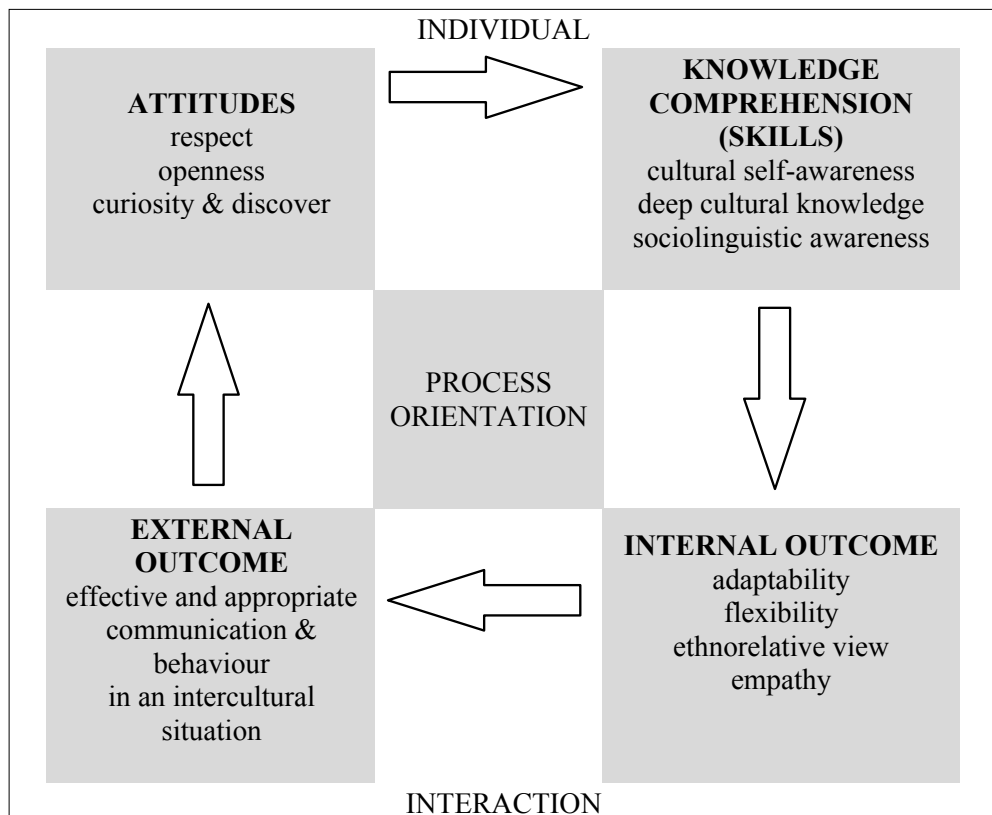


Figure 1 Process model of cross-cultural competence
Source: own elaboration based on Deardorff, 2006, p. 256

The process of acquiring cross-cultural competence is continuous and never-ending. Based on the experience gained in an intercultural environment, one's own scope of knowledge and understanding of representatives of other cultures is constantly verified, extended and supplemented. This has an influence on relativizing attitudes and behaviour patterns, and modifying them in such a way that it is possible to effectively implement communication and interactions (Schumann, 2012, p. 31), so that one can act in a culturally diverse environment.

Cross-cultural competence and professional tasks of university administrative staff

The basic duty of administrative staff employed in higher education institutions is to create optimal conditions for implementing the educational process and conducting research. However, the ongoing internationalization of this type of institutions makes them face new and

additional challenges, including the implementation of the above-mentioned task in a culturally heterogeneous environment, based on cross-cultural competence. The need to shape this competence is, except for the knowledge of foreign languages and internationalization, one of the most frequently mentioned factors in the field of professional development of administrative employees of universities (Hunter, 2017, p. 28). A comparative analysis of the components of cross-cultural competence included in the presented models and those that are most often mentioned in the literature on the subject (Stehr, 2011, p. 11), allow us to indicate the scope of knowledge and skills that can be considered necessary for effective interactions in a culturally diverse environment. They are presented in Table 2.



KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	
		
Cognitive area	Affective area	Behavioural area
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic knowledge of culture (concepts and models of culture)• Knowledge of the standards and dimensions of culture• Knowledge of cultural differences• Knowledge of the internationalization process conducted by the university• Basic knowledge of the culture of the countries the university cooperates with.• Knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of one's own culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Openness.• Tolerance and lack of prejudice.• Empathy.• Flexibility.• Acceptance and respect for other cultures.• Ability to change one's perspective.• Tolerance of ambiguity.• Resistance to frustration and the ability to cope with stress.• Low level of ethnocentrism.• Self-awareness and emotional stability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ability and willingness to communicate in a multicultural environment.• The ability to use a foreign language efficiently.• The ability to establish and build a relationship based on trust.• The ability to counteract and resolve conflicts which emerge from cultural differences.• The ability to manage stress.• Teamwork skills (integration skills).
		

Table 2 Knowledge and skills (selected ones) necessary to perform professional tasks in a culturally diverse environment.

Source: own elaboration based on Stehr, 2011, p. 19; Bolten, 2006

Shaping the cross-cultural competence of administrative staff should include the above-mentioned elements. One should pay attention to the fact that the components are interrelated and they influence each other. The knowledge of one's own culture increases self-awareness and enables people to identify things that are different, whereas the knowledge of standards and dimensions of culture makes it possible to understand those differences. The skills indicated in the affective area manifest themselves in the manner of communication and effective action adequate for the intercultural environment. The action in this case is the administrative service of foreign students, lecturers and scientists. It includes, among others, the explanation of culturally different contexts, situations and procedures in force at a university and ways of proceeding resulting from different academic traditions and culture. Moreover, it also covers the provision of information and instructions as well as the necessary support in the form of widely understood consulting. Taking into account the nature of tasks performed, one can state that the most important role among behavioural skills is the ability and willingness to communicate and establish relationships with the representatives of other cultures. However, it is impossible to implement such skills without a good command of a foreign language, knowledge of other cultures and the characteristics listed in the affective area.

Cross-cultural competence is most often shaped during training courses which may focus on the cognitive, affective or behavioural area, and thus make it possible to acquire and expand one's knowledge of culture and shape attitudes (cultural sensitivity) or behaviour patterns (Kinast, 2005, p. 183). Training courses may be devoted to the aspects of one selected culture, a group of cultures and differences between them, or raise issues in the field of general knowledge of culture (Kinast, 2005, p. 183-184). Due to the complex nature of cross-cultural competence, the effective cross-cultural training is comprehensive (learning objectives cover many areas). It is also important that the methods used are activating – individual activities should be linked with each other and adapted to the planned objective, and refer to specific situations in the professional life of participants (Rathje, 2010, p. 217).

Methods of shaping cross-cultural competence

In general, the process of shaping cross-cultural competence can take place off the job or on the job. When off the job, it usually takes the form of cross-cultural training, in which two types of methods are used: didactic and experiential. The former is based on the conviction that transferring a certain amount of knowledge about a culturally different system of attitudes, norms and values creates a good basis for efficient functioning in an intercultural space. In this case, the cognitive objective of the training is achieved through the use of e.g. lectures, presentations, films and literature. The latter, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that knowledge itself (the cognitive dimension of training) is not enough to acquire cross-cultural competence. Training participants must find themselves in a situation that is culturally different in order to gain the necessary experience. Experiential methods include games, simulations, role-play and analysis of case study and critical incidents (Kinast, 2005, p. 185). Taking into account the above-mentioned groups of methods and the two types of cross-cultural train-

ing courses (culture specific and culture general), the methods used during cultural training can be divided into four groups (see Table 3).

Methods (cross-cultural training)		
	culture specific	culture general
didactic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of a given country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – lectures – discussions – seminars – audio-visual presentations – foreign language training – area studies courses – area orientation briefing – case study – critical incident – culture assimilators (self-administrated culture training manuals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about culture (theory of culture, models of culture, cultural standards, etc.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – lectures – courses in intercultural communication, cultural anthropology and cross-cultural psychology – seminars – audio-visual presentations – literature
experiential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cross-cultural games – role plays – culture specific simulations – bicultural human relations trainings – learning more about the culture and its representatives in the place of living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – culture general simulation – role plays – cross-cultural interaction training – projects – workshops – psychodramas

Table 3 Methods of shaping cross-cultural competence

Source: own elaboration based on Göbel – Buchwald, 2008, p. 121; Gudykunst – Hammer, 1985, p. 118-154

Each of the methods mentioned above has its advantages and disadvantages, and there is no unambiguous opinion as to which one is the most effective. The selection of methods depends mainly on the purpose of a training course and a target group, its needs and the specificity of the intercultural environment in which the group performs its professional tasks. Cross-cultural training courses adopt numerous approaches, combining methods of transferring cross-cultural knowledge with those enabling the shaping of attitudes and the acquisition of necessary skills. Only this way of their implementation makes it possible to shape the cross-cultural competence of participants.

Training courses using the indicated methods represent only one of the possibilities of shaping the cross-cultural competence of administrative employees (off the job). It is necessary to point out that they can also acquire and improve their knowledge and skills in the workplace while performing tasks (on the job). The most frequently used on-the-job methods include intercultural coaching and intercultural mediation. The first one is based on supervision and

may relate to a single person working in a multicultural environment or involve a culturally diverse team or group of people. The aim is to analyse and become aware of the cultural determinants of behaviour, and to modify it so that it is possible to overcome intercultural barriers and achieve high effectiveness of action. A coach plays the role of an advisor – he or she opens new perspectives and potential opportunities, but the coached person or group must develop and test appropriate solutions on their own, using the possessed and available knowledge, experience and the existing framework of intercultural interactions (Bolten, 2007, p. 103-106).

Generally, intercultural mediation is different from coaching as it is aimed at a specific solution to an existing conflict that has its source in cultural differences. The mediator, unlike the coach, acts as an intermediary between the parties to the conflict and controls the process of identifying the existing problem and indicating its causes that originate from cultural differences. What is more, mediation is focused on team or group processes. The team under the supervision of a mediator seeks and works out an effective solution (Bolten, 2007, p. 107-108).

Both on-the-job methods, coaching and intercultural mediation, can be used as approaches supplementing cultural training courses and off-the-job methods used in them. However, while educating university administrative staff, the latter ones are preferred mainly due to the significantly lower costs and high predictability, i.e. the possibility of planning and preparing the curriculum content. On-the-job methods are used spontaneously during the performance of professional tasks, so it is impossible to predict or plan their course. An incredibly important component of their effectiveness is the skills of the coach or mediator, including a high level of cross-cultural competence.

It is also possible for administrative staff to acquire the necessary cross-cultural skills during their stay at one of the foreign partner universities (staff mobility). However, this form is used relatively seldom, mainly due to the need to take over the duties of the leaving employee by other staff members and to introduce the necessary organisational changes, which is not always possible.

Conclusions

The internationalization of tertiary education should be comprehensive and covers all the areas of functioning of educational institutions. Comprehensive internationalisation is understood as “a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service mission of higher education. (...) It is essential it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, and all academic service and support units.” (Hudzik, 2011, p. 6). Employees of the academic service and support units play a crucial role in the implementation of the internationalization process. Their knowledge of culture, understanding of diversity and possessed skills may favour and facilitate this process or hinder it to a significant extent. Therefore, it is important that they are well prepared to work in an intercultural environment and have all the necessary soft skills, among which cross-cultural competence is undoubtedly of strategic importance. It is necessary to note that this competence is characterised by a high degree of complexity. It includes the knowledge of culture, standards, dimensions and cultural differences (cognitive area), as well as the attitude

characterised by openness, flexibility, empathy, respect for diversity (affective area) and the ability to communicate effectively, a sufficient command of foreign languages, and the ability to resolve conflicts and cooperate in intercultural teams (behavioural area). All these components or skills have an impact on the effectiveness of performance of professional tasks by administrative staff. However, the broad spectrum of skills makes it impossible to indicate one effective method that would allow us to master all of them. Finding answers to the research questions appeared to be feasible owing to the comparative analysis of selected models of cross-cultural competence and indicating, based on its results, the skills necessary for administrative staff to perform tasks resulting from the internationalization of universities. The development of a catalogue of methods most often used in cross-cultural competence training, based on the analysis of existing data and examples of selected good European practices, allowed us to identify a set of effective methods shaping cross-cultural competence of university administrative staff (off-the-job methods supplemented by on-the-job ones). The results of the analysis make it possible to formulate several recommendations for universities, namely:

- the internationalization of universities should include shaping cross-cultural competence among administrative employees;
- the indicated methods could be used in training courses devoted to cross-cultural competence of these employees;
- shaping the most important skills (the components of cross-cultural competence) is likely to have an influence on better performance of professional tasks by administrative employees, increasing the standard of service for foreign lecturers, scientists and students;
- better service and better conditions for conducting classes/lectures/research and implementing curriculum will facilitate academic exchange, increase the attractiveness and quality of services provided by a given university to foreign academic teachers, researchers and students, increase the level of internationalization of higher education institutions and improve the quality of cooperation and exchange of experiences in the European educational area.

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M. Agnieszka Pietrus-Rajman. MA, senior lecturer at Wrocław University of Economics and Business, Deputy Head of the University Foreign Languages Centre, Rector's Plenipotentiary for the European Union Programs (2000-2005), certified adult trainer. Graduated from the School of Coaches and Teachers-Masters, Moderator of Intercultural Studies (Bayreuth University / Germany) and the Academy of Economics and Management (Dresden / Germany). She has implemented a number of international projects within the framework of EU programs as well as trainings and workshops in the field of international business for representatives of companies, enterprises and institutions concerning intercultural communication, intercultural differences, negotiations, presentation, business correspondence, mentoring and motivation. The author and co-author of a series of papers on the issues of the international labour market and training programmes for business representatives.

ORCID: 0000-0002-0364-0826

Contact: agnieszka.rajman@ue.wroc.pl



EIRINI ARVANITAKI – CHRISTODOULOS K. AKRIVOS –
GEORGE M. AGIOMIRGIANAKIS

**INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE:
DIDACTIC MATERIAL,
PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND TRAINING**

This article is part of the Stranger project, a project aiming to efficiently prepare universities engaged in the internationalization process. This research project resulted in three intellectual outputs: the development of two manuals, one directed towards the preparation of universities in order to receive foreign students, another intended for the preparation of foreign students prior to traveling abroad for their studies. The third output is the designing and preparation of appropriate didactic materials serving as a training tool to prepare university employees contacting foreign students. This article stems from the third output of the project, and as such, it aims through the development of didactic material to bridge the cultural differences often arising between a host university administrative staff and its foreign students.

Introduction

Internationalization is an issue of increasing significance for higher education institutes (Marcotte et al., 2007); (Pylväs et al., 2021). The international mobility programs sponsored by the European Union constitute one of the channels through which universities attempt to be engaged into internationalization. These programs offer students the opportunity to live and study abroad, experience different cultural, economic and political contexts, and connect to the global community. Furthermore, these programs provide students with a chance of meeting other like-minded individuals and obtaining an international mindset. Host academic teaching and administrative staff play an important role in ensuring participation of students in these programs (European Commission, 2000). These university officials frequently interact with foreign students and what enables the successful communication between the two is intercultural competence. Here, intercultural competence refers to an individual's progress of development and ability to acknowledge and understand cultural differences between the self and the other (Hammer, 2015); (Pylväs et al., 2021). It is this progress of development that the didactic materials and training discuss below.

In the next section, we give a brief literature review on the internationalization process of universities and intercultural competence. Section 3 presents the content and methodology we used to create the didactic material for the training of university officials. In section 4, we explore the didactic material appropriate for resolving and overcoming cultural differences and their practical application. Section 5 offers a conclusion and suggests directions for further research in this field.

Literature Review

Many have written about the internationalization process of universities. For instance, Marangell and research fellows (2018) write about how the universities look into students' engagement with the local community in an attempt to expand their efforts for internationalizing. Arkoudis and co-researchers (2013) and Arkoudis- and Baik (2014) also focus on the internationalization process; more specifically, they examine the promotion of communication and interaction between home and foreign students through the teaching practices of the academic staff. On their research regarding the international student experience in Australia, Ammigan and Langton (2018) suggest that for an institution to embrace internationalization, it is important that a collaborative effort between university administrators and support staff exists in order to provide a framework for the identification of foreign students' specific needs. With regards to internationalization process and intercultural competence, Lantz-Deanton (2017) argues that intercultural competence does not automatically take place when people from diverse cultures gather in universities. Byram (1997) concurs with this view and adds that the active engagement with the foreign culture is also crucial for one's enhancement of intercultural competence. Dunne (2009) and Harrison and Peacock (2010) on the other hand, examine the elements which may hinder interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and as a result delay the development of their intercultural competence. According to them, these elements are possible differences in values and priorities, language barriers and anxiety. Pylväs and Nokelainen (2021) turn their attention on university officials and suggest that international mobility programs enhance not only an individual's intercultural competence but also their professional development. The work of Hiller and Woźniak (2009) provides with an outline of some characteristics such as behavioral flexibility and empathy which they consider essential for the development of intercultural competence training in universities. Moreover, they give insight into a training program developed at the University of Viadrina which is now widely used by universities to promote intercultural competence. In a similar vein, the didactic materials and their practical application created for the Stranger project could be used as a model to interculturally sensitize university officials.

Content and Methodology Used

Most higher education institutes are intercultural hubs, filled with students and staff from various counties and backgrounds. However, it is not safe to assume that intercultural competence is something that automatically and effortlessly takes place when people from around the world meet in one place (Hiller – Woźniak, 2009). Rather, the ability to move with confidence within different cultural contexts, successfully adjust and communicate effectively with others is a skill and according to Bennett an essential one. Specifically, he states, “cultural competence while sharing the planet with others is no longer merely a nicety but a necessity” (Bennett in Fowler – Yamaguchi, 2020, p. 192). The cultivation of such a skill requires training. Intercultural training is crucial for comprehending the practices and values of other cultures. During intercultural training, the participants' perceptions of behaviours in situations of intercultural

nature are often questioned and this helps them acknowledge the differences that exist between cultures (Fowler – Blohm, 2004). The process of challenging beliefs and understanding intercultural differences is termed as ‘critical incidents’ (Fiedler et al., 1971) and it consists of two phases; first, the participants apprehend any misunderstanding or discord that may have arisen while interacting with someone from a diverse cultural background and second, the participants identify the reasons behind this misunderstanding.

For the purposes of the intercultural training, we chose the experiential approach of role-play as it appears the most appropriate for numerous reasons; it is best suited for teaching personal and social skills to individuals (Green – Blaszczyński, 2012). In addition, this approach mainly focuses on hands-on experiences, i.e. the participants acquire skills and gain knowledge by doing rather than reading (Cushner – Brislin, 1997). Role-playing also offers the participants the opportunity to get introduced to other cultures through simulations of intercultural interactions with others. Most importantly, role-play is practiced in a safe environment where the participants can exercise their newly acquired skills and receive feedback (Fowler – Blohm, 2004).

The didactic material which we created for this training was based on some of the key theories and models of the field. These are *Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions*, *Hall’s Cultural Dimensions*, *Culture Shock theory*, *Stereotypes Theory*, and the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*. Prior to discussing the activities constructed for the training, we give a brief explanation of these theories.

Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions is a framework developed by Geert Hofstede in 1980 and sets the fundamentals of intercultural communication and highlights how cultures may vary. It consists of six dimensions. These are:

a. Power Distance Index: measures extend to which the less powerful members accept and expect that power is distributed unequally (for example, in countries with a high score such as Malaysia, younger people expect to be guided and directed towards the completion of a task. On the contrary, in countries with a low score (e.g. Austria), the supervisors and employees are almost equal).

b. Individualism vs Collectivism: represents the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. In collectivist cultures, people exhibit loyalty and there is a strong sense of security vs individualistic cultures.

c. Masculinity vs Femininity: refers to the distribution of gender roles. For instance, men are more assertive and competitive, while women are more modest and caring.

d. Uncertainty Avoidance Index: describes how well people can cope with anxiety. In countries with a low score, people are more open to change or innovation.

e. Long-term vs Short-term Orientation: refers to the degree to which society views its time horizon. Short-term orientation cultures place particular emphasis on the present and quick results while long-term orientation cultures focus on the future and long-term growth.

f. Indulgence vs. Restraint: Countries with a high score allow for free gratification of people’s emotions, conduct, and behaviours. Countries with a low score seem to have stricter social norms.

Hall’s cultural dimensions (1990) is another theoretical framework developed by Edward Hall which underlines the strong link between culture and communication. Hall makes a dis-

inction between high context and low context cultures based on the dimensions of time and space. According to him, in high context cultures, for example Greek, Arab and Chinese, the interpersonal relationships highly depend on a shared understanding of information (there is a fair amount of social trust and therefore less need to rely on paper contracts/agreements). Moreover, there is an evidently strong focus on social networks and emphasis is given to social rather than legal restrictions. Individuals from high context cultures rely on implicit communication and non-verbal cues. For a message to be understood, a lot of background information is needed. There is close proximity to others (i.e. less personal space) and less respect for privacy. In polychronic cultures such as these people, things and events have their own time and punctuality is not emphasized. On the other hand, in low context cultures such as the American, Australian, Scandinavian and German, trust in interpersonal relationships heavily depends on written words (e.g. there is a necessity for contracts for conducting business) and the responsibility of actions lies with the individual rather than with the group. The communication between individuals relies on conveying the message in a clear and explicit way and at times an explanation and/or definition of information is given. Unlike the high context cultures, here privacy is important and personal space is greatly valued and punctuality is very important.

The work of anthropologist Kalervo Oberg is another source which we took into account when designing the didactic materials. In 1958 Oberg coined the term 'culture shock' which refers to the uncomfortable feeling or the feeling of disorientation one might experience when finding him/herself in an unfamiliar culture or way of life. He identified five stages of culture shock:

1. Honeymoon: people in this stage are excited, positive and curious to visit or see a new place, and gain new experience.
2. Hostility and irritability: people begin to acknowledge the differences between the new culture and their own. Feeling of frustration may arise and are generated due to a difficulty to adapt.
3. Gradual adjustment: people start to feel more relaxed and to comprehend how things are done in the host country and culture. As a result, they begin to adapt.
4. Adaptation: people have now adapted to the new country and they feel at ease.
5. Re-entry travel shock: people are once again shocked upon their return to their own country as things are not what they were expected to be.

The issues of stereotypes and cultural generalization are also important concepts which contributed to the formation of the didactic materials. According to Bennett (2013), the term 'cultural generalization' refers to a statement made about a group of people. For example, the Greeks and the Spaniards are less punctual than the Germans. A cultural generalization can turn into a stereotype if used to describe individual members of a group. For instance, it is a stereotype to effortlessly assume that just because someone is Greek is also not punctual in meetings. Based on this one can suggest that a cultural 'stereotype' is the application of a generalization to every member of a group. However, one should be aware of the fact that individuals cannot avoid making generalizations because they are part of their (human) perception. Every object has been assigned in a certain category which automatically associates it with other similar objects and contrasts it with different objects. An object of perception cannot exist without some set of associations. For example, a letter is an object of our human perception

which is associated to the category of forms of communication, just as an email is. However, it also belongs to the category of old-fashioned forms of communication in contrast to the email which belongs to a technology-enhanced form of communication. Culture can also be seen as a categorization of people. It is common for people to belong to groups and share similar characteristics. Nevertheless, members of the same culture may vary as to *how much* they share the groups' common elements. Stereotypes arise when one denies that variation and assumes that these traits apply to *all* members of a community.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity designed by Milton Bennett (1986) was another valuable source which the activities reflect upon. This model indicates the progress people make from an ethnocentric viewpoint towards acquiring an ethno-relative view and a deeper understanding of cross-cultural differences. It is a framework which indicates the reaction of people to cultural difference. By understanding its stages one can learn how to acknowledge the existence of cultural differences, avoid making quick and wrong assumption of others (stereotyping), and also increase his/her competence in intercultural relations. It comprises six stages. The first three stages are ethnocentric (i.e. central to reality). These are the following:

a. Denial: only a person's own culture is experienced as a true culture. People are not interested in cultural difference and act in a negative way if another culture has an effect on them.

b. Defence: only one's culture is experienced as the only good culture. Categorization exists between 'us'/'superior' (known) and 'them'/'inferior' (unknown). People may feel threatened and judge other cultures.

c. Minimization: here, aspects of one's cultural view is seen as universal. People at this stage expect similarities between cultures and may also correct the behaviour of others in order to match their cultural expectations.

The next three stages are ethnorelative that is one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures:

a. Acceptance: one's own culture is perceived as equally complex to other cultures. Accepting cultural differences does not necessarily mean agreeing with them. People at this stage are curious about and show respect for other cultures.

b. Adaptation: one's perception of the world is expanded to include elements from other cultures. People here have the ability to see the world 'through different eyes' and can purposefully adjust their behaviour to communicate with others from other cultures.

c. Integration: one indicates the ability to move in and out of cultural worldviews. As an outcome of this, people may experience issues related to their cultural limits ('cultural marginality').

Practical Application

For the development of a syllabus appropriate for intercultural training, the identification and careful consideration of the nature of work, the environment as well as the individuals participating in such a training program are essential prerequisites (Brewster, 1995). For the purposes of the Stranger project, we made an attempt to adjust the training material to the needs of their participants (Bennett et al., 2000). By acknowledging the participants' profes-

sions and their culturally heterogeneous work environment we chose the culturally generalized trainings (Puck et al., 2008); (Lenartowicz et al. 2014). As opposed to culturally specific, this type of training incorporates activities which enhance the participants' *general* intercultural competence and sensitization for different cultural backgrounds.

As mentioned above, the activities in the didactic materials are hands-on experiences and meant to fully benefit individuals who were encouraged to actively participate. These activities were purposefully short in duration (between 20 to 30 minutes) in order to avoid losing the interest of the participant. Each activity referred to concepts related to culture (i.e. multiculturalism, culture shock, etc.) and aimed at enhancing the participants' intercultural competence. For the practical application of the activities, we followed these four stages in this order: instructions, experience, reflection, information. In the first stage 'instructions', prior to initiating, the trainer shared relevant details on how to carry out an activity. The second stage ('experience') referred to the practical application of activities and the active engagement of individuals, the stage of 'reflection' described the process of contemplation of the concluded activity, and finally 'information' alluded to a brief introduction of the theoretical concept related to the activity. Below we illustrate some of the activities and their link to the theoretical aspects relating to intercultural competence.

Example 1: activity regarding stereotypes and the act of stereotyping: first, a list of statements was given to the participants (e.g. 'Boys are lazy', 'Blondes are not very clever', etc.). The participants were then asked to discuss with their colleagues the validity of these statements.

The objective of this activity was to raise awareness, embrace and accept diversity and promote respect for the other. Additionally, to avoid labelling, making assumptions and jumping into conclusions based on stereotypical ideas and opinions. After the completion of each activity, the trainer posed questions. In this case, the trainer asked the following questions:

- Has your opinion on someone been shaped by such stereotypes in the past? If so, how and to what extent? Share your experiences with the process of stereotyping.
- Can you give your own definition of stereotyping?
- Do the above statements apply to all?
- In your opinion, why do people stereotype others?
- In what way has this exercise facilitated you in becoming more aware of stereotyping?

The reason behind these questions was to trigger the participants to reflect on the activity and more specifically on the concept under examination. Finally, the trainer would briefly highlight the concept of stereotypes, make a reference on how people inadvertently and effortlessly make assumptions about others and identify the negative effect stereotyping has on people (i.e. the automatic exclusion of people from social groups based on wrong judgment and quick assumptions).

Example 2: activity focused on different dimensions of culture. The trainer gave this scenario to the participants and handed out the roles. The following role-play specifically hints at Hofstede's power distance index cultural dimension.

Place: International Office – Academic affairs

Roles: international student, officer, other students waiting

Scenario: The international student is very angry. He wanted to arrange accommodation at the university student hall but he did not successfully complete the application form, he

submitted it late and as a result he was not given a room. He cries, gets agitated and tries to prove that it was not his fault to fill the paperwork incorrectly and miss the deadline as nobody showed him how to do it. Then he brings up all his previous incidents. The administrator, on the other hand, tries to be patient but she also loses control after some time.

At the end of this activity, the trainer asked the participants to discuss all roles of the scenario and find the best solution on how to calm down the student and identify the reasons for his frustration. The objective of this activity was to highlight the cultural difference which is evident between individuals from high context cultures and low context cultures (i.e. individuals from the former such as the student in the above scenario prefer to be given specific guidelines and to be instructed by older people how to fulfil a task). When the activity was completed, the trainer drew attention to Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions. Additionally, a discussion on the role of student and admin staff took place. For the former, the trainer identified the reasons for frustration by giving emphasis on the dimension of power distance index, while for the latter the trainer stressed the importance of understanding Hofstede's model and the ability to apply it in intercultural encounters with students as well as the significance of multiculturalism and open-mindedness.

Example 3: activity related to the concept of multiculturalism. In this activity, the trainer asked them to write down a few statements on what they considered as rude or inappropriate behaviour (for instance, passing gas at the end of a meal, using first name when conversing with someone they do not know etc.) and then discuss these statements with their colleagues.

The objective of this activity was to comprehend how to avoid making assumptions of similarities between cultural contexts and instead understand and embrace a multicultural environment, to familiarize with behaviours which may be unusual or rude to one and acceptable by other people from different backgrounds and cultures and also to bear in mind that the rules of politeness are neither fixed nor certain in all cultural contexts. In a similar format to the above-mentioned activities, here too, the trainer asked the following questions in an attempt to elicit the participants' critical thinking on differences between cultures and raise their cultural sensitivity:

Which statements describe inappropriate behaviour?

- Which statements can be considered acceptable? Why?
- Which of these statements could cause misunderstanding?
- Could these behaviours influence the way we see and form an opinion about someone?
- Could the meaning of these statements change from inappropriate to appropriate based on the cultural context? And if so, how?
- What have you learned from this activity? How have you benefited?

Then a quick introduction on Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and its purpose (i.e. the progress of people towards enhancement of deeper understanding of cross-cultural differences) followed.

The trainer adopted a similar format for all activities which comprised the training material. In tandem with the development of the training material and the practical application of the activities, another noteworthy element in the process of enhancing individuals' intercultural competence was the trainer's active involvement. This is mostly evident in the actions of explaining the theory of these concepts, stressing their importance and their role in acquiring a

multicultural awareness and understanding, especially in situations dealing with international students and also, ensuring clarity of understanding of the concepts and their application in everyday situations by asking the participants to provide their own examples based on the cultural concept discussed. Based on the above, one could suggest that the reinforcement of a person's intercultural competence through the medium of training is a joint effort which involves both the individual's and the trainer's active participation.

Conclusions

The internationalization of higher education is becoming increasingly important and now more than ever universities are required to adapt their policies if they are to continue to thrive in this competitive reality. One way to achieve this is through the internationalization of its staff by offering intercultural training which "prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations when they interact with individuals from cultures other than their own" (Brislin – Yoshida, 1994, p. 2-3); (Fowler, 2005, p. 402). This article focused on the development of such a training didactic material and its practical application. For the purposes of the Stranger project, we created activities based on the needs of the university staff participating in the trainings. Similarly, the approach deemed most appropriate for the actualization of this training was the role-play. All activities incorporated in the didactic material refer to concepts related to culture and as such contribute to the main objective of the training. The developed activities were short, hands-on experiences and their practical application involved a four-stage method (instruction, experience, reflection, information) which appeared to facilitate the comprehension of these culture concepts as it was mostly based on the 'learning-by-doing' process. The act of reflecting upon the activities is a practice which enhanced the experiential learning process and gave participants the opportunity to critically think of the activities and better understand the concepts related. Furthermore, the participant's active engagement in conjunction with the trainer's role and involvement are equally essential requirements for acquiring and increasing intercultural competence skills. Despite the wide array of literature on intercultural training further research on didactic material and their practical application would help shed light on the internationalization of university officials and may possibly contribute to creating guidelines for developing such syllabi.

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Eirini Arvanitaki. PhD in English. Adjunct lecturer and scientific associate in School of Social Sciences at the Hellenic Open University. In the past, she has taught in higher education institutes in Cyprus, Greece and the UK. Research interests: Sociology, Social Policy, Sociology of Tourism, Gender, Gender and Equality, Feminism, Literature.

ORCID: 0000-0002-4357-6638

Contact: arvanitaki.eirini@ac.eap.gr



Christodoulos K. Akrivos. PhD in Management. Adjunct Professor at the School of Economics and Business of the Neapolis University in Cyprus and External Academic at the Hellenic Open University. His research interests relate to Management, Human Resources and Quality Management.

ORCID: 0000-0003-3443-0853

Contact: akrivos.christodoulos@ac.eap.gr



George M. Agiomirgianakis. PhD in Economics. Professor of Economic Theory and Policy at the Finance and Accounting Department of the Hellenic Mediterranean University since September 2020. Prior to this, he was Professor at the Hellenic Open University (HOU) and Director of the Economic Analysis and Policy Lab. In the past, he has served as Dean of the School of Social Sciences of HOU (2008-2012). Research interests: Economic Analysis and Policy, Human Capital and the Role of Education, Tourism Economics & Policy-Making.

ORCID: 0000-0003-4977-2178

Contact: georgeagios@hmu.gr



OLENA PORADENKO – IHOR KRYSOVATYY

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC MOBILITY OF YOUTH IN UKRAINE AS A MANIFESTATION OF GLOBALIZATION PROCESSES IN THE MODERN WORLD

The paper deals with the topic of international academic mobility in Ukraine. It overviews the literature by both national and international researchers on the issue under investigation and provides a case study of the accomplishments made and pitfalls Ukrainian universities encounter on their integration into the common European educational area. Inconsistent educational legislations between contracting countries, as well as the absence of uniform legal regulations, are stated to be the basic instruments that prevent successful implementing of the programmes on academic mobility and factors of major concern that exacerbate the process of students' or teaching staff's exchanges when addressing the topic of academic mobility in Ukraine. A critical study of the analytical data made it possible to spot an array of administrative, managerial, financial and educational properties and socio-cultural roadblocks that hamper Ukrainian transition into the common European educational area. The authors provide statistics on the top rated countries for Ukrainian outbound academic mobility, and on the top rated Ukrainian universities for inbound academic mobility. The research reveals that outbound academic mobility outweighs the inbound one into Ukraine owing to the fact the procedures of transferring a Ukrainian student to a university abroad are less complicated than those of a foreign student to Ukrainian higher education establishments. Finally, there are suggestions as to how it might be possible to align educational curricula with the European principles of higher education to foster international academic mobility in Ukraine.

Introduction

International academic mobility becomes an integral part of scientific activity under modern conditions, a key factor in the development of science and education. However, the spontaneity of the international academic mobility of youth in the context of globalization and the formation of a single European educational space minimize the positive aspects and bring about negative consequences of such mobility ("brain drain", loss of scientific, educational, and socio-cultural potential, lagging behind the world's educational and scientific standards). This necessitates deepening knowledge about nature, trends, structure, motives, and factors of the international academic mobility of youth, which will make it possible to develop informed recommendations for optimizing this process and its use to enter the world's scientific and educational space, improve quality and international competitiveness of the domestic education.

Today, any national higher education institution is able to train specialists in isolation who meet the requirements of information society. Development of international educational and scientific relations between universities, the activation of their cooperation could be facil-

itated by the participation of young people in programmes of international academic mobility, help them access foreign educational programmes, courses and research technologies. This way domestic education and science can be enriched by international academic and cultural experience.

Mobility in the world of education and science provides a significant influence on the formation of an international network of academics and the business elite, relying primarily on individual connections and opportunities for cooperation between professionals. Developed countries do not simply stimulate the development of international academic mobility, but also use it skillfully, on a scientific basis, to build up their own cultural and political capital, increasing the competitiveness of their national economy. Conditions are being created for the return of the youth, enriched with international experience, to the national science and education. In addition, some countries are moving to another level of the development of international academic mobility, which is not only in the return of young people to their homeland but also in maintaining contacts with compatriots abroad, creating international scientific teams, scientific and educational events.

The real scale of the inclusion of Ukrainian youth in the processes of international academic mobility today is insignificant. There is no systematic data on the character, structure, motives, and factors of international academic mobility of Ukrainian youth, and therefore there are no scientific bases for predicting trends and consequences of this process in Ukrainian realities. This, of course, complicates the process of developing and making important management decisions on international relations. In the field of education this causes inconsistency in the implementation of scientific and educational reforms in the country. Based on the above, you can argue that modern, conceptually unbiased scientific approaches to the analysis of international academic mobility of youth are needed, which will allow not only objective control over these processes but also effectively manage them.

Methods

This research paper aims at studying the current state of academic mobility in Ukraine and proposes ways to enhance self-realization for students in the framework of academic mobility opportunities.

To achieve the goal, it was necessary to solve the following tasks:

- 1) To carry out the analysis of analytical sources of the problem under investigation;
- 2) To discuss the impact of economic factors on academic mobility and establish its basic patterns;
- 3) To reveal the main trends and specificities of students' academic mobility in Ukraine;
- 4) To substantiate the conclusions and outline perspective directions for further consideration on the chosen issue.

Achieving the goal required the use of research methods that were consistent with the nature of the phenomenon studied and relevant to the tasks mentioned, namely: – a review of scientific literature on the issue studied; – analysing economic indicators relative to the increase in academic mobility and graphing statistical data that deal with the phenomenon under

consideration; – generalizing findings obtained in the process of diagnosing cause-and-effect relations that account for the academic mobility increase among Ukrainian students.

Results

In modern society, education and knowledge are becoming cross-border and transnational. The formation of a single world educational space is due to the convergence of approaches of different countries to the organization of education, as well as through the recognition of documents on education in other countries. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) form a modern European knowledge society. The Common European Educational Space, on the one hand, contributes to the growth of student and faculty mobility, and on the other hand, academic mobility is a necessary condition for the formation of the common educational space itself.

Academic mobility increases a person's chances for professional self-realization, as well as improves the quality of labour resources of the national economy. It becomes a response of national education systems to the challenges of the global educational space, fierce competition in the market of educational services. The European Commission notes that studying abroad should become a standard element of university education.

According to UNESCO, in 2010 alone, 3.6 million students received higher education outside their country. For comparison, in 2000 there were about 2 million students studying abroad, and their projected number in 2020 will reach 5.8 million (UNESCO, 2020). In absolute numbers, the number of students studying abroad is ahead of Asian countries – China, India and South Korea.

International academic mobility in Ukraine has its own specificities. Ukrainian education and science, being in a state of delay regarding the development of international exchanges under the conditions of general globalization (which scientists perceive as irreversible), are at risk of staying “out of the game”.

A coherent approach to the internationalization of higher education is based on support for international academic mobility through scholarships and implementation of academic exchange programmes, as well as programmes aimed at the creation of institutional partnerships in the field of higher education. A certain shift in this area at the administrative level can be noticed in general. The Ministry of Education and Science appeals to the administration of higher education institutions to inform students, graduate students, scientific and pedagogical workers of Ukrainian higher educational institutions regarding possible study and internship abroad (osvita.ua).

In the world's leading countries, the international component of national education policy over the past 20 years has been in the focus of experts in migration policy, employment and trade, involved in the regulation, organization, and financing of academic mobility with regional non-governmental agencies and international organizations (UNESCO, OECD, EBRD, World Bank, etc.).

The typology of the subjects of organization of student mobility at national and international levels is shown in the following figure:

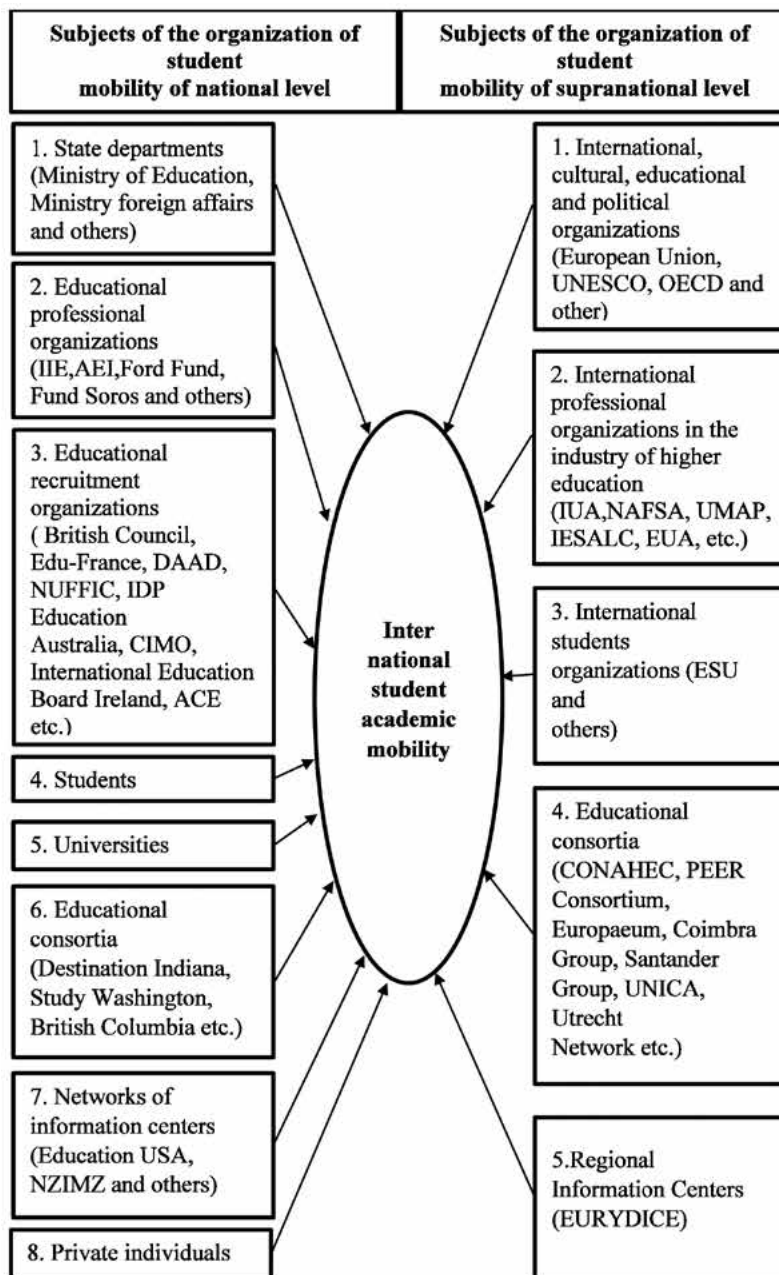


Figure 1 International student academic mobility

Source: own elaboration

Educational mobility in the European Union is provided by a number of special programmes with multimillion-dollar budgets. Over 20 million EU citizens have benefited from the Erasmus programme in 20 years. For academic exchanges between EU countries and other countries, the Erasmus-Mundus programme (“Erasmus-World”) works within the framework of this project. However, despite the professional support of the EU, it was used only by a few Ukrainian universities that have real partnerships with universities in the European Union.

Data collected by the National Agencies of the Erasmus Programme shows that more and more students are interested in international exchange studies under Erasmus+ Programme year-on-year. Unfortunately, the trend is not as dynamic when it comes to being sent on Erasmus+ Internships. In general, students are usually discouraged by the administrative procedures associated with internship abroad, and in particular, by establishing proper contact with international companies that are willing to accept an intern. Not always are the students aware that the Erasmus+ Programme is not only an opportunity to study at foreign universities but also a chance to gain unique experience in the international work environment. This effectively reduces the motivation to go abroad. At the same time, according to the majority of human resources specialists, the multicultural experience is regarded as a great asset that helps them land in a dream job. A candidate with experience gained during an internship abroad is being perceived by recruiters as an active, determined, and independent person who is ready to take on challenges and show flexibility and willingness towards new situations under demanding circumstances (erasplus.com).

Within the framework of the European Union Erasmus+ Programme, the Ukrainian organizations have actively been participating in all calls for proposals in the fields of education, youth and sports in 2014-2020. The cooperation under Erasmus+ contributes to the implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union on education, research, youth, sports and civil society (Title V, Chapters 23-26, Articles 430-445), national strategies & laws in these fields.

In the context of Erasmus+ Calls 2014-2020, all in all, 204 (out of 281) UA Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well as over 3,000 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), national and regional authorities, research institutions, enterprises have been cooperating with partners from the EU Member States and other countries in the world and achieved the following results in statistics (erasmusplus.org.ua):

Key Action 1 (KA1) – Learning mobility of individuals (Figure 2)

- Mobility of individuals in the field of education, training, and youth
- Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

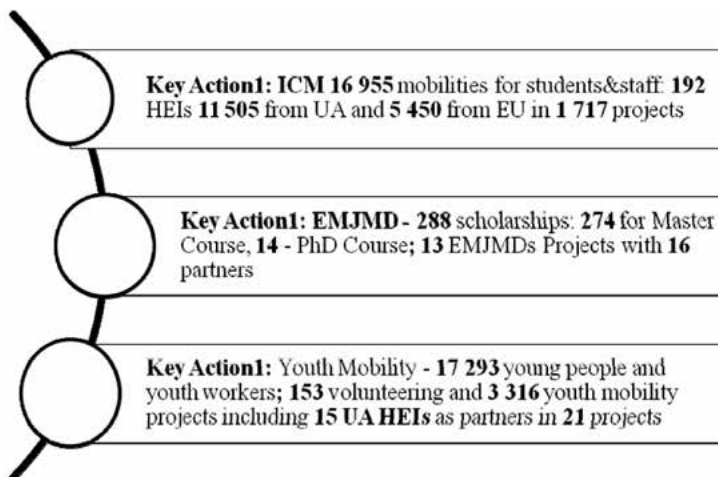


Figure 2 Ukraine within EU Programme Erasmus+ Key Action 1.
Source: field research, authors' compilation

Key action 1 – International Academic Mobility: short-term exchange programmes: credit mobility for study (3-12 months) and practice (2-12 months) for Ukrainian students: (junior) bachelors, masters, graduate students, doctoral students; academic mobility for teaching / advanced training/internships (from five days to two months) for teachers and employees of higher education institutions.

During 2014-2020, the EU's Erasmus + programme provided grants and training opportunities to about 4 million people and 125,000 organizations under KA1: Academic Mobility, allocating 63 per cent of the total budget of EUR 14.7 billion to the Erasmus + Programme (erasmusplus.org.ua).

Jean Monnet activities (Figure 3)

- Jean Monnet Chairs
- Jean Monnet Modules
- Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence
- Jean Monnet Support to Associations
- Jean Monnet Networks
- Jean Monnet Projects

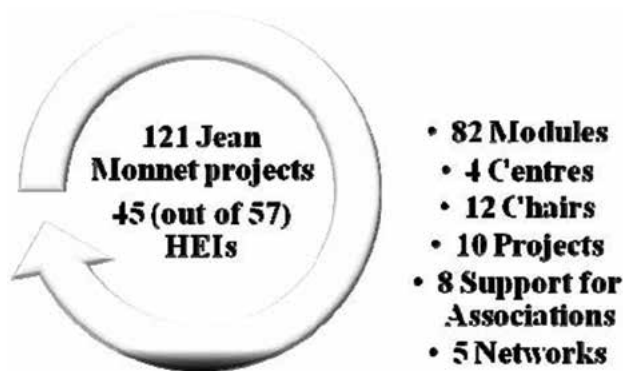


Figure 3 Jean Monnet projects
Source: field research, authors' compilation

The goal of Jean Monnet in the framework of the EU Erasmus + Programme: to intensify the European integration discourse; to promote the perfection of European integration studies; to involve higher education institutions in the study of European integration processes; to spread the ideas of the United Europe.

Cooperation between higher education institutions and other institutions around the world that actively promote Ukraine's European integration, scholars with publications on European studies, the experience of studying the EU for its adaptation in Ukraine cover all areas of the economy where it is important to study and research the EU experience for Ukraine (Erasmus Programme Guide, 2020).

Key Action 2 (KA2) – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices (Table 1)

- Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training, and youth
- European Universities
- Knowledge Alliances
- Sector Skills Alliances
- Capacity building in the field of higher education
- Capacity building in the field of youth

KA2: Capacity Building in Higher Education	KA2: Capacity Building for Youth	KA2: Strategic Partnership in Higher Education	KA2: Strategies Partnership in Youth	KA2: SP in Adult Education	KA2: SP in School Education
48 projects over 200 partners over 100 HEIs about EUR 43 million	59 projects 46 partners 3 HEIs 22 organisations as coordinators EUR 6 million	7 projects 6 UA HEIs as partners	16 projects with UA NGOs 4 UA HEIs are among partners	10 projects with UA NGOs and 2 UA HEIs as partners	3 projects with UA 2 NGOs, 1 school, 1 high school, 1 HEI

Table 1 Ukraine within EU Programme Erasmus+. Key Action 2.
Source: field research, authors' compilation

Within the framework of Erasmus + KA2: Cooperation projects for the development of innovation and exchange of successful practices in the field of higher education, as well as for cooperation between member countries and Erasmus + partner countries (including Ukraine), the following opportunities are open:

- Capacity Building in higher education (CBHE) as applicants and partners – cooperation projects between higher education institutions from Europe, Ukraine and other Erasmus + partner countries to build capacity for higher education reforms according to the Bologna process. Open to academic and non-academic partners.

Key Action 3 (KA3) – Support for policy reform (Figure 4)

Youth Dialogue projects



Figure 4 Ukraine within EU Programme Erasmus+. Key Action 3.
 Source: field research, authors' compilation

Key Action 3: Support to policy reforms in Higher Education. Provides grants for a wide variety of actions aimed at stimulating innovative policy development, policy dialogue and implementation, and the exchange of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth (erasmusplus.org.ua).

In the period 2015-2020 within six calls altogether 2,434 projects proposals for International (Credit) Mobility (KA107) in Higher Education in cooperation between the Universities from Europe and Ukraine were submitted to Erasmus+ National Agencies in 34 Programme Countries. 1,717 projects have been recommended for funding student and staff exchange mobility by 32 National Agencies Erasmus+. Under this Action, the Universities from Europe together with 192 Ukrainian higher education institutions and 20 other organizations, like enterprises, have been organizing short-term mobility flows within 16,955 scholarships for staff and students based on the Inter-Institutional agreements. From Ukraine, 11,505 students (bachelor, master, PhD.) and university staff (teachers and administrative staff) are visiting the Universities in Europe and involved in various learning mobility activities, like study, traineeship, teaching, in-service training. In parallel, 5,450 students and staff from Europe are funded to visit Ukraine for similar short-term mobility activities. All in all, 5,619 Ukrainian staff to Europe, 3,899 EU staff to Ukraine; 5,886 Ukrainian students to Europe and 1, 551 EU students to Ukraine.

Years	Applica- tions	Selected Projects	Grant Awarded (EUR)	Participant Requested	Participant Awarded	Participant Incoming (to EU)	Participant Outgoing (from EU)
2015	299	161	8238000	6056	2160	1777	382
2016	316	214	7876000	8050	2370	1684	686
2017	393	268	8270000	10356	2711	1815	896
2018	414	272	9450410	11169	3044	2010	1034
2019	479	407	8266189	16062	2766	1770	996
2020	533	322+73	10026539 +1890871	tbc	3246 +658	2056 +393	1190 +265
Total	2434	1717	54018009	tbc	16955	11505	5450

Table 2 International (Credit) Mobility in Europe
 Source: EU funded Projects for Higher Education Institutions – Database 2021

The top three Countries for exchange are Poland, Germany and Spain. The top six Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEI) are Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ivan Franco Lviv National University, National Technical University of Kyiv “Igor Sikorsky Polytechnic Institute”, Lviv Polytechnic National University, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University and National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

Calls	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	total for 6 calls
Applied projects	299	316	393	414	479	533	2434
Total Projects Selected with Ukraine	161	214	268	272	407	395	1717
Countries where National Agencies Provided Grants with Ukraine	30	32	32	32	31	32	32
Total UA HEIs among winners	103	127	156	180	180	190	192
Scholarships awarded (including the below):	2160	2370	2711	3044	2766	3904	16955
from Ukraine to Europe	1777	1684	1815	2010	1770	2449	11505
from Europe to Ukraine	383	686	896	1034	996	1455	5450
Staff to Europe	645	814	930	1041	931	1258	5 619
to Ukraine	246	501	673	759	693	1027	3899
Students to Europe	1132	870	885	969	839	1191	5 886
to Ukraine	137	185	223	275	303	428	1551
EU Grant	8238 000	7876 000	8270 000	9450 410	8266 189	11917 410	54018 009

Table 3 Cooperation between the Universities from Europe and Ukraine
 Source: EU funded Projects for Higher Education Institutions – Database 2021

Moreover, from the period of 2014–20 regarding the call results, under 237 projects, 16 Ukrainian institutions, including 11 universities, two research institutions, two NGOs and one private organization have been involved as associate partners with one HEI National University of «Kyiv-Mohyla Academy» – as a full partner in 13 Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree Consortia in 2020:

National University of «Kyiv-Mohyla Academy» – Associate Partner – Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies;

- Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University – Associate Partner – European MSc in Marine Environment 2030;
- Ivan Franko National University of Lviv; Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv;
- V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University – Associate Partners – Interdisciplinary Mathematics (InterMaths);
- Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv – Associate Partners – International Law of Global Security, Peace and Development;
- Association «Ukrainian Agribusiness Club» – Associate Partner – Erasmus Mundus Master Programme in Plant Breeding.

All students and staff must return after their mobility to their home universities and receive recognition of their learning outcomes: students' learning outcomes have to be recognized to receive Ukrainian HEI Diploma and staff will apply their new competencies after a certified in-service training programme. The total EU grant allocated amounts to EUR 54,018 million.

As a result, the staff have increased their professionalism to implement reforms beyond the professional sphere and innovative teaching methods; they improved their foreign language knowledge, working in the international environment, learning good practices and exchanging their experience with peers all over the world. Students have developed their life, their professional competencies and their soft skills, enriched by the intercultural communication and networking with students from different countries.

At the institutional level, the universities have developed their capacities to implement reforms and improve higher education quality. Their curricula have become internationalized as the teachers created and implemented courses in foreign languages, modernized their courses, implemented student-centered teaching and learning, invited and recorded prominent EU lecturers and practitioners for practical classes for student and staff development. The recognition process has been developed in the framework of mobility action. The international relations offices found new partners and were trained to internationalize at home, write proposals and prepare drafts for new calls for proposals in order to apply to Erasmus+ and Horizon2020. They have learned best practices of the internationalization strategies and their implementation and as a result, tailored to their institutions. The universities have modernized their deans' offices, quality assurance services, and accounting services by in-service training abroad. Some universities call these action projects as mini-Tempus/CBHE without equipment but with intensive human capital development instead.

Higher convergence at national and international levels between Ukrainian and higher education systems in EU member states improved mobility outcome recognition mechanisms, implemented good practices to carry out reforms in different sectors to implement the Action Plan for the EU-UA Association Agreement.

HEIs staff and students have become “Ambassadors of Ukraine in the World” who promote and support Ukraine in Europe, contributing to Ukraine’s development and reform implementation.

The most important issue is the effectiveness of international academic mobility of Ukrainian youth in the development of strategies for its return to the homeland. In view of the experience of the countries which have experienced “brain drain” for a longer time than Ukraine, it becomes necessary to develop a system of legally supported measures for creating favourable conditions for the return of young people enriched by experience as Ukrainian scientists; ensuring closer contacts with the Ukrainian scientific diaspora, its involvement in long-term joint research with Ukrainian scientific organizations, including scientific internships young people.

The areas of study of the interaction of specific countries and specific organizations in the field of international mobility are as follows:

- To stimulate incoming and/or initial mobility (training/internship) of scientists and employees of the scientific and technical sphere;
- The availability of government programmes or other economic incentives for the involvement of foreign scientists and for the return of Ukrainian scientists and workers in the scientific and technical sphere from training/internship (for example, increased salaries, including social benefit packages, financial support for education, research activities, tax benefits);
- To support immigrants by government programmes and other tools for attracting foreign scientists or workers in science and technology (e.g., visa support, the possibility of obtaining citizenship);
- Other tools for integration and recognition of qualifications for the involvement of foreign scientists and experts in the field of science and technology (e.g., international mutual certification of professional qualifications);
- State programmes and other social and cultural mechanisms to attract foreign scientists and scientific and technical workers (e.g., language courses, children’s education, health services);
- Government programmes or other mechanisms for providing scientists (or graduate students, doctoral students) opportunities for international research (e.g. research grants or support for foreign trips and business trips).

Recommendations on the development of international academic mobility

To strengthen cooperation with countries of high scientific and technical development in areas where domestic science is able to obtain world results level, in order to reach the potentials of domestic scientific schools in the world system of division of labour in the field of science.

To provide sufficient funding for international research projects and initiators of their implementation, which should form the elite science and education and not only to conduct innovative research but also to implement them in life.

To set up the organizational and legal framework that determines the participation of scientists in international scientific and educational programmes, and in particular, to create forms of interaction of the higher educational institutions with international sister organizations.

Given the proposals of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to develop and implement a programme aimed at developing the internationalization of regional education and science, the export and import of scientific and educational services, in which priority is given to:

- Standardization of certain minimum requirements for education and science by the unification of the curricula and educational programmes and structures of higher educational institutions;
- Issuance of “double diplomas”, recognition of diplomas of foreign countries;
- Introduction of international doctoral studies in research universities’ postdoc programmes and institutions;
- More widely practice of teaching in English, invitations of foreign teachers;
- Creation of an integrated information network of libraries and databases;
- To help increase the citation index of young domestic scientists;
- Wide introduction of the grant system;
- Introduction of an international audit of Ukrainian educational and scientific institutions;
- Creation of a state structure to promote the export and import of educational services and international academic mobility of researchers, teachers and students, attracting foreign students to Ukraine.

Conclusion

International academic mobility is a natural process that has its own history and demands in today’s globalized world. Ukraine cannot stay away from international integration in science and education and already occupies a certain niche in this process, has certain achievements in the international development of academic mobility. However, it is obvious that the current Ukrainian scientific and educational system has its own peculiarities and it has to overcome even greater difficulties in the implementation of intentions to integrate into the world scientific and educational space. For example, for the world’s leading countries, international academic mobility is a source of financial income, obtaining quality human capital, improving the country’s image, and the development of such mobility becomes one of the priorities in the implementation of national public policy. The steps of Ukraine in the direction of the development of international academic mobility so far, mostly, are spontaneous and poorly controlled by the state. If no decisive political and administrative measures are taken in time, Ukraine will not take advantage of the objective development of the international academic mobility, will not receive financial infusions from educational export services and cannot increase intellectual capital, but instead it will end up in the periphery of the world market of educational services,

and capable students and scientists will be irrevocably washed away from the shores of the Ukrainian higher education and science.

Ukraine must become a fully viable participant in the European market of qualified personnel and scientific developments and focus on its real needs that it is able to meet.

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Olena Poradenko. PhD in Economics, Associate Professor at West Ukrainian National University in Department of International Economics (lectures in the field of economics, intercultural management, and international economic activity in Ukraine). Research experience, author and co-author of numerous scientific publications in many fields. Research interests: international economy, foreign economic activity and cross-border economy of Ukraine, management of international companies.

ORCID: 0000-0003-0659-0737

Contact: olenaporadenko@gmail.com



Ihor Krysovatty. PhD in Economics, Assistant Professor of Department for Entrepreneurship and Trade at West Ukrainian National University (delivers lectures in Entrepreneurship, Innovation Project Management and Creative Business). For a long time, Professor Krysovatty has been working in the business sector; furthermore, he has some experience in business and public administration. He participated in a several-month internship at Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania). Professor Krysovatty is the author of several dozens of articles and research papers published in monographs, peer-reviewed scientific journals, and national and international conference materials.

Research interests: innovation and digital economy, sustainable entrepreneurship, internationalization of education, innovative technologies in higher education.

ORCID: 0000-0002-4063-6324

Contact: i.krysovatty@wunu.edu.ua

