

Learning to Integrate Domestic and International Students: The Hungarian Experience

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Abstract

In the past decades, the European integration (political, social and cultural integration of European countries) and the Bologna process have established a framework in the Hungarian higher education scheme by which institutions define their strategic internationalizing objectives and activities. Due to the growing number of international students traveling worldwide, Hungarian institutions continue to welcome more diverse and larger body of students. In the process, the institutions face many challenges in the integration of all students into academic and student life. To remain competitive, institutions of higher education are expected to improve their student services and adjust their practices to provide quality services for both domestic and international students. This descriptive study first examines the tendencies in inbound student mobility in recent years, then explores the main systematic and institutional obstacles to the integration of all students at various study levels. The study also argues that steady increases in student mobility have a decisive influence on the support the integration of international students during their stay in Hungary.

Keywords: student mobility, international students, integration of all students, student services, European perspective

The social and economic environment of higher education has changed considerably in the last decades. The impact of these developments on higher education is inevitable; they have had a decisive influence on recent trends in education and training. Over the last decades, the growing emphasis on increasing migration, global integration, and any other global processes (trade patterns, climate change, inequality) have changed the landscape in which higher education institutions define their strategic goals and internationalizing activities (OECD, 2016). Therefore, it is not surprising that in the last few decades, internationalization has become one of the most significant trends of higher education in Europe (Santiago at al., 2008).

The majority of literature from Hungary focuses on the obstacles of international student mobility in Hungarian higher education settings (Kasza, 2011; Kiss, 2014; Deákné Dusa, 2017; Hámori&Horváth, 2017). The number of studies that center on the integration of international students into the new learning environment, particularly academic and student life, is low. Using the Hungarian experience, this study contributes to the literature on the integration of international students into academic and student life, and the analysis of the role of higher education institutions in this process.

The aims of the study are to give an overview on international student mobility in Hungary and seek answers to the questions of how Hungarian higher education institutions can integrate international students into the academic and student life. According to the literature, the increasing number of students coming to study in Hungary will change the profile and the student body of these higher education institutions (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2018). This changing student body stimulates the universities to re-examine and improve the appropriateness of the student services they provide. Following these trends, the universities should be more responsive and open to the needs of both domestic and international students. Some authors argue that students' integration and engagement have an influence on their academic achievement of the students (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2018). Due to these reasons, it is critical to study this topic in a comprehensive way.

Internationalization in Europe: its Influence on Hungarian Higher Education

Internationalization in European Higher Education has influenced the trends in Hungarian Higher education. Rooted in the Middle Ages, this internationalization in Europe is not a new phenomenon, it has a long tradition and history. Most recently, as a result of the social and economic changes since the 1980s, internationalization has stepped into a new phase evidenced by the following trends: the dramatic increase of international mobility, the strengthening regional approach in institutional collaborations, and the European integration in the field of education and training (Teichler, 2004). Teichler suggests this new phase should be considered a period of “re-internationalization” (Teichler, 2004).

Internationalization is not a homogenous concept; instead, it has many interpretations in the large body of literature it has inspired. Jane Knight, who provided its most accepted and most cited definition suggests that internationalization is “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003). Over the past years, there have been a number of significant concerns about the direction of internationalization (Altbach, 2004; de Wit, 2011). These critiques are varied, but some experts highlight the challenges of uncoordinated, fragmented institutional-level practices, and they promote strategic, coordinated and systematic policies and practices at the institutional level as a best practice to correct for these problems. Because of the weaknesses in some existing programs, some commentators have called for rethinking how internationalization is achieved (de Wit, 2016).

Since the launching of the Bologna process in 1999, internationalization has become one of the main policies in higher education in many European countries. From its inception, the central element of the Bologna model has been the strengthening of international student mobility, and the focus also has been on bringing higher education institutions together in Europe and beyond. In 2009, the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué – declared by Ministerial Conference and adopted by Bologna countries since 2012 – defined a new strategic goal related to student mobility (EHEA 2018). The goal aimed to increase mobility with a specific target: by 2020, at least 20 percent of those graduating in Bologna countries would have

pursued higher education abroad (EHEA, 2018). This goal was adopted by Hungary as well. The Bologna reform is implemented by 48 states, including the most of European countries, and few Asian countries such as Armenia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan (EHEA, 2018).

The role of higher education in the European Union (EU) has been considered in a specific way. Although integration efforts in the EU were defined first in the field of higher education in the 1960s, its main comprehensive goals were not set up until the late 1980s (Halász, 2012). In 1987, the launch of the Erasmus program by the EU was a decisive step. The original purpose of the Erasmus program, which is the first influential¹ education and training program to support student mobility in Europe, was that 10 percent of higher education students from a European country would study in another European country for a certain period. By the mid-2000s, countries of the former Eastern Bloc joined this program; and by the end of the nineties, the programs supported by the European Union (e.g.: Lifelong Learning Program, Erasmus+,) became the fundamental basis for student mobility. In 2016, approximately 725, 000 people (students, teaching or administrative staff) studied or trained abroad in the frame of the Erasmus+ program. Thus, the strengthening regional (European) mobility was one of the main results of the Erasmus program.

In 2000, the Lisbon Strategy and later, the EU2020 Strategy provided fundamental changes in goal setting related to education and training in the EU. According to the Lisbon Strategy, in Europe, it is essential to build a knowledge-based economy in order to respond to the challenges of globalization in an effective way. This approach particularly values the role of education and training (Halász, 2012). Since 2001 the European integration and the Bologna process have provided a strategic framework in Hungarian higher education settings by which universities can define their strategic schemes.

By analyzing the long-term tendencies from the 1990s until 2010, we can see that the intensity of international student mobility has strengthened and internationalization has become a prevalent trend in higher education. Since 2010, the number of international students has continued to increase in the OECD countries. According to OECD data, in 2010, 4.2 million, and in 2015 4.6 million international students were pursuing higher education abroad (OECD EAG, 2017).

Since the early 2000, Hungarian universities have faced major structural and strategic challenges. These changes have resulted in significant transformations in the governance, the organization, and the scope of the higher education institutions' international and national, domestic missions and activities (Kovács and al., 2018). In the last decade, internationalization in higher education institutions was supported by many national and international initiatives. At the national level it was a significant step that in 2013 the Hungarian government set up the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Program, which aimed at supporting diploma and credit mobility for students from outside the EU, mainly from Asian and African countries. The increasing number of international students has had a considerable impact on the practices and policies of higher education institutions, and it triggered changes at the system and at institutional level as well. For example, between 2012-2015, the Campus Hungary, and later in

2015, the Campus Mundi Programs were launched (co-financed by the EU and the Hungarian government), with the aim of supporting higher education institutions in their internationalization activities and enhancing outbound student mobility. These initiatives have resulted in considerable changes in the administrative and pedagogical strategy of higher education institutions, especially in the field of teaching and learning practices, curriculum development, and student services.

Research Methods

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods for analyzing the various elements of the topic. In the first part of the study, for examining the main trends of inbound student mobility in Hungary, the datasets of the Higher Education Information System (HEIS) was the primary object of analysis. The HEIS is a national, integrated, administrative database system compiling student and institutional data for all state-recognized higher education institutions in Hungary.

We used the datasets of an empirical study for secondary analysis. In that study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. Qualitative methods included document analysis (website analysis, study of relevant literature) and semi-structured interviews with students and staff members of HEIs. Quantitative methods included on-line student and teaching staff surveys. In 2017, the research team of the T-Tudok Centre for Knowledge Management and Educational Research Inc. was commissioned to undertake the survey by Tempus Public Foundation. The target populations of the study consisted of Hungarian students, international students, and staff members of higher education institutions (Lannert 2018). This paper shows the data of this empirical study related to integration of domestic and international students.

The above-mentioned data are supplemented by qualitative survey. At the final stage of the research, document analysis is used to suggest new directions for research, to help us understand the situation of both the higher education system and the position of individual institutions, especially in terms of their strategic objectives and planned activities focusing on the integration of international students. For this reason, an overview of the Institutional Development Plans (IDPs) of higher education institutions was carried out in this stage. An Institutional Development Plan is a strategic document of Hungarian higher education institutions used to identify key strategic goals and activities. IDPs can give an idea of how approaches applied by higher education institutions in recent years have interpreted the process of internationalization (Kasza, 2018).

The study used data from an online quantitative questionnaire which asked for the opinions and expectations of international students about their experience on campus and in the local community. The Student Satisfaction Survey used for international students has been carried out in the last 3 consecutive years. This study used the dataset of Student Satisfaction Survey 2017 for secondary analysis. In 2017, international students who are grantees in the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Program in Hungary reported their opinions about how implementation of the program is prioritized in an online questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the following four topics: the characteristics of the study programs; the factors of

motivation behind choosing Hungarian higher education; various student and other services provided by the universities; and the students' social and educational background. The students answered the questionnaire between June and August 2017. The study surveyed 2825 international, degree-seeking, scholarship students who were enrolled in 27 universities in Hungary during the 2016/2017 academic year (Hangyál–Kasza, 2017).

Findings: The Main Trends in Inbound Student Mobility

In Hungary the main pillar of internationalization is student mobility. Over the past 5-10 years, the number of international students has dramatically increased. In 2017, international student enrollment at Hungarian institutions of higher education has reached 32,000. This means that 11.5 percent of all students are international, which leads to a more diverse and larger body of international students. In addition, it is important to highlight that in Hungary international students can be categorized into four main groups: (1) degree-seeking students who come from neighboring countries and speak Hungarian as a first language, (2) degree-seeking international students who study in the field of Medical and Health Sciences and they don't speak Hungarian as a native-language, (3) degree-seeking international students who mostly come from the sending countries such as China, Turkey, Nigeria and Iran, and they don't speak Hungarian as a native-language (4) the group of international students who primarily participate in short-term (credit or exchange) mobility and they don't speak Hungarian as a native-language.

In 2018, the overall number of international students continues to increase. A record high number of 35,480 international students started their studies in Hungary in this year. The main sending countries for these students were: Germany, China, Romania, Iran, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Turkey, and Nigeria.

Table 1

Number of international students per study level in the last 4 years (Source: Datasets of Higher Education Information System)

<i>Level of training</i>	<i>Fall 2015</i>	<i>Fall 2016</i>	<i>Fall 2017</i>	<i>Fall 2018</i>
College level program	24	-	-	
University level program	32	3	-	
Advanced vocational program	94	128	116	115
Postgraduate specialist training course	338	370	300	661
Doctoral program (Ph.D./DLA)	852	1 085	1 489	1 755
Master program (MA/MSc)	2 830	3 592	4 520	5 322
Integrated (one-tier) Master program	9 308	9 884	10 259	10 643
Bachelor program (BA/BSc)	12 677	13 566	15 625	16 976
Total	26 155	28 628	32 309	35 472

The trends show significant differences at different study levels. The number of undergraduate students has been increasing in recent years. In 2017, there were 4481 students participating in exchange programs; in 2018, this number of students reached up to 4697 students. In addition to the countries immediately surrounding Hungary, a great number of students came from China, Turkey, Germany, and Italy. Within the undergraduate degree programs, the following fields were popular: business and management, nursing and patient care (physiotherapy), computer science, computer science engineering, and tourism and management. Sixty-one percent of the undergraduate students were enrolled in English-taught study programs, the rate of students studying in the Hungarian language is 37%.

The number of international students studying at the master's level has doubled in the past 4 years. The number of students enrolled into master's degree programs reached 4,520 in 2017, and 5,322 in 2018. A considerable number of masters' candidates came from China, Syria, Azerbaijan and Jordan, apart from those who came from the neighboring countries. The most popular courses in 2017 were international relations, international economics and business, psychology, management and leadership, and computer science engineering. The number of students pursuing integrated master study programs has risen at a slower pace in the past two years. Among the courses, most of the international students chose medical, dental, veterinary, and pharmacy programs. The main sending countries for these programs at this level in 2017 were Germany, Iran, Norway, Israel, and Nigeria. The languages of instruction for the integrated master study programs, which are popular among international students, are mainly English and German.

International students studying at doctoral programs show an increasing number in the past two years: it was 1,489 in 2017; accounting for 4.6 percent of all international students. Previously, in 2016, this ratio was 3.8 percent (1085), and back in 2015 it was 3.2 percent (852 students). As for the doctoral program's students themselves, the most popular sending countries are Romania, India, Serbia, Slovakia, and Iraq. A larger number of doctoral student study in scientific fields of business and management, humanities and social sciences. The language of instruction is primarily English, but many international students (mainly Hungarian students from neighboring countries) are also studying in Hungarian-taught doctoral programs. Edelstein and Douglass studied Institutional Development Plans using document analysis to identify the main institutional logic behind the institutional strategic goals and internationalizing activities. The answer, to why a higher education institution develops its international co-operation, or why an institution welcomes increasing numbers of international students, is complex. According to the authors, based on their document analysis, the following two institutional logics can be identified in the case of Hungarian institutions of higher education: (1) revenue / resources and (2) market access and regional integration (Edelstein and Douglass, 2012).

The quest for new resources (financial, human etc.) has become one of the most important motivations in recent decades for higher education institutions to internationalize, especially in the pillar of higher education mobility. Fee-paying students are not only a source of income but also a long-term resource for the development of various international forms of co-

operation (Edelstein and Douglass, 2012). The analysis of the IDPs shows that increasing the number of international students as key tools for boosting revenue or resources is in the forefront of the strategic thinking at several higher education institutions.

Supporting student mobility is also a key initiative in strengthening the regional integration of the higher education institution and promoting a regional market access (Edelstein and Douglass, 2012). At the institutional level in Hungary, this logic is accentuated by the European integration (political, social and cultural integration of European countries) and the Bologna Process. A motivation of entering into a new market with the aim of increasing visibility and recognition is also clearly revealed as a priority for many Hungarian institutions.

Integration of Domestic and International Students

Limited literature exists on integration of all of these groups of students to the Hungarian university context. As the international student population in Hungary continues to diversify, therefore, Hungary's universities will have to devote much attention to the question of successful integration. International students face a number of challenges during their studies, ranging from language barriers and accommodation issues to the lack of social connections (which can be addressed by the university through creation of a mentoring or buddy system). The next part of the study brings together the results of analyzing the various datasets that reveal the main obstacles to fostering successful integration and engagement between domestic and international students.

The Motivation of International Students

The motivation and expectations of international students, and their knowledge about a host country and its higher education institutions prior to their applications, have an influence on their aspiration and satisfaction during their studies (Hangyál and Kasza, 2018). The Student Satisfaction Survey of 2017 found that 60 percent of the international students arriving in Hungary say that they had some knowledge about the country prior to their arrival. The depth of their knowledge ranged from general stereotypes to personal experience. Most of the international students selected the country at first and then chose an institution and study program based on their interests. Regarding the selection of the country, the financial support provided by the Hungarian state (in most cases the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship) and the presumed high level of education were mentioned as dominant incentive factors. Hungary's relative affordability and central location within Europe was also a decisive factor. International students primarily reported having gained knowledge on the Hungarian study programs via the websites of various mobility programs and scholarships as a result of individual searches, but reported that they also considered the opinions and experience of other students (Hangyál and Kasza, 2018).

Satisfaction of International Students with Teaching and Student Services

In general, the results of Student Satisfaction Survey in 2017 indicate that international students are satisfied with the environment and services experienced in Hungary, and they would also recommend that their acquaintances study in Hungary. Among their positive experiences, they mention the nice atmosphere of Hungarian cities and the wide range of intercultural opportunities. As negative characteristics, the introverted personality of Hungarian people and the generally low level of foreign language proficiency were highlighted, as both factors make it difficult to establish personal relationships and to manage administrative tasks and matters. Furthermore, among negative factors, survey takers also mentioned that since many international students do not speak Hungarian, they may face abuse or can be deceived easily.

International students are significantly more critical when judging the services, leisure opportunities, and the openness of students and teachers in Hungarian higher education institutions than were Hungarian students judging their fellows (Lannert, 2018). Domestic and international students generally know where and to whom to turn to with questions, and they are also satisfied with university administration. The activities of international offices and coordinators, as well as the mentor services provided, are appropriate according to international students.

Many of the international students participating in exchange programs or short-term mobility programs were partly satisfied with the quality of education. According to the respondents, though there are excellent professors providing high-quality education, the courses are not taken “seriously,” especially regarding the final exams. It seems that this kind of “lightness” is a mutual consensus between both professors and students. The students studying in the framework of a scholarship program are generally satisfied with their university and study programs; however, many of them find their accommodation and other related institutional services (housing services) problematic. A few international students have highlighted that they were expecting more practice-oriented education. In the case of domestic students, this point has also been mentioned several times. Regarding their plans, almost half of the international students surveyed in the online questionnaire think that it is likely that they would continue their studies in Hungary and 21 percent of them think that they would like to live in Hungary in the long term. After finishing their studies in Hungary, a few of them are planning to return to their sending country. It is important to most of the students surveyed to gain more international experience, though, whether through additional schooling, traveling, or working.

Motivations and Aspirations of Domestic Students

In general, Hungarian students are aware of the ongoing internationalization processes at their university and are well informed about international mobility programs. Nearly all students have heard about the various mobility programs, for example, the Erasmus + program, from university announcements and from other students. Nevertheless, those polled were less familiar with some of the other available programs, such as Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship program (Lannert 2018). Thirteen percent of the students surveyed had already taken part in

international mobility, exchange programs, or the Erasmus + program. Students tend to be involved in international programs during the middle of their undergraduate studies, in their second or third academic year. Students have identified gaining experience and the development of language proficiency as the main goal of international placement, followed by the demand for a change of scene and then by professional prestige. According to the respondents, the most popular destinations for Hungarian exchange students are Germany, Italy, Austria, and Portugal.

Regarding the motivation of domestic students to pursue their studies abroad, 37 percent of the respondents indicate that they do not plan international mobility in the future at all, due to their limited financial resources or uncertain language skills (Lannert 2018). Several students noted a desire to gain international experience; however, they also indicated that they were not able to extend their study period with an Erasmus semester, since in Hungarian HEIs it is difficult to transfer courses or credits completed abroad. Other students have heard that the Erasmus + program is an occasion for partying, and some say the half-year semester is too expensive (Lannert 2018). Many students do not take advantage of international studies because they do not want to break away from family and friends for half a year. Many of them would prefer to take part in shorter-term studies. Those students who are planning to participate in an international mobility program in the future mostly would like to finance it from a scholarship program supported by the European Union and would prefer to go to Western Europe, North America, or Northern Europe.

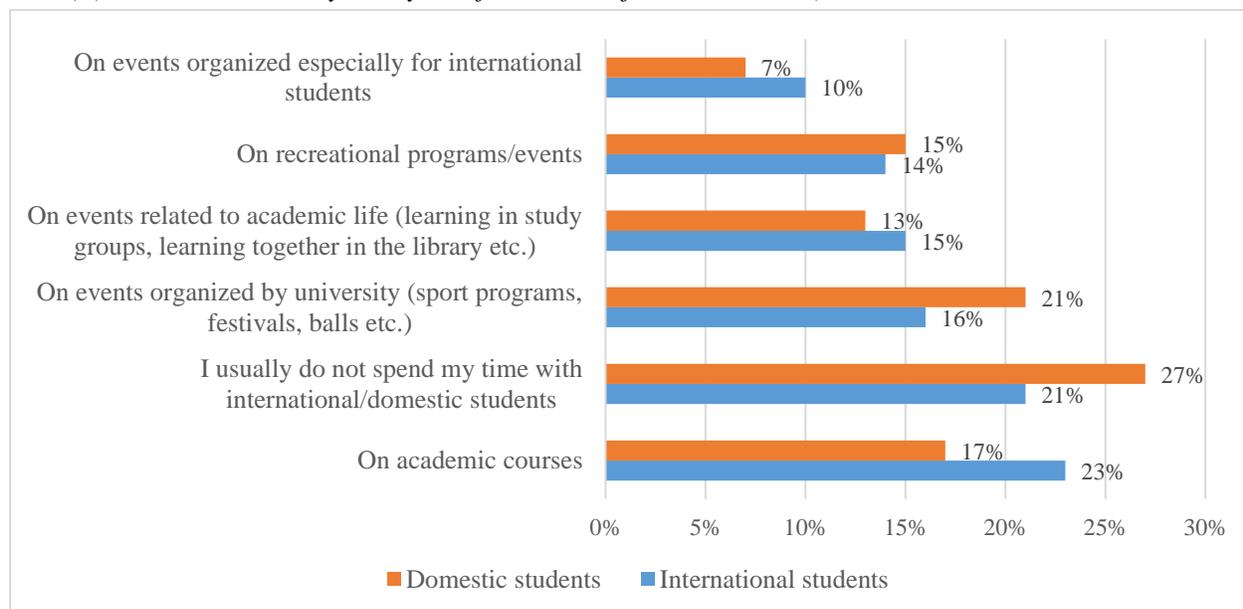
The Main Elements of the Integration of International and Domestic Students at Undergraduate and Master level

Considering that the integration of international students must be a crucial part of a university's internationalization process, we examine both the international and domestic students' opinion, in order to move the integration discussion forward.

Regarding the internationalization of higher education, it is extremely important to integrate international students into the academic and informal communities of Hungarian universities, and to increase the extent of "mixing" the two group of students. The results show that there is a greater willingness from the side of international students to contact Hungarian students, and Hungarian students are less open to getting acquainted with international students (Lannert 2018). The most typical meeting spaces for international and domestic students can be realized in the framework of common coursework, informal social events, and sporting events organized by the university. However, due to the absence of opportunities, a large number of international and domestic students never spend time with the members of the other group (Figure 1). Both groups thus require more programs that would bring them together. The interviews showed that there is no real cross-section of the programs organized for Hungarian and for international students, since the Hungarians do not participate in programs for international students, and vice versa. In many cases, international students do not even receive any information about those events which are not specifically organized for them.

Figure 1

On what types of programs/events do you spend time with domestic/international students? (N=2373) (Source: Secondary analysis of datasets of Lannert 2018)



Many of the domestic and international students would prefer to participate in joint courses or projects. The Hungarian students who are already involved in joint courses and projects have positive experiences of getting to know the perspectives of international students with different backgrounds, although all of them emphasized that there were always some difficulties during the co-operation due to the lack of language proficiency, or because the students did not know each other well enough.

In addition to the lack of opportunities, the connections between the two groups also seem to be influenced by the fact that Hungarian students are typically not very open or interested in engaging with others. In most of the cases, students themselves initiated connections with the members of the other group based on their personal motivation. Hungarian students judge international students as being more open than they are seen in turn, and international students have reported more Hungarian friends than the international friends reported by Hungarian students.

Table 2

Satisfaction of international students with relationships and helpfulness of various actors N=2825 (Source: Student Satisfaction Survey 2017)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relationship with your teachers	4.26	0.911
Relationship with your fellow international students	4.38	0.841

Relationship with your fellow Hungarian students	3.76	1.183
Helpfulness of the tandem/buddy/mentor student partner	3.68	1.229
Helpfulness of Hungarian students	3.69	1.159
Helpfulness of University/College staff in administrative issues	4.12	1.002
Student counseling services	3.76	1.057
Student mentoring services	3.68	1.148

According to the professors and the leaders of the universities, the communication between international and domestic students is problematic almost everywhere, a situation caused by the different courses offered to these groups. There are also efforts made by the professors to create a common space for student's communication, but these might fail due to the lack of interest on the part of students.

Integration of Domestic and International Doctoral Students

The number of doctoral students studying in Hungary nearly doubled between 2006 and 2016. While in the fall semester of 2006, 719 international doctoral students were enrolled in Hungarian universities, this number rose to 1351 by 2016. This rise suggests that doctoral schools have made more progress with respect to internationalization than Hungarian higher education as a whole.

Doctoral candidates are important contributors in many fields of academic research at universities. International doctoral students also provide opportunities for domestic students to gain new perspectives on knowledge; however, not much attention in the literature has been devoted to how these students perceive their own experiences. For this reason, in the next part of the study we focused on better understanding the perspectives of doctoral students studying in Hungary on integration issues.

If our intention is to improve the competitive position of Hungary's universities in the internationalization rankings, raising the number of doctoral students and the quality of their studies is indispensable. The number of international students is the most visible indicator of the internationalization of any university. International students not only raise the prestige of an institution, but they also bring significant revenues or resources to both the university and country. From a quality perspective, extremely important indicators are staff mobility, the presence of professors with international reputations, students' active participation in international research projects, and the publication of research results in prestigious academic journals alongside the acquisition of patent rights.

Removing the walls existing between international and domestic students at doctoral schools should be a top priority strategic goal. To achieve this goal, doctoral schools are expected to organize joint programs; however, these currently only happen occasionally. It seems that students of both groups are routinely informed only about events closely related to the

doctoral program or course, and rarely if ever invited into other opportunities to mingle or collaborate.

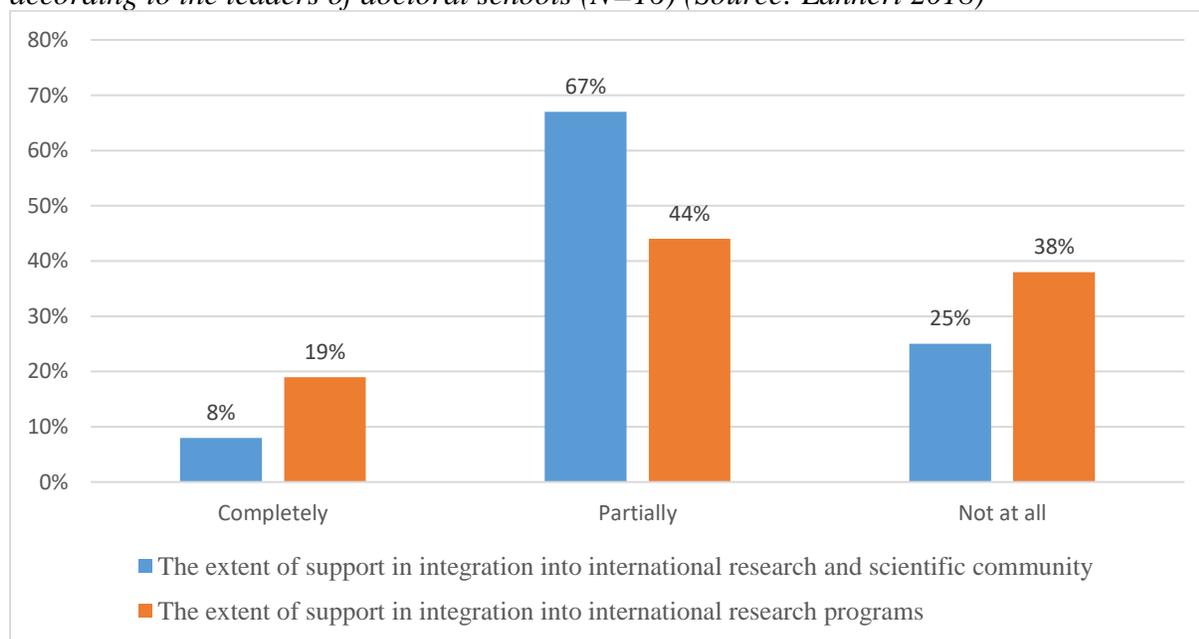
Regarding the mobility of Ph.D. students in Hungary, we can see that if Hungarian Ph.D. students go abroad, it is usually based on their individual initiative. There are no mobility programs to be handled at the doctoral level, although the conference attendance of Ph.D. candidates is supported for Hungarian and international students equally, without any distinctions.

In line with their financial resources, doctoral schools make efforts to provide the opportunity for students to attend one major European conference per year. Doctoral schools also support the submission of scholarship to international publications.

In doctoral schools--based on the survey responses of professors who teach in doctoral schools--there is a possibility for Ph.D. students to obtain course credits for research projects completed; nevertheless, only 38% of respondents indicated that their students are involved in international research programs, and only one quarter of them responded that the doctoral schools take steps to involve their students in international professional or academic communities and associations, see Figure2.

Figure 2

The extent of support in integrating international students into academic and scientific life according to the leaders of doctoral schools (N=16) (Source: Lannert 2018)



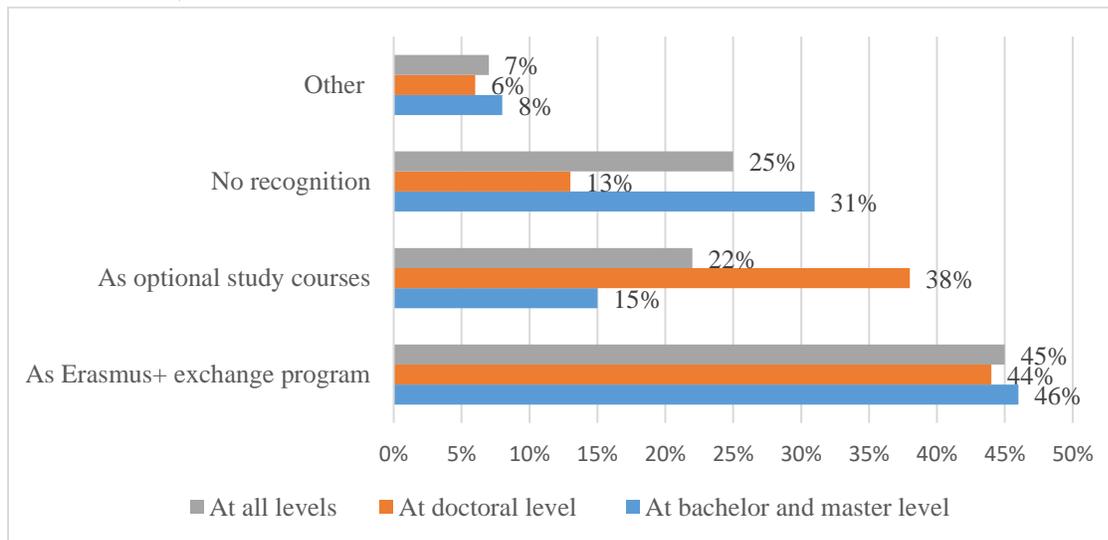
Fifty percent of the Hungarian students taking part in the research reported that their research activity is mostly obstructed by poor infrastructure, 27 percent of them mentioned the inadequate support of teachers and supervisors, and 23 percent of them mentioned the lack of

opportunities. International students have the same problems; nevertheless, in their case communication breakdowns and language barriers are also deterrents.

According to the quarter of the Hungarian respondents their credits earned by international partial studies or exchange program (study in another HEI in abroad) have been recognized by their home universities, see Figure 3.

Figure 3

Credit recognition in diploma supplement according to the university staff, N=16 (Source: Lannert 2018)



Facilitating Student Mobility at Doctoral Schools

In terms of student services, Hungarian doctoral schools are not independent units. At the university level (hierarchically above the doctoral level in the university structure), specifically organized units are in charge of communicating with international students and updating web pages. Informing international students of the availability of learning opportunities and study programs is the responsibility of these international offices. Also, the international offices coordinate the international student services at the institutional level. Therefore, these university level based units are responsible for supporting undergraduate, master and Ph.D. students.

The Research Report on International Students in Higher Education Institutions in Hungary suggests that the development of institutional practices is a learning process, and with increasing numbers of international students, universities must continuously work to learn more about how to make these relationships the most effective and beneficial for all participants (Lannert, 2018).

As demonstrated earlier, the possibility of hosting international students was created by specific programs such as Erasmus, Erasmus +ⁱⁱ, Stipendium Hungaricum or Horizon2020ⁱⁱⁱ. By the introduction of these programs, project management units were established, that are able to

effectively support the orientation of international students, and handle the tasks associated with internationalization. These units have been integrated gradually into the institutional structure at most Hungarian universities. The increasing number of international students brought new tasks and challenges. To improve the quality of the related student services (housing services, student mentoring and buddy system), those institutional actors have been involved who have never previously carried out project tasks. Therefore, these organizations also have become part of internationalization (for example student support organizations, that had previously been focused on Hungarian students only, associations of Ph.D. students).

One of the weaknesses of Hungarian doctoral schools that they are not sufficiently active in supporting their students' mobility. For instance, Ph.D. students need to find a host institution for themselves if they want to go abroad. Moreover, there is no formal goal for doctoral schools to define a minimum time that has to be spent abroad for doctoral students. However, it would be desirable for all Ph.D. students to be able to spend some time abroad. Taking part in an international study experience is an important expectation at European level since it can contribute to developing student's critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills. The gained professional development can help candidates become more attractive for employment.

Conclusions

This paper showed that Hungarian HEIs are becoming more engaged in the integration of international students into their school's academic and student life. However, their practice has been confronted with some challenges. The universities need to ask themselves how their work can be managed more effectively, and how to react proactively towards these challenges. Doctoral schools should place more importance on creating an inclusive organizational culture including orientation programs and support for international students. The international activities of doctoral schools in Hungary are based mainly on the individual activities of the staff. As a result, doctoral schools as institutional units are less represented at the international stage, and they typically do not have contacts with doctoral schools in abroad (Lannert, 2018). Participation in international research is not organized at the system level, it is typically based only on individual efforts and personal relationships of professors and PhD candidates. Therefore, at the beginning of their PhD studies candidates sometimes face difficulties in terms of choosing their projects, or join ongoing international research projects. It would be a valuable direction of development for all Hungarian doctoral schools to assist PhD candidates (if they needed) by organizing some research projects at the level of doctoral schools.

Both Hungarian and international students at all academic level think the language barrier is one of the main obstacles of making acquaintances. The insufficient language skills of some international students entering the university, the lack of foreign language skills of the university staff dealing with administrative issues, and the insufficient foreign language competence of some Hungarian students may cause trouble for doctoral schools. In the case of Hungarian students, the problem is not simply their deficient foreign language skills but also a communication habit which makes the student refrain from asking questions or making

comments, a habit probably acquired at school, where frontal teaching does not really favor interaction in class. A potential development framework would be the more intensive usage of foreign-language literature in Hungarian language courses and a wider availability of foreign language courses for Hungarian students.

Regarding social contacts, most universities help international students socialize within the framework of a mentor or buddy program that includes the organization of several leisure time programs as well. However, most other events, like performances, presentations, and lectures, are in Hungarian. To draw a lesson from this, universities need to apply a more integrative approach in the area of student services and to create active student communities.

It is important to emphasize that both international and Hungarian students wish to have more programs that would bring them together. The empirical findings show that many of the Hungarian and international students also would like to take part in joint courses or joint (research) projects. It seems that events organized specifically for international students help to mix students with only very low effectiveness, while the combined sports programs, parties, and learning-related programs are more suitable occasions for connecting the two groups.

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Further resources:

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ⁱ The support of student mobility in Europe was created by specific programs such as Erasmus, Erasmus +, CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Program for University students).

ⁱⁱ Erasmus Program is a European exchange student program that was launched in 1987 with the aim to provide foreign exchange options for student and staff between universities. https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/anniversary_en

Erasmus+ is the program of the EU in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020, which - compared to Erasmus- additionally includes opportunities to study, train or volunteer abroad for students, teachers, youth workers and volunteers. The Program supports transnational cooperation and mobility among education, training, and youth institutions and organizations. https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-programme-guide-2019_en

ⁱⁱⁱ Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Framework program for research and innovation, in which approximately 77 billion EUR of funding is available for the period of 2014 to 2020. The program supports initiatives that fit for its 3 priorities. (excellent science, industrial leadership, societal challenges) (<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/what-horizon-2020>).

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Laura Kovács completed her Ph.D. studies as a full time candidate in Political Science, at the University of Pécs. She obtained her MA degree in political science as well. Her academic interest revolves around the international cooperation of cities. She investigated why local authorities become increasingly more international and how the concept of “networking” can be interpreted. Since in Europe these issues are strongly connected to the European Union, she also

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Georgina Kasza is Ph.D. Candidate at Doctoral School of Educational Science of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest (Hungary). She obtained her MA degrees in history and sociology. Her main research interests are higher education policy and equity in education. Next to higher education her professional interests also include public and adult education. Her doctoral research covers internationalization in Hungarian higher education. She focuses on how internationalization-related policies can be implemented at the institutional level, how the different policy mechanisms and tools can change the institutional practices. The international student mobility is a key topic of the research. Her doctoral research is supported by the ÚNKP-17-3 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry of Human Capacities. Prior to her doctoral studies, she had already worked on international student mobility in the frame of several research projects. Between 2010 and 2011 she analyzed the mobility-related data of National Graduate Tracking System. After that, she was involved in a research project which focused on statistical and empirical datasets in higher education. Since 2016 she has continuously analyzed the various empirical and statistical datasets related to international mobility in higher education. Recently her interest has turned to the international mobility of adult/mature students. She is working for Tempus Public Foundation.