

**7 SEMESTERS - 2 DEGREES WITH THE DOUBLE
DEGREE PROGRAM AT BUDAPEST BUSINESS SCHOOL,
FACULTY OF COMMERCE, CATERING AND TOURISM**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of our research is to reveal and explore deeper motivations and experiences of the Bachelor double degree program of Budapest Business School, University of Applied Sciences, College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism. Furthermore, this year the European Commission has a historical anniversary of the Erasmus Programme, which gave us the idea to emphasize this program in our research as well, because in most cases the double degree program is related to the Erasmus+ scholarships. We also had a personal motivation to investigate this topic, as the authors of this research are currently completing their double degree studies at Hof University of Applied Sciences, in Germany.

First, we searched for facts and aims about the double degree and the Erasmus Programme, then we analyzed the data from the BBS CCCT Erasmus+ participation rate in a 8 years of period. Due to the topic and the small number of interviewees, we decided to conduct depth interviews. The interviewees were selected by the snowball method and arbitrarily from the sample, which was fundamentally small, and after the short introduction of the research questions, the main issues were revealed. Exceptionally interesting results have been produced, which can be found in the research and in the annex. The most important proposition (because in qualitative research no concrete conclusions can be drawn, the results are not representative) has been formulated in the following statements. The double degree program is an outstanding opportunity for the students of BBS, because they can be awarded with their own university's and the partner university's degree as well in the same period. Furthermore, the students of the program can gain competitive advantage on the labour market and professional language skills, just like widespread intercultural competences.

On the other hand, our results according to the double degree program awareness in BBS CCCT was only partially fulfilled, because the results showed us that there is no specific promotion activity from the CCCT side to emphasized the program.

INTRODUCTION

In our research, we would like to analyze and explore deeper motivations and experiences behind the double degree program of Budapest Business School, College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism at the Bachelor level. One of the main reasons for our special topic selection was primarily personal motivations: in March 2017, we were honored in Germany by the invitation of Hof University of Applied Sciences Academic Advisor of the International Management course, Professor Dr. Peter Schäfer as lecturers at the "60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and the 30th Anniversary of the Erasmus Programme, moreover the Brexit" which is an event that plays a significant role in today's political life. (60 Jahre Römische Verträge, 30 Jahre Erasmus - und nun der Brexit!?) Feeling the importance of the event we started the scientific preparations weeks before the conference about the European

Union and the Erasmus Programme. As young students, only the two of us participated in the conference and our main task was to represent the views of young people in the European Union, including the advantages and disadvantages of the EU and the opportunities the Erasmus Programme offer. After the success of the podium discussion we decided to make a further investigation about the topics of the conference: how the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme can influence students to spend semesters abroad.

Moreover, the authors of this research are currently complete their studies in Germany as double degree students from the Commerce and Marketing (in English) BA course from the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism (furthermore: CCCT) of the Budapest Business School – University of Applied Sciences (furthermore: BBS). As we have been living in Hof for the last nine months and attending the courses at Hof University of Applied Sciences which is one of the four partner universities of BBS CCCT, we had a broad knowledge about how this program operates in the real life. We were outstandingly motivated and curious about the behind motivations and experiences of the students who are also participating in this unique experience. On the other hand, our questions are also related to our university studies: in Commerce and Marketing we had several subjects in connection with marketing research or research methods. The third reason for choosing this topic was that there were no similar research in this topic done before in BBS (such as double degree program and its marketing), so we had a chance to execute real, own analysis instead of analyzing former research.

METHODOLOGY

Definition of double degree program

There were remarkable changes in the field of the labour market in the last decades. Nowadays, most of the students need to know at least two foreign languages in intermediate or professional level to get a diploma. Moreover, in our world economic and social globalisation, internationalization, intercultural relations and experiences play a significant role in the everyday life. One way to gain competitive advantage is by intercultural competences and experience, moreover learning foreign languages in their original environment is a specific characteristic of the double degree program.

The double degree program is a special contractual agreement between two partner universities which contains that during your studies or after a further one or two semesters of the required studying period you have the possibility to get the partner institution's degree, as well as your home university's degree. The degrees of foreign universities are of great prestige in the labour market. The double degree programs not only give you specific language knowledge at a very high level, but also you will get to know the economy, society, and working environment of another country, which matters a lot in a multicultural environment. Furthermore, this is an outstanding experience, you can acquire new knowledge and language

skills like in the “normal” Erasmus semesters abroad, but in the end of your studies you will have a degree about your abroad experiences as well. An important element of the double degree program is that under an agreement between two or more institutions, students do not have to pay for a tuition fee. Students already enrolled in higher education institutions can apply for double-degree programs - applicants are selected by means of a proposal, including on the basis of the remarkable study results and their language skills.

BA double degree programs at BBS

The Budapest Business School – University of Applied Sciences is officially the oldest public business school in the world, with the establishment in 1857. Since its founding, BBS always has been on the list of the top Hungarian higher education institutions that have been specializing in economics. Following closely the international tendencies it has continuously expanded and shaped its training offerings, also adapted to the social needs generated by the internationalization. Budapest Business School offers an incomparable number of double degree opportunities in the case of Bachelor Programmes (BA): At the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism in the Commerce and Marketing BA course there are four possibilities for the students to get another degree from the BBS’s partner universities: At Hof University of Applied Sciences and at Kempten University of Applied Sciences in Germany, at University of Oviedo in Spain, and at University of Le Havre in France. At College of International Management and Business on the English held International Business Economics BA course, there are several chances to have a double degree at the end of the study programs: at School of International Studies Avans in the Netherlands, at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences in Germany and at College of Management of USC in Taiwan. Moreover, in the French held International Business Economics BA course the students can earn a double degree from Université de Picardie Jules Verne in France. These eight partnerships prove to us that the Budapest Business School provides unique chances for participation in the internationalization.

Briefly introduction to the Erasmus Programme

Erasmus (*European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*) is an exchange program for students in Europe financed by the European Commission. The original Erasmus was launched as an exchange program in 1987, with the aim of enabling students in higher education to experience how to live and study in another country. Nowadays the name of the program has changed to Erasmus Plus or Erasmus+ and contains all the schemes for education, sport, training, and youth. We can say that today the program offers many additional individual and institutional opportunities, including volunteering, internships or participation in international projects. The program now extends beyond Europe.

Since the launch of Erasmus+ in 2014, a total number of 2 million people have been involved in various fields to study, volunteer and experience abroad. Over the past 30 years, over 9 million people have participated in the program. (European Commission, 2017)

Erasmus at Budapest Business School, College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism

Those students who want to participate in the Erasmus+ program at CCCT can study abroad one or two semesters in 58 partner institutions in 19 countries. The college has relations in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, United Kingdom, Finland, France, Netherlands, Croatia, Ireland, Poland, Germany, Norway, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, and Turkey.

In our research, we are focusing on the data from the academic year of 2009/2010. We investigated how the numbers of the students who participated in the program, their destination countries and the number of the partner universities changed through this 8 years of period. As *Figure 1* shows, till the 2012/13 academic year there were more than 70 students involved in the program every year, but after that there was a significant decrease of the participants from the 2013/2014 academic year. In the case of the destination countries the number has never went below 10, with the tipping number at 14, so we can say that there is continuity in the number of the participant countries. The number of the partner universities is between 21 and 35 which means that students from CCCT participating in the opportunities of available partner universities in approximately 30%-60%.

The Erasmus and the double degree program are related to each other while most of the students at the double degree program apply for the scholarship from Erasmus+.

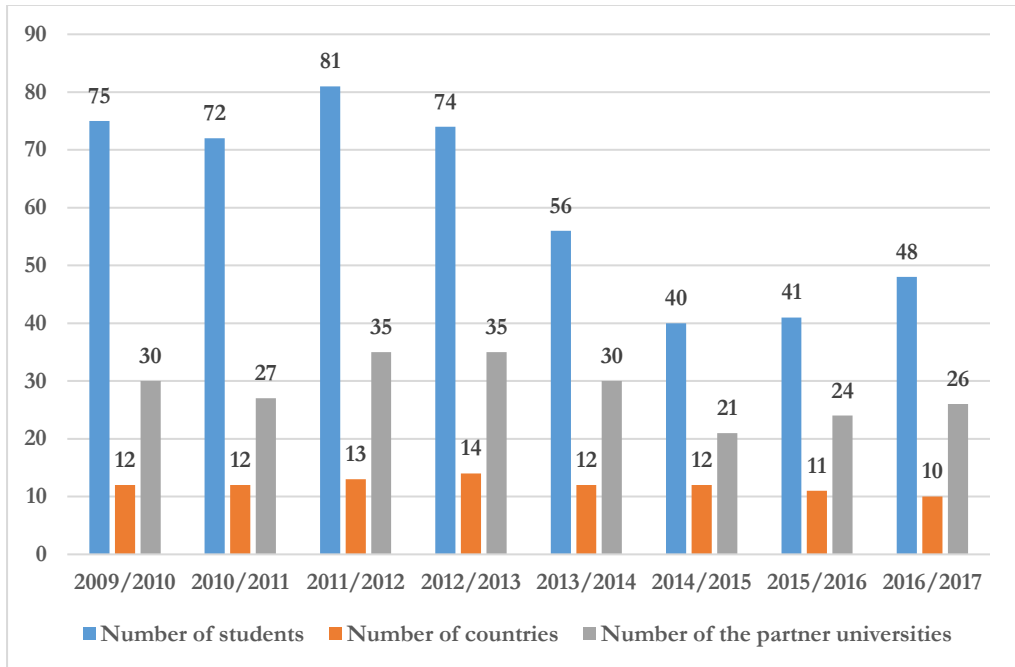


Figure 1. Participation in the Erasmus Programme at BBS CCCT

Source: Own construction

Sample and methodology

Selection of the research method

During the preparation and the topic selection phases of our research quite a high number of factors influenced the selection of the research methodology. First of all, the only possible solution for us was to conduct primary research, since there are no previous similar analyses made on this topic.

After we have identified our hypothesis we had to choose the methods of our data collection. With help of the BBS CCCT's International Office we had the opportunity to send our questionnaires via direct e-mails for the double degree program participants who have attended the program from the academic year of 2009/2010. Unfortunately, we couldn't anticipate that the number of the participants of the BBS CCCT's double degree program were so small in the last seven years: There were only 15 students from that two of them are writing this research, so we only have 13 respondents, which is not a big number enough to use the given information as sufficient quantitative answers for coming to adequate results in the end. After this realisation, we have clarified that our research questions are based on the motivational factors, the value of the double degree and how to make it more attractive to the students that is why we would like to understand the deeper drivers, thoughts and

opinions of the students. These kinds of information cannot be obtained in a clearly structured and formalized way; we had to find a primary qualitative research method that meets the conditions of our plan to conduct the research.

Due to its nature and the topics according to our research questions, the number of possible interviewees in our case was very low (numerically 13). In the focus group discussions there are usually 8-12 people sit together and split into homogeneous groups (Malhotra, 2001). The main argument against the focus group technique is the fact of the ability of influencing, that people tend to change their own opinions before a bigger crowd because of the role of the group pressure. (Gyulavári et al., 2012) This is confirmed by the focus group research that we have made earlier. After all we started to focus on the method and the advantages of an in-depth interview.

Why an in-depth interview?

The in-depth interview, like the focus group methodology, is a direct form of information acquisition, but the interviews are conducted individually. The qualitative interview is "a uniquely sensitive and powerful way to get acquainted with the experiences of the interview subjects have drawn from their everyday world and the already lived experiences of this world." (Kvale, 2005, p. 79) This methodology was the most suitable option for our research: ideal for a small sample of people, can be executed quickly in relaxed conditions, via the Internet as well, and the most important arguments beside it were understanding and exploring individual motives of the different people completing the same study program. As we are also students of the double degree program, we are currently living in Germany. This is why we had to pay attention already in the beginning of research process to choose a method which can be conducted via Internet and in-depth interviews are proved to be appropriate from this point of view as they could be conducted via Skype or on the phone as well.

Taking into consideration all the mentioned aspects, our final decision was the in-depth interview as our research method.

About the sampling process

As we have outlined in the previous chapters, the ultimate research methodology has become the in-depth interview, which is a primary type of qualitative research focusing on individual opinions. Since qualitative research is not a representative type of sampling, therefore only theoretical sampling can be used in this case. In addition, qualitative research does not strive to have a random, large sample, but rather to individual cases where the aim is to present the diversity of the viewpoints. Typically, non-probability sampling is conducted, such as judgemental sampling or snowball method. (Gyulavári et al., 2012)

Since our research question was limited to a very small sample of people, for us the only way was the non-probability sampling. During our research, we first set out some criteria for searching potential subjects (e.g.: past or current double degree students from the BBS CCCT), thus defining the sampling frame (Gyulavári et al, 2012). We shared the interview with the snowball method, where the sample elements provided information to the interviewer not only about themselves but also about the person they named. (Frank - Srijders, 1994) By this method we also reached people who we could not personally know. Finally, based on the distributed questionnaires and in addition to a few other aspects (e.g.: studying abroad currently as a double degree student), we chose the final interviewees with judgemental sampling where, as the head of the research, we decided about who are going to participate in the sample. (Gyulavári et al., 2012)

Research questions and propositions

In our research we are mainly focusing in the frames of the 30 years of Erasmus Programme to the operation of the double degree program at Budapest Business School CCCT Department. Based on this topic we declared three main research questions that we found as the most significant ones. These questions are the followings:

- 1) What are those most important motivational factors why the students decided to apply for the double degree program?
- 2) How the value of the two degrees is increased by the gained knowledge from the host university, the professional and the intercultural experiences?
- 3) Are most of the students aware of the double degree program at CCCT?

Choosing the main focus areas of the study our university studies also had influence in it, as we are currently participating at the double degree program in one of the Budapest Business School's partner university, at Hof University of Applied Sciences in Germany. Moreover, our Bachelor studies are in the field of Commerce and Marketing, so we believe that we have sufficient experience and knowledge to create the appropriate research questions and propositions with a professional background.

The guide of the in-depth interview (for the current double degree students and for the expert as well) started with three introductory questions, where we mainly focused on how they became aware of the possibility of the double degree program, why it was attractive to them and when they decided to go and spend a year at a foreign university to study. These questions were mainly used to create the atmosphere and for the better understanding of the interviewee. The main issue is closely related to the specific research questions: we had not only asked them about the double degree program of BBS CCCT, but in the beginning of the main issue we were interested about the Erasmus Programme and if they have experienced something special about the 30 years' anniversary of the program. We have asked them to share what they think as an advantage of the double degree in contrast to a normal

degree and their opinion about the enhancement of the double degree program. In the final part, each interviewee could share his or her own ideas and further comments about the interview.

As we chose the methodology of qualitative research, on one hand we used in-depth interview to gather information that we needed for the study, on the other hand we applied for the non-probability sampling method where the subject of the research did not have equal chance to be selected. This technique is based on personal opinions and experiences that we were interested in, but these are the reasons why we could not predict the results in advance and make hypotheses. Although we were able to make some propositions to the three main research questions:

- 1) The most significant motivational factors why the students decided to apply for the double degree program according to our views are that during 7 or 9 semesters students are able to graduate from two universities and the scholarship that they receive from the Erasmus Programme is also an important decision factor.
- 2) We expect that students who complete this program are going to gain competitive advantages on the labour market while after participating in the program they are going to enjoy professional language skills and unexceptional intercultural competences.
- 3) We believe that the double degree program can be made more attractive to the current and future students of the CCCT.

RESULTS

Participation in the double degree and the Erasmus Programme

The double degree and Erasmus Programme are closely related to each other while most of the students at the double degree program use the scholarship from Erasmus+. During our research, we have identified that in the period from 2009/2010 till 2013/2014 there were no students from the BBS taking part at the double degree program which was surprising for us as there were at that period a big number of students in the Erasmus Programme. On the other hand, from 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 the participations in the Erasmus Programme started to decrease, there were 10 students who attended the double degree program: 3 students at the University of Oviedo, 5 students at the Kempten University of Applied Sciences and one student at the Hof University of Applied Sciences. In the current academic year (2016/2017) there are 5 students who are participating at the double degree program: 3 students started their semester in Oviedo, Spain, while the authors of this research studying in Hof, Germany. All in all, we can say that based on the statistics in the last 8 years (from 2009/2010 till 2016/2017) there were only 15 students who studied in the double degree program of CCCT which is compared to the number of the students at the course of Commerce and Marketing BA is infinitesimal. Also, if we are taking under consideration that 487

students spent one or two semesters abroad in this period, the double degree participants' number is minimal.

There were other interesting results according to our analysis: the distribution of the students based on their language studies is consistent between the English-taught and the Hungarian taught Commerce and Marketing BA. Our results have shown us that because of the double degree program at CCCT basically for those who have an intermediate or better German, Spanish or France language knowledge, advanced English knowledge is not obligatory to participate in the program.

On the other hand, we found that extremely strange that in the examined period of 8 years there were no students at all from the Commerce and Marketing German held BA course, because at first the German double degree programs sounds axiomatic for the participants of the German held BA course of BBS CCCT. Unfortunately, the reason why there were no double degree students at this period is a disappointing fact: The Commerce and Marketing BA course in German language - regarding the low number of candidates – did not start in 2009, 2010 and 2012, however since 2013 the course is continuing successfully.

Introduction of the interviewees

The first interviewee (male respondent, 23 years old) studies at the Budapest Business School University of Applied Sciences from 2013 September and from 2016 September he is also a student at the University of Oviedo. He originally comes from Budapest. He heard about the double degree program “...from our Spanish teacher András Kéry, who told us almost every lesson that the double degree program is a unique and outstanding opportunity to study abroad, get more language knowledge and experiences with it. The best ones can have a degree from BBS's partner university” (male respondent, 23) He thought that the Spanish double degree program is very attractive because “...you can make 2 degrees with one plus year in Spain, you must use Spanish as a foreign language and can easily improve it and you really live in Spain – not like when you are somewhere only for one semester. Moreover, the scholarship from Erasmus was also a remarkable point for me.” (male respondent, 23) He knew from the start of his university life that he wanted to participate in the double degree program of BBS.

The second interviewee is (female respondent, 22 years old), from Budapest. She is a 4th year student at the Budapest Business School University of Applied Sciences, on the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism; she is studying Commerce and Marketing in English. This interviewee is studying at the University of Oviedo in Spain, as a double degree student. She decided to enter this program because she successfully completed all compulsory subjects at the BBS so far so she lived with the possibility of the double degree program, first of all to learn another language (in this case Spanish), because she does not know yet what the advantages of the double degree program are going to be later. She has heard about this

possibility in the home university, on her Spanish lessons from her teacher who often emphasized the high standards of the program. However first she was not sure whether she would like to apply for the double degree program or not but after some time and because of the support she got from her friends and family she decided to take part in the program. In 2016 January and February she started to arrange all the paperwork that is needed to apply for the double degree program and at that time she was already very sure about that she wants to go and study in Spain for one more year. As she said *“In Spain, one year, another language and another degree, these sounded fully attractive to me”* (female respondent, 22) and also there was not any barrier in the way of her plan.

The third interviewee is (female respondent, 25 years old) studied in a Spanish dual language secondary school in Budapest. First, she attended Tourism and Hospitality BA in the Budapest Business School University of Applied Sciences but she decided to switch to the Commerce and Marketing BA major. One of the main reasons why she decided about the change was because the double degree program is only available in the Commerce and Marketing major and she thinks that this is an outstanding opportunity not only to study in abroad and but to get a degree in the end. She heard about the double degree program *“... accidentally on the corridor of BBS from one of my fellow student when I was in the Tourism and Management BA course.”* (female respondent, 25) After she switched the bachelor courses in BBS CCCT she built up her course selection as she will go to Spain, to the double degree program in the last year of studies. *“I took up the BBS courses earlier than it is written in the academic schedule – preparing for the last year abroad at the University of Oviedo.”* (female respondent, 25)

Our fourth interviewee is (male respondent, 24 years old) from Budaörs. He is also a student of the Budapest Business School on the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism, he is studying Commerce and Marketing but in Hungarian language. He is also a double degree student of the Hof University of Applied Sciences in Germany. Our interviewee heard about the double degree opportunity first on a lecture that took place some years ago at the home university CCCT department, given by a Professor from Kempten University of Applied Sciences, Germany. In the beginning he wanted to apply for the double degree program of Kempten University as he founded the Professor’s speak impressive. After this lecture he gave in his application form and his motivation letter, however he was accepted from the Hof University at the end, but he also took the possibility and went to Hof to study one more year.

All the four interviewees who took part in our in-depth interview had some characteristics in common. They are all from Budapest or from the suburb of Budapest, they are active students of the BBS College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism. As all of them are participant of the double degree program, each of them are studying Commerce and Marketing. Only one of the interviewees is completing his studies in Hungarian language at the home university, the remaining three students are studying in English. This finding justified our hypothesis that a more significant number of students choose to take part in the double degree program from the English Department than from the study program that is held in

Hungarian. Those undergraduates who are studying in a foreign language and surrounded by other foreign-speaking Erasmus students during their studies at the home university are more likely to get motivation for taking part in the Erasmus Programme and even more in the double degree program. They are going to have more courage to speak in another language than their mother tongue and they can also recognise some of the advantages of being an Erasmus or a double degree student. We received satisfying answers from our respondents to the three introductory questions as each of them could remember where they have first heard about the program or when and why they decided to take part in it. In all the cases the first informations about the existence of the program can be traced back to the home university of BBS which is a positive outcome of this part, but we still believe that only a very small amount of students in the CCT Department are aware of the opportunity of the double degree program. It was also surprising to know that our third interviewee had to change her study program from Tourism and hospitality to Commerce and Marketing to get the possibility of being a participant in the double degree program. All four of them gave the answer that first of all it was attractive to them to gain advanced language competences in a foreign speaking country and they all hoped for obtaining competitive advantage on the labour market after successfully graduating from school.

Table 1. Introduction of the interviewee's

Interviewee's gender, age, occupation	Double degree university	How did you get in touch of the double degree program of the BBS CCCT?	Why do you think that the program is an attractive opportunity?	When did you decide to participate in the double degree program?
male, 23, student in English study program	University of Oviedo, SPAIN	From his Spanish teacher at CCCT	2 degrees with one plus year, foreign language improvement, living in abroad, Erasmus scholarship	From the start of his university life
female, 22, student in English study program	University of Oviedo, SPAIN	From her Spanish teacher at CCCT	One year abroad, 2 degrees, foreign language improvement	After her friend asked her to go with him
female, 25, student in English study program	University of Oviedo, SPAIN	From a fellow student	Study in abroad and get a degree in the end	After she switched the BA courses in CCCT
male, 24, student in Hungarian study program	Hof University of Applied Sciences, GERMANY	From a German Professor at a lecture on CCCT	Gaining intercultural competences, know other people, foreign language, 2 degrees	After he took part in the lecture held by a German Professor

Source: Own construction

Introduction of the expert

We agreed that for better insights as well as for totally covering of our topic we should ask the opinion about mainly the same issues from an expert, who has professional views, job-related activities and experiences that may serve our study in an exceptional way. We have

invited Ms Katalin Faluvégi, Course Director of the German Commerce and Marketing BA, to share her ideas about the Erasmus and the double degree program with us. She graduated with her second degree in Economics in 1997 and she is currently finishing her PhD academic work at the University of Pécs. She is working for the Budapest Business School since 1997, in that year she immediately received as one of her tasks to start to organise and make it possible to establish a German language course in the field of Commerce on the university which she successfully managed as in 1998 September the course came into operation. After long discussions in 2003 the first double degree agreement with the Hof University of Applied Sciences was signed and she finds it still today very attractive as she explained, *“it means a serious added value to the degree which can be obtained at our home university.”* (Ms Faluvégi)

Evaluation of the main issue

After the warm-up questions we have introduced the main issues to the interviewees which were specifically related to our research topic. In this session we started by asking questions in connection with Erasmus Programme focused on their personal as well as on general issues. In the next part we reached our most important topics, the question of the double degree program from their point of view and also to the problem of promotion.

The first question we asked in the second and main part of our interview was in connection with the finances and scholarships of these four students by the Erasmus Programme. It is known that only those students are honoured to get the financial support from Erasmus to their participation who achieved advanced results in the university so far. We were curious, out of four people usually how many receive this money or any other type of scholarship, as beside of the Erasmus scholarship there are many possibilities that can be applied for as a financial support for student's semesters spent abroad (both of us for example are in the Campus Mundi excellence scholarship). Three of the interviewees are in that rewarding situation that they are receiving the Erasmus+ scholarship as a further promotion for their semesters spending abroad. *“This is an advantage, a significant help from the program.”* (female respondent, 22) The same interviewee had a remark that she missed to apply for other scholarships and our third respondent has also emphasized that *“unfortunately she found out about these possibilities too late.”* (female respondent, 25) which let us to draw a conclusion. Either these helpful monetary supports are either not emphasised enough or students do not take appropriate amount of time on getting as much information as it is possible about these potentials.

In the next question we inquired about the benefits of being an Erasmus student according to the interviewee's own experiences. Three of them highlighted those advantages they can feel while they are spending their semester abroad. They talked about the importance of acquiring foreign language skills and one of them also added that *“the advantages for us are a little bit different because we have already could speak in English well when we came to Spain”* (male respondent, 23) but then he explained the benefits more generally *“the most important is improving your foreign language skills or getting familiar with new kinds of teaching methods in a different type of*

education system". (male respondent, 23) The other male respondent of the research approached this topics from the side of the Erasmus Programme and more from the organisation of the European Union because *"it is already an outstanding possibility that in the frames of the Erasmus Programme, in the European Union, students have the opportunity to go and study abroad and they do not have to pay the enrolment fee of the hosting university."* (male respondent, 24) On the other hand one of our respondents talked about what it means for her at the home university being an Erasmus and a double degree student which was also a very interesting and remarkable view to think about. She summarised it as the following: *"It was quite hard for me in this semester to enroll to the university as an active student, to solve all the administrative problems like taking up subjects, which is anyway not easy for me because I have changed the BA program. Although I study in this year in Spain, as a student I could not solve these things in a flexible way."* (female respondent, 25)

When we came to our third question we got very well-reasoned and quite diverse answers, from different point of views that we did not expect. Our first respondent was very positive about the recommendation of the Erasmus Programme, moreover he also emphasised the place itself where he is completing the double degree program, Oviedo, because it is a liveable city where people speak the original Spanish language which he found an important aspect according to his studies. The second interviewee divided the question into two parts as she founded it crucial to distinguish between the recommendation of the Erasmus Programme and the recommendation of the double degree program to others, despite the fact she also answered with a definite yes to our question. She explained her ideas in a way that who are those people or students to whom she would recommend the "normal" Erasmus Programme and who are those that she thinks should try to complete also the double degree program abroad. *"Basically I would recommend the Erasmus Programme to the students who would like to make new acquaintances because this program gives you first of all new relationships, you can be more communicative and you can also improve your language skills. Moreover I would recommend it to students who are sometimes tend to be shy and would like to change on it a bit or those who are just the opposite of shy and would like to enjoy and profiting from their language skills and confidence"*. (female respondent, 22) Our third respondent has approached the question again from another aspect as she was considering the time-consuming nature of the program and when is it worth to take part in a study program like the Erasmus. Her aspect was formulated from the examples from her closest surroundings, she mentioned her friends who earlier participated in the Erasmus Programme and the way they could manage it. She highlighted that lots of students should complete one more semester at the BBS as some of the subjects they sign up to at the host university will not be accepted by the home university. That is the main reason why she would recommend the Erasmus Programme to those students for whom it would not be a problem to complete one more semester at the university if it is needed. When she first heard about the possibility of the double degree program, she immediately started to gain as much information as possible to find out whether the program is worth to apply for as a candidate. Finally as she said, *"the double degree program is absolutely worth to spend some more time on it."* (female respondent, 25) In connection with this question our fourth respondent was again very positive

as he told as *“those students who do not take part in the Erasmus Programme are missing a good chance to get to know another culture, new people or learning the language well and seeing new places from the world.”* (male respondent, 24)

The next two questions we asked from the respondents were more specific but shorter questions; on the other hand what the results show to us is more thought-provoking. We were curious their opinions from their closest surroundings, whether they feel that a sufficient number of Hungarian students choose to take part in the Erasmus Programme and if they have heard about the occasion that the Erasmus Programme is 30 years old this year. Our respondents told us with no exception that they do not think that enough Hungarian students take the possibility of the Erasmus Programme and leave for one semester to study abroad. There were some very rational solutions and propositions they explained to us to find out the hidden reasons for it. As one of men interviewees said, *“because of the students are usually paying for their studies at the university and more likely they will have to complete one more semester as their subjects are often not accepted at home, they cannot do anything just paying for one or two more semesters. Although it is good that they have participated in the Erasmus Programme, it does not help in this way.”*(male respondent, 23) because if the subjects are not accepted, the program will not be more attractive to the university students. The second respondent highlighted as a fact that *“I believe from the BBS there are not enough Erasmus students in abroad”* (female respondent, 22) which we can also confirm with statistical data that we received from the International Office of the CCCT. We can say she was more surprised and disappointed because of as she explained, *“this place is really beautiful, not to mention the university and the professors are so exceptional, I do not understand why somebody would not to come and spend a semester here as an Erasmus student who can speak just a little bit of Spanish”.* (female respondent, 22) By asking this question the problems of the inappropriate promotion of both of the study programs were already revealed. All four of them first heard about the 30 years of Erasmus anniversary during our interviews.

The following two questions are closely connected to each other; usually we asked them together from our interviewees. For our first respondent, it does mean a lot that he will have working experience from abroad as he is doing his internship also in Oviedo and as he said *“you get another degree from a foreign university so in this case your language skills are accredited and acknowledged by graduation, which is anyway a plus for companies.”* (male respondent, 23) The second man from the in-depth interview group believes that it counts more significantly abroad but at home he would like to apply for jobs at German companies *“where German language skills matters a lot and I may get competitive advantage because of it”.* (male respondent, 24) He also pointed out that we are going to be among those students who are graduating from the BBS BA program with two degrees and that makes this program and us special when we are speaking about if the double degree gives you more benefits or not. Our second interviewee just replied as *“exactly this was the reason why I went for a double degree”* (female respondent, 22) when we asked this question, she explained she had spent significant amount of time in England before where she learned the language well where she made lots of contacts and now she is

trying to do the same but in Spain. She has quite the same intentions as the previous interviewee, she hopes *“by knowing another language (Spanish) beside English is hopefully going to give me a competitive advantage on the labour market in Hungary.”* (female respondent, 22) She is interested in the Public Relations sector; she would like to get a Spanish-English position in the future. She also added that *“in the business life today Spanish has started to come to the front”* (female respondent, 22) so it is quite sure that there is a need for this kind of labour force. Although the third interviewee would like to be trained and educated more to the international market because she has a Spanish high school graduation as well, she emphasised that *“a lot depends on diligence; students should be really interested in what they are studying at the university, have a passion for completing it and to learn the language.”* (female respondent, 25) To summarise all the things we heard from them, we can say that they see lots of potential in accomplishing the double degree program, because of two main reasons: to learn foreign languages in an exceptional way and to become competitive on the labour market through their experiences abroad.

Before asking our last and one of the most important questions, we were curious about the similarities and the differences of the three different universities' (BBS, University of Oviedo, Hof University) education systems and more about the teaching methods if the students recognised any important advantages or disadvantages when correlating them to the teaching methods of our home university. What the four respondents uniformly highlighted in the first place was one big difference, the examination system in Oviedo and also in Hof. At these universities the established custom is to do only one exam from all the subjects at the end of the semester and there is no possibility to take the exam again in the same semester, in the case when the student has failed. Three out of the four respondents also added that whether or not students like this system, it is granted that they are going to learn much more with might and main and take the examination period more seriously than students at the BBS where there are second, third and sometimes also fourth chances to pass an exam within one semester. The third respondent also pointed out regarding to the topic that *“it is also beneficial for us that there will not be a day where we are going to have 4 exams after each other”*. (female respondent, 25) What our first interviewee emphasised as another difference in addition was *“there are many practical examples and even more case studies taken from real life that are included in our curriculum and help not only in learning the language but also in the better understanding of the materials as next week we always get the evaluation of last week's tasks which makes it very advantageous for us”*. (male respondent, 23) *“In Hof University I think the lectures are more open and students are more talkative as they are at the home university and it is also special here that courses named “Personal Competences” are also available for the students”* (male respondent, 24) After the interviews were conducted, we could identify the main similarities in the teaching methods of these universities as well. The results we got were that in Spain and in Germany none of the lectures are compulsory to attend and there are many in Hungary too, where there is no attendance sheet, after all it does matter in a big percentage whether students appear on the lectures or not. Professors are usually paying attention to those students who are present and solve the group works during the lectures. Another similarity which can be mentioned is that making presentations is a current,

practical and well-tired method when students have to work out different topics using their own ideas, research and hold the presentation in front of their fellow students at the lectures. These group works, case studies and presentations are usually included in the final grade of the students at all three universities. One last thing that was remarkable for us during the interviews that two out of the three students who are currently finishing their studies in Spain emphasised the Spanish mentality as an influencing factor in the teaching methodology, *“they are really flexible which is not a pro or contra in this case as it is coming from their mentality”* (female respondent, 25) The other student stated as a difference that *“there are a lot more elderly students at the university than we used to it at home, which originates from the fact that they do not hurry with their studies, they really enjoy their university years for longer than the Hungarian students in general”*. (male respondent, 23) We can find many similarities and differences, also advantages and disadvantages when we examine the education systems or the teaching methods at certain universities. In each country and every university there are good working practices institutions can be proud of but also customs that should be improved in the future in favour of their students and professors.

In the last phrase of the main questions, we revealed the most crucial issue in connection with the operation of the double degree program at the BBS CCCT. All of our respondents stated their views to the last question firmly by saying the program would provide a significant competitive advantage to the College of CCCT. On the other hand they all continued by declaring that it is not emphasised and promoted in an adequate way and we came to the conclusion that they are sure about only a minimal number of people are aware of the fact that students have the opportunity to participate in a double degree program at four universities in Germany, Spain and France from our college. Our second interviewee approached the question as a future professional, *“as a future marketing expert I would say the application for the BBS CCCT can be made much more attractive by promoting the double degree program and making people aware of it.”* (female respondent, 22) She thinks that *“no better marketing exists to our university than giving the chance to students to spend one year in abroad and get two degrees for it if they are hardworking enough.”* (female respondent, 22) While she explained it further she pointed out that the chance for students applying for the double degree program should not be based on fortune or accidental events and primarily it is also not the business language teacher’s job to promote the program. She believes that for the future potential students of the BBS it should be emphasised that if they complete the BA program’s first two or three years in Budapest, they have the possibility to go and successfully fulfil the requirements of the double degree program abroad and at the end of their studies they can leave university holding two degrees within 7 to 8 semesters. The other female of our in-depth interview group mentioned also some important instruments for promoting the program more efficiently. *“On the Education exhibitions or on the open days of our college the topic of double degree should get a lot more space, students’ attention on the Registration week should be waken up by explaining that it is worth to attend Business Language courses and write homework during the semesters and if they have good grades, are passionate enough and can speak the language in an adequate way go for the double degree abroad.”* (female respondent,

25) She added that it would be better if the attitude towards the program would be more open and motivating, it could help a lot to those students who choose to complete it. Although we can say we received quite the same answers to the last question, four out of four students made a final conclusion that the program means a high competitive advantage not only to the students participating but also to the university of BBS but it is a serious issue that there is a lack of promotion, usually people are not aware of their possibilities in connection with it so something should be done to make change this.

After we finished asking them, we thanked them that they accepted our invitation and shared their opinions with us about the operation of Erasmus and the double degree program at the BBS CCCT. We added at the end that if they have any further ideas or comments in connection with the topic they are free to say it or contact us as well. We also stated that in the case they are interested in our final results; we are going to send our study to their given e-mail addresses.

About the expert's opinion

Ms Katalin Faluvégi stated in the beginning of the interview that she is more familiar with the question in connection with the double degree program, but she made some remarkable thought concerning the Erasmus Programme to encourage students, *“it does not matter what are the ideas of students about their future, that is quite sure that they can earn such professional and life experiences through the program that otherwise may not.”* (Ms Faluvégi), although she added she does not think that enough Hungarian students live with this exceptional opportunity. It was interesting for us to find out that also our expert did not know that this year is the 30 year anniversary of the Erasmus Programme. When we asked her about the benefits of the double degree for students accomplishing it she told us significant information that we should be aware of. *“In 2002-2003 we have worked out syllabuses partnering with Hof University's delegation that allow for our truly dedicated and gifted students to take up courses at the host university that cannot be reached in our home university and vice versa, beside the cultural and language benefits.”*(Ms Faluvégi) She added that in our changing times students are going to only profit from their time spent in a multicultural atmosphere, knowing by a new kind of working culture and educational system as well and *“by participation, these young people can be hired after their studies at workplaces where otherwise maybe with lot more efforts only.”* (Ms Faluvégi) The example about one of the previous double degree students turned up here as he managed to get a job in Hong Kong right after his studies. When we asked our expert what she thinks about the double degree (is it more advantageous for students in contrast to the “normal” degree of the university), her answer was that it must be more beneficial in certain areas, particularly when students have strong intentions about working for a foreign company, also in Hungary. In the followings Ms Faluvégi emphasized that she feels the awareness among students about the double degree program is low but the world-of-mouth plays a big role in this case. When we asked about it deeper she shared with us, she is sure that *“whether by the help of one of my colleagues students are*

becoming aware and interested in the program or they hear it simply from the fellow students which is anyway a good thing but should be much more emphasized in the future. If it would have good marketing, it could be a serious image-improving possibility for our university and college as well.” (Ms Faluvégi) For our last question our expert responded in a positive way as she explained that it gives an exceptional competitive advantage that *“nowhere else in Hungary you can find so rich palette of the double degree program that it is on the BBS CCCT where lots of enthusiastic students got the chance to live with this possibility.” (Ms Faluvégi)* After we finished questioning we thank her for her acceptance of our invitation, for participating in our research and share with us her individual, valuable thought can count on.

FINAL CONSEQUENCES

After analyzing the main issues we can see the broader operation of the Bachelor double degree program of BBS CCCT. However, it is important to emphasize that because of the research qualitative nature, the results cannot be regarded as representative, but rather a discovery of intentions and understanding of different opinions about the double degree program. We had received exceptionally interesting results from the interviewee’s and the expert as well that we could work with more successfully.

All the four of the interviewees and the expert first heard about the 30 years of Erasmus Programme during our interviews what is surprising for us because in Germany it was highlighted in an outstanding way. What we found out as a clear result here is they all think and speak about the double degree program in a very positive way as they all responded with full of motivation to the question of gaining more benefits from the double degree in contrast to the “normal” BBS degree. All of them are optimistic when they talk about future possibilities on the labour market and they all had similar expectations when they chose to complete the program.

Our first proposition, that *the most significant motivational factors of the double degree program are that during 7 or 9 semesters students are to be able to graduate from two universities; and the scholarship that they receive from the Erasmus Programme* were fulfilled through our research. Moreover, all the interviewees have the same opinion about the remarkable experience and opportunity what they have earned abroad through the double degree program: they can try themselves out living abroad in a foreign-speaking country for at least 1 year.

Our second proposition was that *students who complete this program are going to gain competitive advantages on the labour market while participating in the program they are going to acquire professional language skills and unexceptional intercultural competences.* In this case, the proposition from us was relevant because they were not only expected the competitive advantage on the labour market, but through their internship abroad they have already felt the advantage of the double degree program. Furthermore, they enjoy special advantages because of their professional

language skills were gained through in the motherland of the language along with their intercultural competences.

The third and last proposition of the problem was that *the double degree program can be made more attractive to the current and future students of the CCCT*. However, the research has showed us that our last proposition and more the research question were highly underestimated because the main problem that we found out is not whether the program is attractive or not, but it is has no promotion at all and students become aware of the program in most of the cases just accidentally. Answers in connection with the third question have shown us the most controversial results correlated to our last proposition.

The expert's opinion has also confirmed what we found out that the most significant issue is with the double degree program is the lack of awareness. Based on the interviewees and Ms Faluvégi's ideas we have identified several propositions that can be implemented to promote the double degree program and increase the number of the semesters spent abroad among students. There is a need for promoting the programs already in the beginning of students' university lives and on events like the Educatio exhibition, open days or the registration week by giving enough information on the topics. Moreover we would like to suggest highlighting the programs on CCCT itself with for example spreading it by means of social media, Neptun messages and the webpage of the university. During the open days opportunities can be to set up stands, hold lectures on these topics and use flyers in addition. We can see a huge potential in the possibility of the double degree, we would suggest expanding this already developed program to other courses of the Budapest Business School, University of Applied Sciences, College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism.

Because of the lack of previous research made on the topic, it could be used as a pioneer in this field. In our view, it is a sufficiently interesting and useful area for further future research, just starting from the fact that through the double degree program intercultural awareness is a fast-developing concept today.

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