

ELITE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITIES LINKING ECONOMY AND SOCIETY GLOBALLY

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Abstract

In 2020, nine Hungarian universities were among the world's elite. I propose to highlight the fact that in the universities where the research activity is powerful and internationally recognized the number of students is significant, and the number of foreign students is related to the quality of the curriculum. The average present of foreign students at Hungarian universities is around 19%. In the last three years, 85% of graduates in the fields of engineering, information technology, and economics after graduation managed to find a job in the first month.

Keywords: *Hungarian university education; global; research activity; development*

JEL classification: *I21, I23, I25*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to identify students' choice regarding Hungarian universities. Considering the evolution of university ranking, I propose to highlight the fact that in the universities where the research activity is powerful and internationally recognized the number of students is significant, and the number of foreign students is related to the quality of the curriculum. Research methods used in this article are techniques like scientific observation, documentary analysis, data analysis and conclusions. Currently, students have at their disposal many institutions where they can acquire the knowledge necessary for a successful career. In Europe, thanks to the adoption of the Bologna system by the Member States universities, the competition for

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recruiting multitudinous students has intensified. In this competition, a good "marketer" is The Times Higher Education World University Rankings, (www.timeshighereducation.com) since 2004, based on thirteen well-calibrated performance indicators provides a list of the world's university elite. The rankings involve the three essential missions such research, teaching, impact, and evaluates universities about Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. In 2016, six Hungarian universities won a place among the world's elites: Semmelweis University, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, University of Debrecen, Eötvös Loránd University, University of Pécs, and the University of Szeged. In 2017, the Central European University is added, which manages to attract 77% more foreign students than in previous years. In 2018, seven universities were on the list, but the place of Central European University was taken by Corvinus University of Budapest. In 2019, the seven universities manage to maintain their place on the list. The 2020 list expands with Szent István University, and in 2021 with the University of Miskolc. The universities ranked on this list represent the base of university education in Hungary, and each of them with a particular approach contributes every year to economic and social development.

2. Literature review

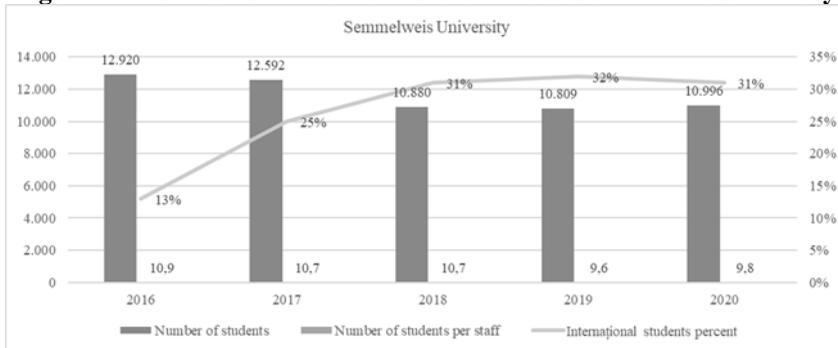
Bodorkós and Pataki studied community-based research and learning for sustainable rural development in Hungary. Kőmíves after his research concluded that it is impossible to increase the quality of higher education without the intensification of the universities' staff mobility rate. Lentner considers that Hungarian universities have a key role in the attenuation of differences between Hungary and the other 27 states of the European Union. In Keizer's opinion, the internal management should rearrange intra-university power relations and harmonize responsibility and competence.

3. Five elite Hungarian Universities for development

Semmelweis University with 250 years of history is the most significant medical institution of higher education in Hungary and the Central European region. The training is conducted in three languages (Hungarian, English, German) at six faculties. Research and innovation are activities carried out in a prominent role at the university, where 300 research groups set things in motion and their activity is supported by 46 international and 263 national

funding programs. (semmelweis.hu) Between 2008 and 2019, some 24.283 graduates were registered, 61% of them found a job immediately or within a month at the latest. In the academic year 2020-2021, 247 researchers and 1.600 professors contributed with their work to the development of university prestige and conducted the activity of 11.047 students. It is one of the most international universities in the world, with foreign students from five continents, and the faculties maintain relations with over 200 foreign higher education institutions. In the cardiovascular field, it is among the top 100 universities in the world. The University is represented by students at international and national scientific events. Frigyes Korányi Scientific Forum (Korányi Frigyes Tudományos Fórum) is a self-organized conference where high-quality scientific papers are presented. Published scientific papers number reach a thousand per year, and their impact on the scientific community, measured by the number of citations, is 16.000 over five years. Since the suspension of physical classes due to the covid-19 pandemic, Senior Academy (Szenior Akadémia) has received a meaningful role in the transmission of specialized online courses, with 1.000 participants per event held on the Zoom platform. The university has played an important role in preventing the spread of the virus, until 5.05.2021, the number of vaccines given by the university staff was 224.051. (semmelweis.hu/szeniorakademia) The attractiveness of university programs is also expressed by the growing number of foreign students, an increase of 18% in five years. as we can see in fig.1.

Figure 1: Evolution of the number of students at Semmelweis University

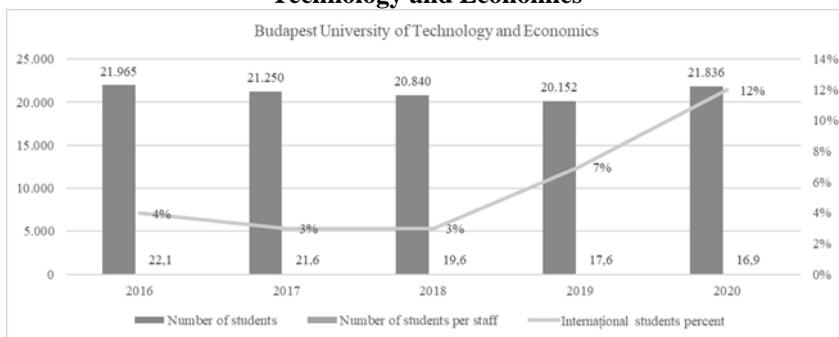


Source: created by the author, based on calculations performed on KSH data

3.1. Budapest University of Technology and Economics

Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem - BME) is a highly prestigious institution of Hungarian higher education, with eight faculties, train technical, IT, natural science, as well as economic, business and management professionals. And his famous doctoral schools prepare students for scientific research and development careers. (bme.hu) In the 2020/2021 academic year, approximately 1.400 young people are studying at BME as part of the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme, which aims to support the internationalization of Hungarian higher education. The value of scholarships has steadily increased since 2018 - 330.1 million Huf, to 333.7 million Huf in 2019, and in 2020 it reached the amount of 398.7 million Huf. In 2020/2021 most foreign students came from Brazil (120), Jordan (180), Azerbaijan (128), China (172) and Kazakhstan (164), and their percentage reached 12% of the total number of students as we can see in fig.2.

Figure 2: Evolution of the number of students at Budapest University of Technology and Economics



Source: created by the author, based on calculations performed on KSH data

The university focuses on scientific research, so the number of students participants abroad in scientific activities in 2016 was 675 (580 with scientific paper), 2017 - 591 (517 with scientific paper), 2018 - 680 (605 with scientific paper), 2019 - 641 (544 with scientific paper), and 2020 - 668 (582 with scientific paper). The number of publications based on Scopus is high: 2016 (1.516), 2017 (1.670), 2018 (1.556), 2019 (1.800), and 2020 (1.655). funding obtained from national projects and support schemes shows the quality of

scientific research: 2018 (2,778 billion Huf), 2019 (3.686 billion Huf), 2020 (2.738 billion Huf). Graduates number fluctuated from 2016 (6.024 graduates), 2017 (5.856), 2018 (5.631), 2019 (5.623), to 2020 (6.214). 85% of graduates in the three main fields engineering, information technology, and economics in the first month after graduation find a job. In 2020 the number of full-time lecturers/researchers was 1.232. On 17 February 2020 was opened Z10, BME's start-up incubation centre and at the same time the country's first university-based start-up incubation programme, which was realised in record time. The university joined the EELISA consortium (European Engineering Learning Innovation & Science Alliance) with eight other universities in Europe, to renew European higher education by strengthening the links between the technical sciences and society. (eelisa.eu) With the suspension of physical training due to the covid-19 pandemic, 10.000 courses were switched to the distance learning mode by lecturers within a week. Since 1998 the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (GTK) at the bachelor's degrees level in six specializations like Economics and management, International Management, Finance and Accounting, Technical Management, Communication and Media Science, Technical vocational education, and twelve Master Programmes (Communication and Media Science; Technical Management; Finance (in English); Psychology; Regional and environmental economics; Leadership and organization; of which remote: Economics teacher; Marketing; Business Administration; Engineering teacher; Regional and environmental economics, and Accounting) ensures the transmission of qualitative knowledge. Those who want to raise their knowledge to a higher level can do it in the PhD School in Business and Management (Specializations: Management and Business Economics; Economics; Environmental economics; Finances; Sociology and Communication; Ergonomics and psychology; Philosophy and history of science). From the very beginning, the training structure of the Doctoral School combines general knowledge of economics and management that forms the basis of specific research. Accordingly, in the first two semesters, students take the same subjects and later pursue their programs in (Marketing, Technical Manager, International Economics and Management, Finance, Regional and Environmental Economics, Accounting, and Management Organization).

3.2. The University of Debrecen

Provides higher education from 30.194 students in the academic year 2020/2021, of which 6.127 in the first year of study, attracted 12.6% of the total number of university students admitted in the first year on the territory of Hungary. With 1541 teachers, in the 72 bachelor's degree specializations, 84 master's degrees, 69 in a foreign language, the number of foreign students in the 2019/2020 academic year was 6.297, of which 52.3% from Asia, 4.1% from North and South America, 23.2% from Europe, 20.3% from Africa, and 0.1% Australia and Oceania. (<https://unideb.hu/hu>) From August 2019, the Faculty of Management of János Neumann University separated from the organization of János Neumann University and merged into the University of Debrecen. Within 24 Doctoral Schools, in 73 doctoral programs, it trains 1096 students. The quality of university programs is also shown by the significant number of foreign students in 2020 (6.438 students).

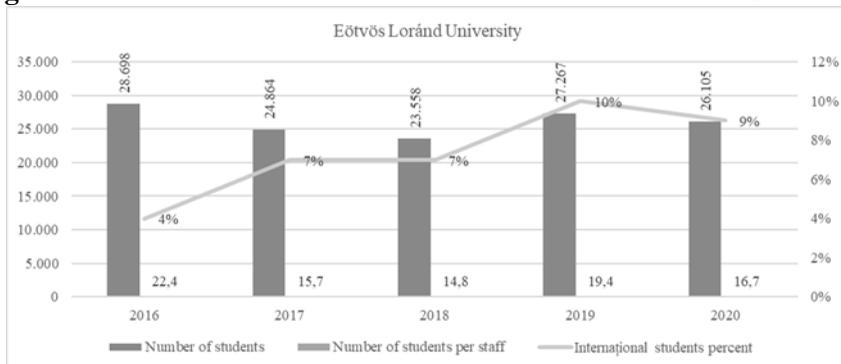
Scientific events like the Debrecen University Symposium (twice a year), the Night of researchers (since 2008), the Hungarian Science Festival (since 2016), and the Science Café (since 2013) are meant to keep the communication between the business world, researchers, and specialists in different fields at university standards. (mta.hu) The iDEa Tudóstér is a database that ensures the visibility and wide dissemination of individual and institutional published scientific performance. By the students of the Faculty of Economics have been published 1.624 scientific articles between 2000-2021. (tudoster.idea.unideb.hu) Applied Studies in Agribusiness and Commerce (APSTRACT) is an Open Access (OA) Journal that publishes high-quality contributions on topics related to Agribusiness and Commerce. Other important Journals are *Competitio*, which publishes studies in any field of modern economics in Hungarian and English; *Nutrition Marketing*, the scientific journal established in September 2014 by the Institute of Marketing and Trade. In the 2019/20 academic year, the total number of state-subsidized and state-scholarship students per cent increased by 5.1%.

3.3. Eötvös Loránd University

Another famous university, which has been operating since 1635, is Eötvös Loránd University, with eight faculties, 52 specializations of bachelor level, and 112 master level. The University elitism is motivated by the five Nobel Prize-winning graduates. (<https://www.elte.hu/>) In 2020, through 128 projects, it attracted 8.550.000.000 forints support. ELTE values diversity, and

for that does its best to allow every student to develop and make the most of themselves (Nulladik Nap program), in 2021 some 430 students with special needs learned at the university and 271 courses were adapted for their needs. At ELTE the teaching staff is reinforced by 72 academics. As a reliable partner of 530 higher education institutions and an active member of eight prestigious university networks, the university is connected to the best European and global institutions, providing unique opportunities for students and staff to gain international experience, as part of mobility programs like Erasmus +, Campus Mundi, CEEPUS, EEA Fund, International Credit Mobility, Visegrád Fund. Eötvös Loránd University also offers other forms of training: at the Hungarian Summer University of the Carpathian Basin, Hungarian young people living in cross-border regions and the Hungarian diaspora can further their education in a special field. From year to year, the program is becoming more popular. Due to the countless opportunities, university specializations attract and retain students, most of whom go through at least two stages (bachelor’s degree and master). The number of enrolled students is quite large, in 2020 reached 26.105 as we can see in fig.3.

Fig. 3. Evolution of the number of students at Eötvös Loránd University



Source: created by the author, based on calculations performed on KSH data

A popular faculty among students is the Faculty of Social Sciences whose slogan is “If you want to understand the world”. With five bachelor’s level specialisations (Applied economics; International studies; Social work; Sociology; Social studies), eleven master's programs in Health Policy, Finance, Human ecology, Minority policy (also in Ethnic and Minority

Studies), Economic analyst; Community and civic studies, Cultural anthropology, International studies, Survey statistics, Social work, Social policy, Sociology and three PhD programs (Sociology, Social policy, Interdisciplinary social research). The Central and Eastern European Regional Education Center of the Confucius Institutes was established in 2013 at Eötvös Loránd University. The Institute received twice the Outstanding Confucius Institute of the Year Award. The newly established Brazilian Science Center usually plays a role in nurturing Hungarian-Brazilian relations and supporting university-related projects. The Center for Interuniversitaire d'Études Françaises (CIEF) at Eötvös Loránd University aims to effectively support the teaching of the French language, literature, and culture in Hungarian higher education institutions and to coordinate research in French studies. While the Faculty had Erasmus + bilateral agreements with 61 universities in 2009, by 2016 this number had risen to 80. Students of the Faculty can also apply for other scholarships, which support study and research abroad, such as the MÖB State Eötvös Scholarship or the Campus Hungary Scholarship. Bilateral agreements also attract a significant number of students from universities outside Europe (eg Hong Kong, Singapore), and the Doctoral School of Sociology is a member of Sorbonne University's interdisciplinary platform for doctoral school collaboration.

3.4. University of Pécs

With 20.000 students, 1.400 lecturers, researchers and ten faculties, the University of Pécs (PTE) play an important role in the Hungarian people's lives. It represents classic values and at the same time successfully adapts to the challenges of the present and the future. Has significant training centres in Szekszárd, Kaposvár, Szombathely, Zalaegerszeg and Zombor. (<https://pte.hu/hu>) It is one of the most important research universities with a huge professional research base. The János Szentágothai Research Center is home to many areas of scientific and medical research. There are 21 doctoral schools which through well-organized programs encourages research from science to art. An important part of the university is AUDEM, the alliance that brings together American and Eastern European universities. The program main goal is to strengthen the role of universities in society. University Network of European Capitals of Culture was established in 2005 on the initiative of the University of Pécs. Currently, the organization has nearly 50 member universities and try to deepen educational research cooperation

between member universities. The Danube Rectors' Conference was founded in 1983 by four universities in three countries (Germany, Austria, Hungary) (Ulm, Linz, Vienna, Budapest). Membership has since expanded, with 44 universities and the conference main objective is to develop higher education in the field of education and research in the countries of the region by establishing bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The excellence of the students and teachers is recognized by education and labour market actors. University courses attract more and more foreign students.

The Faculty of Pharmacy with the Faculty of Economics implemented the training program entitled Business knowledge for pharmacy students. The aim is for students to acquire in their training the basic economic knowledge and marketing approach that is essential to run a successful pharmacy business. (gytk.pte.hu) Since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic students has acquired knowledge on PTE Moodle LMS. The measures caused by the epidemic in Pécs as in almost all parts of the world, “hibernated” the economic activities of companies. Using the professional knowledge of his team, the fresh, youthful resources of his students, the local and international network of contacts, the faculty tried to slow down this negative spiral. To achieve this goal launched the REVIDPécs campaign by joining several local actors (eg: Pécs-Baranya Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to build a community that actively shares information with its members about recovery opportunities, helping businesses in problem. The success of REVIDPécs is illustrated by the fact that in just one month more than 1.000 followers joined the initiative. Within 19 open online courses and six webinars, successful alumni businessmen shared their experiences and knowledge. (www.facebook.com/REVIDPecs/)

4. Conclusions

DUiversity education plays an important role in everyone's life. Semmelweis University, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, University of Debrecen, and Eötvös Loránd University, and the University of Pécs whether it is a period of prosperity or a difficult time, make an incredible effort to help people through research. They also work constantly for the personal and professional development of students and teachers. Support all efforts aimed at lifelong learning and does not forget students with disabilities. They construct a reliable bridge between graduates and the business world and successfully integrates foreign students. The more international is the

university programs and adapted to the needs of the students they enjoy more global appreciation. The exchange of students' experience is an excellent opportunity to acquire not only specialized and linguistic knowledge but a different, more critical vision. Eötvös Loránd University with nearly four hundred years of experience is still a practical value in education and research. Since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, each of the above-mentioned universities has helped prevent the spread of the virus and tried to reduce the consequences for the business world.

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