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RESEARCH ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF TRANSCARPATHIAN MOBILE STUDENTS

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Аналіз навчальної успішності закарпатських студентів - учасників програм мобільності

Анотація. Навчальна успішність може аналізуватися в контексті різних підходів. Так, її можна розглядати на основі зовнішніх і внутрішніх показників успішності студентів і закладу. Попередні дослідження засвідчили, що доцільно провести вивчення успішності цієї категорії студентів, які взяли участь у програмах академічної мобільності. Припускаємо, такі студенти були більш успішними у навчанні, а також під час працевлаштування. Метою дослідження було простежити навчальну успішність закарпатських студентів, які продовжили навчання в Угорщині. Вивчено, де оселяються студенти, які здобували вищу освіту за кордоном, після навчання: залишаються в Угорщині, повертаються в Україну чи шукають щастя в інших країнах. З'ясовано, в яких закладах вищої освіти навчались колишні студенти, яким спеціальностям віддавали перевагу, а також які відмінності та що спільного в контексті успішності спостерігається між студентами, які повернулися на Закарпаття, і тими, які залишилися в Угорщині чи оселилися в інших країнах за кордоном. Інструментом дослідження стало онлайн анкетне опитування, в якому взяли участь 347 закарпатських студентів – учасників програм мобільності. Зібрані дані проаналізовано з допомогою програми SPSS 22. У ході аналізу висновано статистичні дані. Для студентів, які оселилися в Угорщині, найбільш характерним є те, що, вже приймаючи рішення про участь в академічній мобільності, вони мали на меті отримати потрібні на ринку праці знання і завдяки цьому працевлаштуватися в Угорщині. З'ясовано, що їхні плани не змінилися і після завершення університету.

Ключові слова: Закарпаття, навчальна успішність, постійне місце проживання.

ABSTRACT. Introduction Academic achievement can be approached from several aspects. The first aspect is the achievement of students and educational institutions based on external and internal indicators. Previous research has shown that it is worth examining students' achievement in student mobility. Mobile students are more likely to succeed in their studies and find jobs. **Purpose.** The research aims to reveal the academic achievement of Transcarpathian students continuing their studies in Hungary. We examine where students studying abroad settle down after graduation: they either stay in Hungary, return home to Ukraine or utilise their knowledge in another country. We examined in which higher educations the former students continued their studies and which faculties they preferred as well as what differences and similarities can be observed in terms of achievement between students returning to Transcarpathia and students settling down in Hungary or abroad. **Methods.** During our research, an online self-completed questionnaire was applied. We used the snowball method to track down former students. 347 Transcarpathian mobile students filled out the questionnaire. The obtained data were analysed by SPSS 22 Program. Descriptive statistics were used during the analyses. **Results** It is most characteristic of students living in Hungary that they already wanted to acquire proper marketable knowledge when they decided to take advantage of student mobility. As a result, they tried to find a job in the Hungarian labour market. Their plans have not changed since university graduation. **Conclusion.** Our results suggest that the choice of major significantly influences the final settlement decision. Getting a job with a degree obtained in Hungary can face many obstacles for a well-qualified young person. This is especially true for prominent majors. In a city, a graduate has a much higher chance of finding a position according to his qualification.

Key words: Transcarpathia, academic achievement, settlement.

INTRODUCTION (problem statement). Student mobility has been known in higher education since the foundation of the first universities. Attending foreign universities has become popular with the children of wealthy, privileged families (Hrubos, 2005). For decades, student mobility has served young people belonging to the elite social layer of countries with less developed higher education systems to continue their studies at top universities. The importance of mobility has undergone a significant change. Learning mobility provides ambitious students with opportunities to gain an insight into the life of the best foreign higher education institutions and to prepare for their chosen careers (there) (Lajos, 2005).

The analysis of recent research and publications. Both domestic and international literature analyse academic achievement from several points of view. Academic achievement can also be analysed from the aspects of return on investment in the education system, social mobility, status rise, educational policy and sociology of education (Pusztai, 2010). During his research, Pusztai paid particular attention to the importance of school studies, the willingness to further learning, the duration of higher education studies, scientific work, future work plans, students' self-education, moral thinking, academic performance and the recognition of lecturers (Pusztai, 2009; 2011). At the beginning of the 2000s, the interpretation of academic achievement was approached from an opposing point of view, and the reasons for student failure came to the fore. Researchers wanted to explore the reasons that led to the unsuccessful completion of semesters, gap years, student dropout, failure and disillusionment with the institution. From a different point of view, student achievement is aimed at examining successes. These include the internal events that took place in higher education. According to internal indicators, successful entry, successful admission to higher educational levels, further education in accordance with career plans, and commitment to studies, measured by how much time students spend studying, can be effective. (Pusztai, 2011; Klein et al., 2005).

According to international literature, student mobility positively impacts individual academic achievement. On the one hand, language skills improve. On the other hand, due to foreign study strip personality changes. During geographical mobility for learning purposes, students can move more freely and acquire and gain new knowledge. "*Learning mobility is one of the fastest channels for increasing intellectual resources.*" (Rédei, 2008, p. 8). Learning mobility positively impacts the student's success, and mobile students are most likely to be more successful in the labour market (Dusa, 2015). Student mobility not only testifies students' academic achievement but is also considered when setting up the ranking list of higher education institutions. The mobility of lecturers and students is considered when compiling rankings aimed at comparing universities. The departure and arrival of lecturers and students play an essential role in international evaluations (Dusa, 2015). Based on the facts mentioned above, it can be said that learning and lecturer global mobility can be considered a kind of achievement indicator for higher education institutions (Dusa, 2015). Within the Higher Education for Social Cohesion- Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border Area (HERD) research, Dusa investigated student mobility, its possibilities and students' mobility intentions in the higher education institutions of the Partium region (Dusa, 2014). The research results show that students with higher than average capital are more self-confident. They feel that they can meet the academic requirements and it is worth fighting to achieve their educational goals. In the research, he examined the mobility capital from the aspect of access to student mobility. As a result of this approach, it can be shown that there is a correlation between mobility capital and the academic achievement of students from Partium. The confidence of the examined students and their extracurricular activities influence the increase or decrease of the mobility capital. (Dusa, 2014). It results that students with higher mobility capital are more optimistic about their studies and participate more often in extracurricular activities (Dusa, 2014).

Purpose and methods. The target group of our research is former Transcarpathian students continuing their studies in Hungary. The snowball method was used to follow former students.

The number of samples in the database is 347. During our research, a questionnaire was applied. The questionnaire was developed in-house but also contained adapted questions. As a research question, we formulated the differences between former students who returned to their homeland and those who settled in Hungary or another country regarding their academic career and achievement. In our hypothesis, we assume that students who stayed in Hungary have a more successful academic career than those who returned to Transcarpathia. The obtained data were analysed by SPSS 22 PROGRAM. Descriptive statistics were applied during the analyses. For the bivariate analyses, we used the Chi-square test and analysis of variance.

The results of the research. Successful language exams belong to the group of achievement indicators (Szemerszki, 2015). In our research, we examined the proportion of former students who passed language exams and in which language and at what level they passed the language exams. 43,6 % of the respondents have a Ukrainian language exam certificate, while 26,1 % of the students have a Russian language exam certificate. 22, 1% of the respondents have an English language exam certificate, and only 6,4 % of the students do not have any language exam certificates. The first chart illustrates the distribution of the language exams.

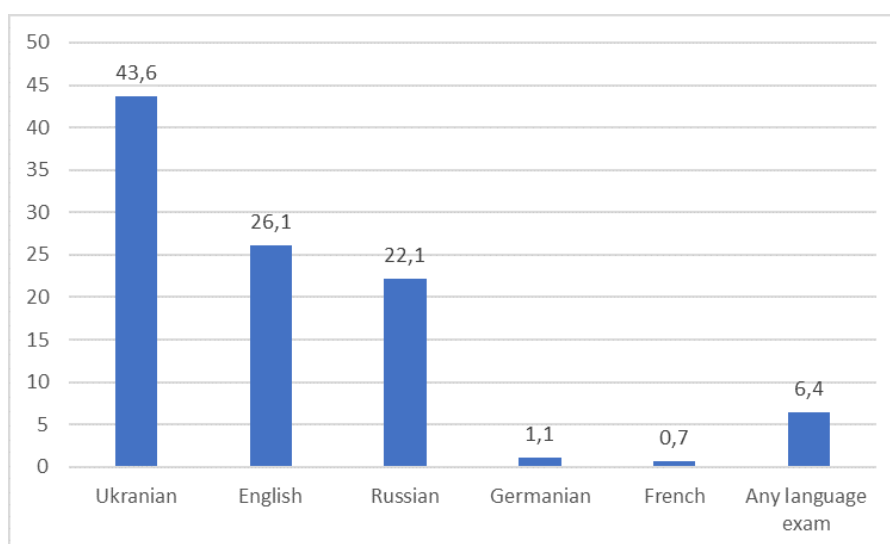


Chart 1. Language exams in percentage (N=347)

Source: own construction

We compared the language exam with the final settlement using the Chi-square test. In this case, a significant correlation can be observed. Most of the respondents employed in Hungary have a Ukrainian language exam (44,3%). Most returnees to Transcarpathia also have a Ukrainian language exam (42,1 %). Among the returnees, no one has a French or German language exam. In their case, the proportion of those who do not have language exams is strongly overrepresented. The lack of the language exam could impair their employment opportunities in Hungary or abroad. The most significant proportion of those living abroad has a Russian language exam (55,6). They belong to the older generation. Presumably, among the respondents, they were the earliest to take advantage of mobility. They used Hungary as a starting point and then chose a foreign country as the place of their final settlement. In the case of the students living abroad, the proportion of those with a German language exam is overrepresented. The distributions are illustrated in the first table.

Table 1

Comparison of final settlement and language exam certificate (%). (N=344)

		Hungary	Transcarpathia	Abroad	Chi-square	Sig
Language exam	Ukrainian	44,3	42,1	11,1	32,01	0,000
	English	24,4	18,4	22,2		
	Russian	26,7	23,7	55,6		
	French	0,8	0,0	0,0		
	Germanian	0,0	0,0	<u>11,1</u>		
	No language exam	3,8	<u>15,8</u>	0,0		

*In the case of the underlined values, the absolute value of adjusted residuals is over two.

Source: own construction

We examined which university the former mobile students were admitted to. Several Hungarian universities have also been popular with the Transcarpathian mobile students.

27,8 % of the respondents preferred Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) (27.8%), 12% of the former students studied at the University of Debrecen (DE), 9.5% at the Semmelweis University (SE), 7% at the Corvinus University of Budapest (BCE), 6.1% at the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE), 5.5 % at the University of Pécs (PTE). (Chart 2.)

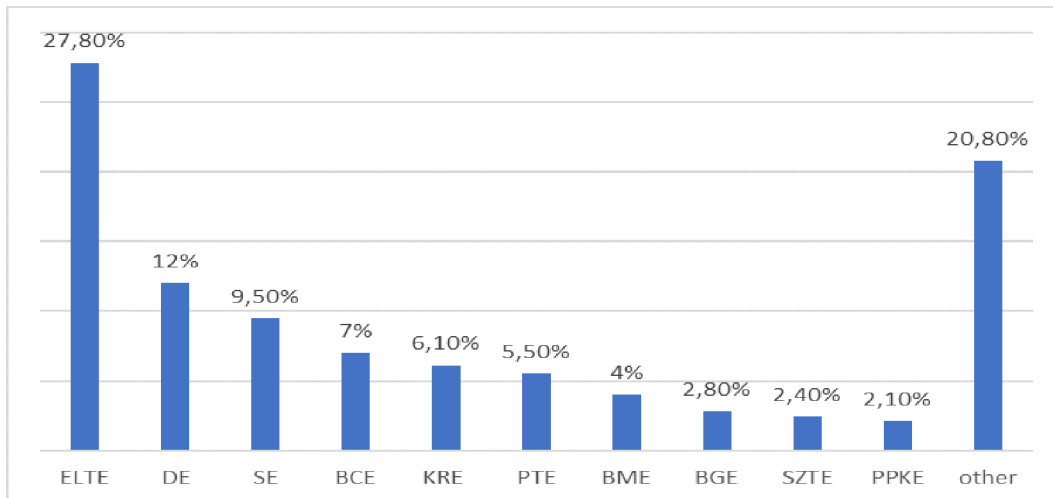


Chart 2. Higher Education Institutions of Former Students (N=327)

Source: own construction

64.4% of the successful applicants were admitted to a university in Budapest, while 33.5% of them to a rural higher education institution (University of Debrecen, University of Pécs, University of Miskolc, University of Nyíregyháza, University of Sopron, University of Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Apr Vilmos Catholic College, etc.).

2.1% returned to their homeland after completing the preparatory course and their higher education studies at the Ferenc Rakoczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education and the Ungvár National University. The choice of institution shows that most respondents are less likely to choose a rural university after living in the capital for one year. The intellectual and cultural life of Budapest can be attractive.

24.5% of the respondents chose majors in human sciences and arts, and 9.3% in education. These include Russian, Ukrainian and Hungarian language teachers. The Transcarpathian students had previously learnt the listed languages. Presumably, language competence as an existing resource played a role in choosing majors. Our results confirm the literature sources, according to which, in the case of international students, migration for study purposes is strongly encouraged by specific fields of study (medical, legal) and postgraduate courses (Ferenc – Séra, 2013). 18.8% of the examined target group chose a health and social care major, and 7.2% continued their education in business, administration and law. According to Pusztai and Kozma (2008), in the case of international students, the choice of majors in Hungary is mainly adapted to the labour market's demand. Thus, the most popular majors are technology, business and sciences. These literature statements are also relevant to the examined target group. 9.9% of the former students chose majors in sciences, mathematics and statistics, 3.6% of the respondents opted for technical sciences, and 19.4% of them attended the majors in social sciences, journalism and other information services. Economics also belongs to the latter category. The following majors in the field of science listed above cannot be taught in the Hungarian language in Transcarpathia: international management, corporate economics, corporate finance, community economics, foreign trade, technical manager, program planning computer scientist, agricultural engineer, mechanical engineer, computer engineer, architecture, electrical engineer, physician, dentist, lawyer, etc.

The listed majors are prominent, and they suit the conditions of the Hungarian labour market demand (Mikrocenzus, 2016). As a result, former students choose Hungary as their place of the final settlement. Transcarpathian mobile students acquired specialised knowledge in these majors that does not help them find employment in the Transcarpathian labour market.

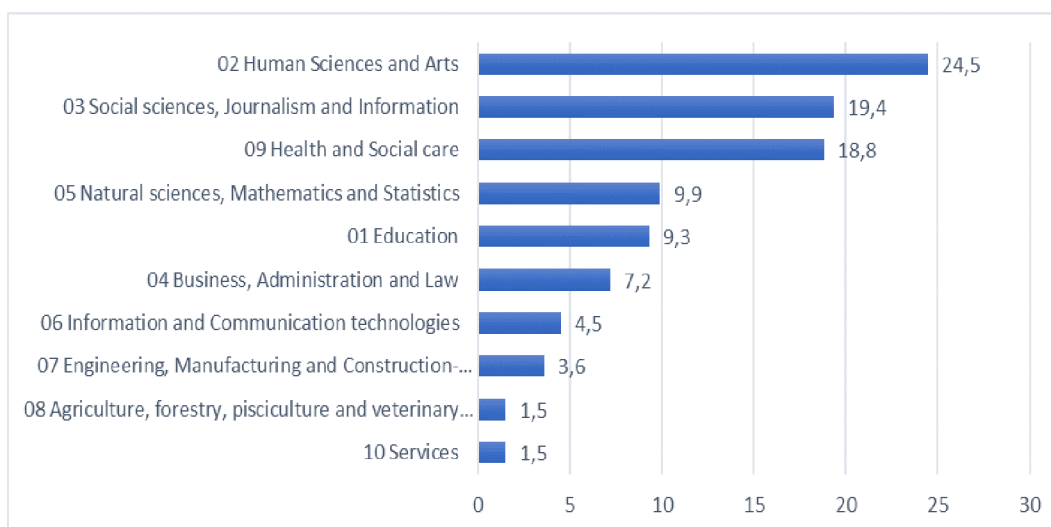


Chart 3. (N=336) Majors of former students

Source: own construction

There is a significant correlation between the final settlement and the majors. In the case of all majors, most former students chose Hungary as their place of the final settlement. 100% of the respondents with qualifications in information and communication technologies, agriculture, forestry, pisciculture and veterinary sciences, and services settled in Hungary or abroad. This trend can be explained by the fact that there is a greater labour market demand for these majors in Hungary and abroad. In the case of respondents with qualifications in health and social care, the proportion (97.5%) of those employed in Hungary or abroad is overrepresented (Adj.Resid.=2.6). 90.9% of

business, administration and law graduates settled in Hungary or abroad. A similar result can be observed in the case of graduates of technical, industrial and construction industry majors: 90.0% of them live in Hungary or abroad. Specific fields do not offer such a position that a well-qualified young person in Transcarpathia could fill in. In a big city, a graduate has a much higher chance of finding work according to his qualification. Students of majors in the listed fields acquire specific knowledge with which they can most easily find a job in the Hungarian labour market. 67.6% of former students with qualifications in human sciences and arts live in Hungary or abroad, but in their case, the proportion (32.4%) of those who returned to Transcarpathia is overrepresented (Adj.Resid.=3.9). It may be because graduates in human sciences found a job in their homeland. However, in most cases, well-qualified people do not have the opportunity to practice their profession in their homeland, as their degree does not meet the conditions of the Transcarpathian labour market. It mainly applies to law, engineering, and medicine majors, as lawyers do not speak Ukrainian and are unaware of Ukrainian laws and regulations. Engineers are unfamiliar with Ukrainian standards different from the European Union, and physicians must pass the specialisation exam in Ukrainian. However, in the mother country, the listed majors are the most popular in the labour market. The distributions are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison of final settlement and majors (%) (N=347)

Categories		Hungary/A broad	Transcar pathia	Chi- square	Sig
	01 Education	74,1	25,9	31,511	0,000
	02 Human Sciences and Arts	67,6	<u>32,4</u>		
	03 Social sciences, Journalism and Information	91,2	8,8		
	04 Business, Administration and Law	90,9	9,1		
	05 Natural sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	71,0	29,0		
	06 Information and Communication technologies	100,0	0,0		
	07 Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction-related studies	90,0	10,0		
	08 Agriculture, forestry, pisciculture and veterinary sciences	100,0	0,0		
	09 Health and Social care	<u>97,5</u>	2,5		
	10 Services	100,0	0,0		

*In the case of the underlined values, the absolute value of adjusted residuals is over two.
Source: own construction.

We used the Chi-square test to examine the correlation between the choice of major and gender (Table 3).

Our result is consistent with Balica's claim that we can distinguish professional stereotypes from the point of view of gender (Balica et al. 2004). While men are more attracted to STEM majors (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), women prefer interpersonal, communication-intensive professions (e.g. pedagogy, nursing, patient care, etc.). In the case of men, the proportion

(16.7%) of those who chose majors in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics was overrepresented (Adj.Resid.=3.2). As for men (Adj.Resid.=3.3), the proportion (7.9%) of those who continued their studies in engineering, manufacturing and construction-related studies is also overrepresented. Women preferred human sciences (25.5%), and in their case, the proportion of those who chose majors in education is overrepresented (Adj.Resid.=3.7). The distributions are illustrated in the table below. Researches confirm that the feminisation of the profession can be observed in the case of education majors (primarily the teaching profession). This phenomenon also affects the prestige of the profession.

Table 3

Comparison of majors and genders (%). (N=335)

Category		Male	Female	Chi-square	Sig
Category	01 Education	1,6	<u>13,7</u>	49,276	0,000
	02 Human Sciences and Arts	23,0	25,5		
	03 Social sciences, Journalism and Information	15,9	21,6		
	04 Business, Administration and Law	4,0	9,3		
	05 Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	<u>16,7</u>	5,9		
	06 Information and Communication Technologies	<u>7,9</u>	1,5		
	07 Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction-related studies	<u>7,9</u>	1,0		
	08 Agriculture, Sylviculture, Pisciculture and Veterinary sciences	0,8	2,0		
	09 Health and Social care	19,0	19,1		
	10 Services	3,2	0,5		

*In the case of the underlined values, the absolute value of adjusted residuals is over two.
Source: own construction

Academic extra work as an achievement indicator. Previous researches (Pusztai, 2011, 2015; Szemerszki, 2015) confirm that to measure effectiveness; it is worthwhile to reveal whether the students have done any additional academic work. 16.8% of the respondents provided private lessons during their university years. 9.5% of the former students prepared a NSCA (National Scientific Students' Associations Conference) thesis or poster, 9.2% presented a poster at a conference, and 9.2% received merit scholarships. 9.2% of the respondents participated in a talent management scholarship program. 8.7% of the former students published a scientific publication or had independent work (program, application, artistic work).

4% of the interviewed were awarded a scholarship, and 6.1% held the year manager/group manager position.

We used the chi-square test to examine the correlation between extra academic work and final settlement. A significant connection can be demonstrated in two cases. Students returning to Transcarpathia were the least active in extra academic work, and students settling abroad were the most active. In their case, the proportion of those who provided private lessons is overrepresented (Adj.Resid.=3.9) (Table 4).

Table 4

Correlation between extra academic work and final settlement (%). (N=333)

	Transcarpathia	Hungary	Abroad	Chi-square	Sig.
Preparation of NSCA thesis or poster	7,6	13,2	20,8	5,706	0,050
Private lessons or tutoring	13,2	15,1	<u>45,8</u>	15,503	0,000

*In the case of the underlined values, the absolute value of adjusted residuals is over two.

Source: own construction

By combining the examined dimensions, we created an achievement index, the minimum value of which is 0, and the maximum value is 7.

Our research examined the average scores of former students with different socio-demographic backgrounds. Children of parents with higher education (1.01 and 0.91 points), married people (0.92 points) and former students in a better-than-average financial situation (1.00 points) are the most successful in terms of the metric of extra academic work. No significant differences can be found between the final settlement and gender (Table 5).

Table 5

The average points in the academic extra work index based on the most crucial social background variables

		Academic extra work index (0–7 points)	F	Sig	N
Qualification of mother	elementary	0,65	6,668	0,001	342
	secondary	0,52			
	higher (education)	1,01			
Qualification of father	elementary	0,78	3,901	0,021	342
	secondary	0,53			
	higher(education)	0,91			
Marital status	Single	0,46	5,418	0,005	344
	Married	0,92			
	Living in a relationship	0,58			
Relative financial situation	Better than average	1,00	3,731	0,025	343
	Average	0,56			
	Worse than average	0,73			

Source: own construction

3.7% of the respondents studied in post-secondary education, 40.9% of the former students got a bachelor's degree (BA/BSc), 20.20% also got a master's degree, and 17.90% participated in undivided training. 3.2% of the respondents have a PhD degree, and 13.5% of the interviewees started their studies in college/university but did not finish it.

Mobile students mostly cited a lack of motivation (21.3%) and persistence (13.8%) as the reason for dropout. 10.6% of the former students cited poor qualifications, and 10.6% mentioned family problems as the reason for dropout. Many students said other reasons: financial and socialisation issues and student employment. Our results are confirmed by Teichler's statements, which highlight that behind the motives of student dropout are tactical decisions, forced situations, and deliberate choices can be observed (Teichler, 1998). According to Tinto, dropout is also caused by the student's

separation from their previous communities (Tinto, 1975; Tinto, 1993). The new environment and the integration into Hungarian university/college students were accompanied by difficulties and, in some cases, led to student dropouts. Several students blamed the higher education institution and the higher education system for abandoning their studies.

The most significant proportion of former students living in Hungary completed some level of training (Adj.Resid.=2.1). The largest share of respondents living abroad (92%) also completed one of the training levels. Most of those who returned home to Transcarpathia (73.%) did not finish their primary education. Among the respondents living in Hungary, the proportion of those who completed the BA/BSc course is overrepresented (Adj.Resid.=2.1). In the case of respondents residing in Transcarpathia and abroad, former students with PhD are overrepresented. The distributions are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6

Comparison of levels of training and final settlement (%) (N=344)

	Transcarpathia	Hungary	Abroad	Chi-square	Sig
Completed	76,5	<u>89,2</u>	92,0	8,289	0,016
levels of training	None	<u>23,5</u>	10,8		
		<u>73,5</u>	56,2	6,836	0,033
	BA/BSc	26,5	<u>43,8</u>		
		92,6	99,2	21,704	0,000
	PhD	<u>7,4</u>	0,8		
			<u>16,0</u>		

*In the case of the underlined values, the absolute value of adjusted residuals is over two.

Source: own construction

Conclusion and prospects for further research. During our research, we examined in which Hungarian higher education institutions the former students continued their studies and which majors they opted for. Eötvös Loránd University and the University of Debrecen were the most popular among former students who graduated from preparatory courses. Human and medical sciences were the most popular. 4.4% of the respondents continued their studies in political science and law. Our results suggest that the choice of major significantly influences the final settlement decision. For example, in specific fields, there are no positions that a well-qualified young person could fill in Transcarpathia. In a big city, a graduate has a much higher chance of finding a job according to his qualification. Another influencing factor is that well-qualified people do not have the opportunity to practice their profession in their homeland, as their degrees do not meet the conditions of the Transcarpathian labour market. For example, lawyers who graduated in Hungary are unaware of the Ukrainian legal language and laws. During our research, the fact was proven that students who stayed in Hungary have more successful careers than those who returned to Transcarpathia or tried their luck in other foreign countries. It confirmed our hypothesis that the students who stayed in Hungary had more successful academic careers than those who returned to Transcarpathia. In the future, we would like to examine the employment of mobile students from Transcarpathia, which is also an important achievement indicator.

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