

“The Romanian NAMO Graduate Survey and Its Major Results in Comparative Perspective”

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Congratulation!

The Romanian NAMO graduate survey succeeded to

- assure the cooperation of a large number of higher education institutions,
- mobilize responses of many graduates (39,000 responses, 30% return rate)

with a long and complex questionnaire.

The Strengths of Complex Graduate Questionnaires

- To overcome the elitist notions of “mismatch” and “over-education”
- To address professional “success” in terms of employment and work
- To analyse the links between study achievements, competences, transition, employment and work
- To analyse the determinants of study achievements and professional success
- To provide feedback to the (individual) institutions of higher education

Overcoming the Elitist Perspectives of “Mismatch” and “Over-Education”

Traditional simple graduate surveys are only strong in establishing the proportion of graduates taking over traditional “elite” graduate jobs

Under conditions of “mass higher education” we have to analyze the impact of higher education on graduate employment and work on

- positions “below” the traditional “elite” graduate jobs,
- specific dimensions of work tasks.

“Employment” and “Work” Success

- Past graduate surveys have shown that a substantially higher proportion of graduates consider their study professionally useful than of those being employed in a typical graduate job
- This phenomenon is most striking at times of rapid expansion of the number of graduates

Study Achievements, Competences, Transition, Employment/Work

A complex graduate survey can show the extent of imperfections as regards selection and allocation of graduates. For example:

- High achievers in higher education might not get the best positions in the world of work
- Not all professionally relevant competences are linked to successful study
- Professional relevant competences might be overlooked by employers
- Successful students might not choose the best job search strategies
- Some graduates might not consider themselves “*homines oeconomici*”
- Smooth transition might not necessarily lead to the best jobs
- Many employers might prefer other recruitment criteria than those usually viewed as typical for employers

Determinants of Study Achievements and Professional Success

Differences in the employment and work success of the graduates cannot be attributed solely to the higher education institutions, department or study programmes. Other major factors:

- Socio-economic background
- Prior education
- Location of higher education institution and employer
- Study behaviour
- Study and employment/work motives
- Events in the transition process

Feedback to Higher Education Institutions

Potential feedback with the help of graduate surveys

- Retrospective questions on study experience
- Graduates' rating of the impact of study on employment/work
- Comparing the professional success of graduates between institutions programmes
- Multi-variate analysis of the impact of the institution/programme
- Analysing the role the specific profile of the institution/programme plays

Analysing NAMO Results Comparatively

Comparative Studies CHEERS, REFLEX and EMBAC

- Schomburg, Harald and Teichler, Ulrich (eds.). *Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe*. Dordrecht: Springer 2006.
- Teichler, Ulrich (ed.). *Careers of University Graduates*. Dordrecht: Springer 2007.
- Allen, Jim and van der Velden, Rolf (eds.). *The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society*. Dordrecht: Springer 2011.
- Schomburg, Harald and Teichler, Ulrich (eds.). *Employability and Mobility of Bachelor Graduates in Europe*. Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense 2011.
- Unpublished German KOAB study

Comparing Selected Results of the NAMO Survey (I)

70 percent women (2009 graduates)

- In most European countries, the proportion of women among graduates has surpassed 50% in the last years
- 70% in Romania exceptionally high
- Response rates varying by gender?

Comparing Selected Results of the NAMO Survey (II)

International mobility (2009 graduates)

- Hardly any foreigners graduating in Romania
- 11% temporary study abroad and altogether 22%
- According to EMBAC study, the event of temporary study abroad ranges from more than 20% in Austria and the Netherlands via about 15% in Germany and 10% in Italy to 4% in the United Kingdom and 3% in Poland.
- According to the 2009 Bologna Conference in Leuven (Belgium), the target for 2020 is 20%.
- 2% of graduates from Romanian higher education institutions are employed abroad, as compared to 5% of graduates from German higher education institutions.

Comparing Selected Results of the NAMO Survey (III)

Self-Rating of Competences at Time of Graduation (2005 graduates)

- In general, quite high ratings by Romanian graduates (3.7-4.2 on a five-point scale in most cases)
- Similar in most cases to German graduates 1995 (CHEERS study)
- More positive ratings by Romanians than by Germans as regards two items
 1. Ability to mobilize the capacities of others
 2. Ability to write and speak in a foreign language

Comparing Selected Results of the NAMO Survey (IV)

Job Search (graduates 2009)

- Relatively long duration in Romania: more than 6 months on average as compared to 3 months of German graduates 2007 (KOAB)
- 15 employers contacted by Romanian graduates – similar to German graduates (13), but in Romania the search period was longer
- 20 % successful search with help of family, friends etc. (similarly in Germany)
- 17% of 2009 graduates in Romania unemployed 1 ½ years after graduation (i.e. not employed and looking for employment) as compared to 2% of 2007 graduates in Germany

Comparing Selected Results of the NAMO Survey (V)

Employment Situation of Employed 2009 Graduates 1 ½ Years after Graduation

- 77% unlimited term contract in Romania, as compared to 43% of 2007 graduates in Germany
- 74% full-time employed in Romania, as compared to 70% in Germany

Comparing Selected Results of the NAMO Survey (VI)

Link between Study and Employment/Work – Employed 2009 Graduates 1 ½ Years after Graduation

- No higher education needed: 12% in Romania, 8% in Germany
- High use of competences: 52% in Romania, 51% in Germany
- Field of study is the exclusive or best preparation: 37% in Romania, 40% in Germany

The Future of Graduate Surveys in Romania (I)

Types of Graduate Surveys

1. Statistical data collection of graduates with very few items (e.g. UK, Sweden)
2. National representative surveys – no feedback for individual institutions of higher education (e.g. France, Norway, German HIS survey)
3. Centralized survey with common questionnaire providing feedback to individual university (e.g. AlmaLaurea in Italy)
4. Centrally coordinated collaborative survey with partly specific questions at individual institutions of higher education (German KOAB survey)
5. Individual surveys at individual institutions of higher education

Romania has to make a choice after the first NAMO experiences.

The Future of Graduate Surveys in Romania (II)

The KOAB experience in Germany

- Staff at all individual universities responsible for collection of addresses, interpreting the findings and mobilizing discussions about the findings
- Staff at individual universities vary in the extent they are involved in complex substantive and methodological issues
- Some institutions of higher education are active in adding, subtracting and modifying questions, while others just take the master questionnaire
- Activities coordinated or undertaken by INCHER-Kassel: training seminars, development of master questionnaires in collaboration with staff at the participating universities, undertaking all the field work, providing benchmarking data sets. Possible additional services upon request

Future International Collaboration of NAMO

INTGRADNET

- International network of persons and institutions involved in graduate surveys
- First meetings held in autumn 2010 in Berlin and spring 2011 in Bologna
- Coordinated by Harald Schomburg (INCHER-Kassel)
- First steps: Collaboration for convergence of concepts and questionnaires
- Envisaged next steps: regular comparative analyses of national surveys (similar to the EMBAC project; cf. Schomburg und Teichler 2011)