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What Erasmus students expected and experienced during the course of People in Organisations at a Business and Administration School.

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1. Aims

- To analyse Erasmus incoming students' expectations and competences developed during the course of People in Organisations.

2. Framework

- Erasmus + has become EU's “flagship programme to support and strengthen education, training, youth and sport in Europe” (European Commission, 2018 :3).
- Erasmus in higher education promotes (Papatsiba, 2005; Marques and Almeida, 2014) :
 - a) the opportunity to acquire and develop international competences, such as the proficiency in maternal and foreign languages, culture awareness, initiative and autonomy;
 - b) the European labour market, and the transfer of skills and technology from one country to another.
- The political rationale appears to be congruent with the students perceptions of the importance of Erasmus (Papatsiba, 2005).

Foster
employability

2. Framework

Reasons for students to participate:

- to study in high quality academic environments;
- to carry out extracurricular activities during this period, and/or for vacational reasons;
- to improve their linguistic skills;
- to have the opportunity to meet people from other cultures;
- to become more independent.

(Pietro and Page, 2008; Vaicekauskas; Duoba and Kumpikaittė-Valiuniene, 2013; Marques and Almeida, 2014a)

Reasons for students not to participate:

- the differences of cost of living between home and host country;
- social class or family background (students with graduate parents are more likely to do Erasmus);
- the distance (students prefer neighbourhood countries);
- the financial support;
- family commitments (being married, working students).

(Pietro and Page, 2008; González, Mesanza and Mariel, 2010)

2. Framework

- Most participating students showed that they were highly satisfied with the Erasmus experience (Rivza and Teichler, 2007).
- Erasmus has a positive influence on the development of the eight key competences for lifelong learning (Kumpikaittė and Duoba, 2013; Vaicekauskas et al., 2013);



1) Communication in the mother tongue; 2) Communication in foreign languages; 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; 4) Digital competence; 5) Learning to learn; 6) Social and civic competences; 7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and 8) Culture awareness and expression (Official Journal of European Union, Brussels, Belgium, pp. L 394/10 - L 394/18, 30.12.2006).

2. Framework

- There are some differences between competences which students consider more important and the level of development of these competences .

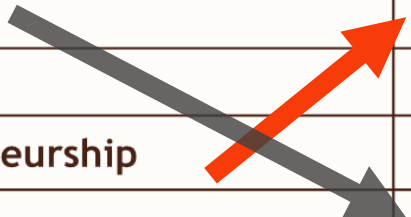
Degree of importance of competences	Level of development of competences
Communication in the mother tongue (1) and in foreign languages (2)	Communication in the mother tongue (1) and in foreign languages (2)
Social and civic competences (6)	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (7)
Learning to learn (5)	Social and civic competences (6)
Least important	Least developed
Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (3)	Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (3)

Source: Kumpikaittė and Duoba (2013); Vaicekauskas et al. (2013)

2. Framework

- There are some differences between competences which students consider more important and the level of development of these competences .

Competences expected	Competences developed
Communication in foreign languages	Culture awareness and expression
Culture awareness and expression	Communication in foreign languages
Social and civic competences	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
Learning to learn	Learning to learn
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	Employability
Employability	Social and civic competences



Source: Marques and Almeida (2014)

3. Methodology

- A qualitative study carried out in two stages:
 1. at the beginning of the semester an open question questionnaire was passed out to the 36 students enrolled in the course - the questionnaire aimed to analyse students' expectations and motivations for Erasmus and for the course.
 2. at the end of the semester students answered two open questions about the competences they perceived they had developed in the course and during their stay in Portugal. Socio-demographic data was also included.
- Content analysis by means of predefined categories with frequency analysis was carried out.

3. Results

Students' socio-demographic profile

Profile	Sample
Gender	78%
Age	21 years average
Home country (cluster)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 50% Eastern Europe (Poland and Slovakia);▪ 47% Western Europe (Belgium, The Netherlands, France and Germany);▪ 3% (Turkey)

*3 students from Poland were from the Ukraine, 1 from Germany came from Brazil, and 1 from Belgium came from Venezuela

3. Results

▪ Students' expectations and motivations:

Competences	Quotes
Culture awareness and opportunity to work in multicultural groups	“culture differences, vacation reasons, international experience”; “meet people with different experiences, personal development”; “compare people, get people to do better, other cultures”
Language proficiency	“improve English, manage people from different cultures”; “Improve English, learn Portuguese, know people from different cultures”; learn Portuguese and improve English, managing people of different cultures“
Managing people/groups	“nice country, manage people”; “improve English and managing people”
Sense of initiative	“how to take care of myself, be more social, know new people and cultures”; “being, working with people from different cultures”

3. Results

▪ Students' perception of competences developed (more frequent):

“working with people from other cultures” (12)

“learning about other cultures” (9)



▪ Culture awareness

“independence”; “autonomy”; “assertiveness” (12)



▪ Sense of initiative

▪ “improvement of the English language” (9)



▪ Language proficiency

▪ “team work”; “social skills” (3)



▪ Soft skills

3. Results

- **Students' expectations and perception of competences developed:**

Expected	Developed
Culture awareness and opportunity to work in multicultural groups	Culture awareness and opportunity to work in multicultural groups
Language proficiency	Sense of initiative
Managing people/groups	Language proficiency
Sense of initiative	Soft skills, managing people

4. Conclusions

- Corroborating previous studies (Marques and Almeida, 2014), we found that incoming students choose to do Erasmus to enhance their culture and international competences, and Portugal for “vacational reasons”.
- Although there is a coherence between competences students expect to developed and perceive they develop, the sense of initiative is more acutely perceived as developed than initially expected.
- Working in multicultural groups and learning about People in Organisations appears to give the students a perception of the development of soft skills and team work, particularly in multicultural groups.