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**The analysis of benefits of studies abroad within
the higher education**

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Abstract

Over recent years student mobility has risen rapidly worldwide. The most widely known and successful programme in Europe is the Erasmus programme which sends abroad almost 3 million students each year. The aim of this study is to evaluate the contribution of studies abroad to the future career paths of participants in terms of linguistic gains, cross-cultural understanding, and personal development. All these aspects lead to the profitability of the world's economy, respectively the economies of the particular countries which benefit from the highly-qualified citizens creating a prosperous state. The research was carried out mostly among Erasmus and Exchange students of the University of Huddersfield and the Business School of Saint-Etienne in France. The respondents were mostly aged 20 – 30 years thus they represent a young and highly-educated generation. Some statistical analyses like Spearman rank order correlation, Chi-square and Mann-Whitney U Test were used to test several hypotheses to explore the relationships between programmes, gender and gains. The research showed that the students decide to study abroad due to the language improvement and the career enhancement. The vast majority of them found this experience very useful in terms of the academic knowledge and exploration of new opportunities. The participants mostly feel very self-confident, feeling they have an advantage over their peers without similar experience. The countries of the EU-15 indicated that they were more for the equity between nationals and foreigners in the labour market than those accessed after the enlargement in 2004. Overall, the expectations of the European Union like enhancing the European citizenship were met.

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Introduction

Background

The modern societies have changed their priorities and values. They have turned from industrialisation towards information because knowledge represents a valuable "commodity" today (Tilak, 2009). Generally, the "price" of information had risen which led to the advance of teachers' and students' positions in the educational area (ICDE International Conference, 2005, p.4).

If a person wants to assert himself in career, he must approve a wide range of skills and knowledge (ICDE International Conference, 2005, p.4). The today's labour market requires workers with much deeper knowledge of languages and culture due to becoming successful internationally (At the ICDE International Conference, 2005, p.4). One effect of globalisation today is the need to educate "intercultural-competent" students with a broad overview (Deardorff, 2004, cited by Byram, 2006). The awareness of habits of another culture helps to avoid communication or ethnical breakdowns. Teichler (2009, p. 93) claims that one of the ways how to keep up with others or be better and gain the self-confidence about own skills and goals for the future career is to try to live out of place where he/she was born, especially in a foreign country. Therefore, it is very beneficial to participate in student exchange programmes or working in other country, as he adds.

Globalisation and education go together hand in hand; they do not have the same meaning as it may seem (Maringe, Foskett, 2010). As Maringe and Foskett (2010) state, globalisation is generally understood as a process of cooperation of countries at the international level in "business or trade with help from the World Trade Organisation and General Agreement in Trade and Services". On the other hand, internalisation reflects the influence of globalisation in each institution individually, for example by students' mobility or partnerships (Altbach et al., 2009) such as "Erasmus Mundus, the Atlantis or the Council on International Educational Student Exchange" (Chang, 2012). The students' mobility has a deep influence on the world's economy. Interestingly, as the "fifth biggest export service industry" in the USA is considered the higher education thanks to the annual income of approximately "\$17.7 billion"(Chang, 2012). Eventually, education is possibly to become "a tradable commodity" on the market (Maringe,

Fosket, 2010, p.3; Tilak, 2008). Gradually, cultures of the world tend to the unification and creation of a "single culture" (Spring, 2008, cited by Aldridge, Christensen, 2012). In the near future, it is very possible we will be talking about a global citizenship which is a result of so called "cultural imperialism" (ICDE International Conference, 2005). As Jack Demain (2005) notes, young people are already aware these days of what it means to be a global citizen because they have been raised in this environment.

The origin of the student mobility in Europe is credited to the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The agreement initiated the necessity of acknowledgement of "qualifications" in all the Union to enable students to study in another country within the free movement of people and labour (Sigalas, 2007). Sigalas (2007) claims the Hague summit in 1969 initiated the "institutionalization of education" in the EU as the first step to raise the economic prosperity. He describes the prime "challenges" for the entire Union such as the "recognition of qualifications, enabling education for everybody and the lifelong learning". Sigalas (2007) states that in the beginning it was crucial to clarify some concepts for statistical purposes. For example, the outbound students can spend a long-term mobility which refers to completion of the degree abroad. On the other hand, the short-time mobility is usually represented by the programmes like Erasmus or Erasmus Mundus created in 1987 (Kelo et al., 2006; cited by Sigalas, 2010). The other expression needed to be determined was who can be considered as a "foreign student". According to (UNESCO, 1971; cited by Gürüz, 2011, p. 201) it is a person who starts attending a higher-educational institution in another country than his official "permanent residence is". However, as he adds there is still dissimilarity in the perception of foreign students. Furthermore, OECD (2007) explains that an "international student" is a person intending to attend a higher-educational institution when crossing the border.

Recent changes in education were examined by Jarvis et al. (2004, p.1). They give an example of the previously mentioned "knowledge economy and lifelong learning". They add we cannot speak anymore just about finished education but rather we should look at learning as a continuing process. Secondly, the importance of theory and practise has changed. These days it is common to focus rather on the practical part of knowledge than the basic theoretical backgrounds which have been disappearing (Jarvis et al.,

2004). Furthermore, they agree with Milton Friedman and his economics of monetarism that education should become a tool to earn money. Consequently, education should convert to a "market provision" (Jarvis et al., 2004, p. 10).

Aims of study

The aim of this dissertation is to find out the main reasons why students undergo the studies abroad; which benefits this experience can bring and how it affects the future life of participants from the career and personal point of view. The study has been undertaken because of the author's previous experience in the studies abroad and interest in international education.

The research analyses all persons who participated in the studies abroad mostly by undertaking various types of study programmes like the Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus or exchange programmes within the higher education institutions because they all are about to meet the same expectations and open students' minds.

Three main objectives of the dissertation were determined:

1. To find out the main participants' motivation factors to study abroad.
2. To find out whether the primary expectations, in terms of the return on investment, of the EU were met thus whether the participants really improved the language skills, enhanced academic knowledge, cross-cultural understanding and the pro-European attitude.
3. To examine the return on investment in the participants' career path.

Outline

The first chapter reviews the current situation of the higher education in Europe and the impacts of highly qualified citizens on the European economy in terms of the return on investment in education. Afterwards the Bologna process is described as the main part of the higher education harmonisation. The author will analyse the students mobility programmes, mainly the Erasmus programme and will determine the motivation factors to study abroad. Furthermore, the main benefits of the studies abroad are examined and the political rationales derived from the EU programmes as well.

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The methodology chapter focuses on the strategies chosen to conduct the main research. The reasons of selecting the research method are rationalized and its advantages and disadvantages are adduced. Afterwards, the main information about the research sample is specified and the research limitations are explained.

There are primary data analysed and presented in the fourth chapter. The research is divided into four parts on the profile of respondents and other three sections reflecting the previously determined objectives.

The last chapter compares the research results and the secondary data from the literature review. The similarities and differences are emphasised and some recommendations are stated.

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2 Literature review

2.1 Higher education in Europe

According to the European Commission (2012) the economic growth depends on the qualification of workers building a prosperous state. Therefore, there are many applicants for the places at universities. In the same time, the number of universities is growing. Approximately "4 000" organisations are found in "higher education", where around 19 million people study. Consequently, it creates working places for "1.5 million" employees. Europe can be proud of universities ranked as "the best in the world" (European Commission, 2012). However, the state governments and higher education institutions are still trying to create better conditions for universities which would be able to provide the students with more opportunities. The governments usually help the education institutions financially and it is up to the universities to create own curricula (European Commission, 2012). As Maringe and Foskett (2010) claim, each institution has its own policy which diversifies the "global" educational system and leads as well to various points of view on its quality depending on university's priorities. To prove the rise of the higher education level, Teichler (2009, p.94) points out the high number of students from abroad at universities. He explains that by creating the "successful run of the Erasmus programme".

2.2 Returns of education on the European economy

One of the impacts on the state economy is the level of education of the "citizens" because the return on education is given back by higher salaries and so by taxes derived from a "monthly income" (Brunello et al, 2007). Interestingly, the profits distributed to the government from the US higher institution graduates are higher than in Europe as it is described in the table below. Females' contribution in the USA is much lower than in Europe which is, however, caused by their low participation in the highest types of education. Moreover, among huge contributors to the state economy belong "student grants and loans" as well (Brunello et al,2007).

Table 2.1: Returns on education in economy (Brunello et al., 2007)

Country	Males	Females
Denmark	6.7	6.1
Finland	14.2	15.2
Spain	9.2	8.5
Sweden	8.8	7.3
United Kingdom	11.2	13.7
United States	11.0	7.9
EU-5	10.3	11.2

Brunello et al. (2007) point out the positive and strong influence of education on a lower unemployment rate thanks to a better "economic performance" of workers of both genders. According to the research conducted by the OECD (2004; Brunello et al., 2007) the employment rate of women with secondary education was just 49% which was lower by 26% than males' employment rate. However, regarding the tertiary institutions graduates the gap between men and women was only 8%.

2.2.1 Mobility within the EU

Brunello et al. (2007, p. 33) describes the human resources as being a very "mobile" commodity. The European countries are unlike in the willingness to move because of a job. For example countries characterised by a high willingness to change the place of living for a better job are "Denmark, France or the UK" in contrast to southern European states like "Portugal, Spain or Italy". Brunello et al. (2007) note that people without a tertiary education move very rarely.

2.3 Harmonisation of European educational system

2.3.1 The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

The European Credit Transfer System was established after the creation of the Erasmus programme as a way how to evaluate exams passed at a foreign university within Erasmus. The number of credits which a full-time student can get depends on the course requires (European Commission, 2013a). Mostly, it is usual to gain "60 credits per an academic year" after the amount of "24 to 30 working hours a week" at the university

(Roper, 2007). As Roper (2007) adds, each student is obligated to fulfil a "learning agreement" where all courses are mentioned and evaluated by a number of credits at a home and foreign university.

2.4 Bologna process

The Bologna process is an arrangement among higher-education institutions of 45 countries in Europe with the aim to create "the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)" within the European Union with "three-tiered degree structure – bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees" (Floud, 2006). It was signed by 30 representatives of the countries in Bologna, 1999 (Wächter, 2004). The European educational institutions tend to build a common system without big divergences, followed by enhancement of "social and human growth" (Karseth, Solbrekke, 2010). Additionally, the goal of this agreement is to foster the assumptions in the future career possibilities and make them comparable among European countries (Karseth, Solbrekke, 2010; Wächter, 2004; Chang, 2012). Overall, the quality of education usually builds "the civic capital" of state and so citizens interested in building a prosperous state (Gaston, 2010, p. 14; Tilak, 2009). Therefore, widening range of graduates' skills abroad is very welcoming and supported by Bologna (Roper, 2007).

Teichler (2004) states that less than 5% of all students started attending a higher education institution abroad. He argues that some small states like "Luxembourg or Liechtenstein" lack a proper higher educational system so people commonly do their studies abroad. Issues like theoretical backgrounds, methods or "lifelong learning" are examined and summed up into several stages (Karseth, Solbrekke, 2010). Furthermore, Gaston (2010) notes the Bologna agreement explains as well the context of modules necessary for getting a degree. He says, there must be a certain level of knowledge which the students must gain.

However, Andree Sursock disagrees with a positive contribution of Bologna process on the enrichment due to its "incoherency" (Teicher, 2001; Morgan, 2010). Gaston (2010) claims that meeting all the expectations have been refrained due to several reasons. Firstly, participating countries were not willing to put as much money as promised into educational changes followed by rise of tuitions and other fees (Gaston, 2010, p. 21).

He adds a problem regarding the possibility of preferring one nationality to another. Moreover, Sojur (2009, cited by Faston, 2010, p. 22) points out the necessity of "sustainable societies including political, cultural, social and environmental awareness". He notes that Bologna needs such people interested in learning, getting to know new stuff and "discovering". However, there is a small complication in managing the administration caused by differences in financing systems or level of knowledge required by the countries participating (Gaston, 2010).

2.4.1 Cooperation with universities from the USA

Bologna process has been implemented in the USA as well and both sides can benefit from exchanging experience and new procedures (Gaston, 2010). The American educational system has gone through many changes, for instance universities have spent a lot of money on new "curricular programs" or supporting democracy like solving problems regarding "justice, equity or hunger" (Gaston, 2010, p. 14). However, the government is very keen on fostering citizens' capabilities by gaining new knowledge from international companies which Bologna is very useful for. According the research of the "Association of American Colleges and Universities" (Hart, 2007; cited by Gaston, 2010) - 76% of employers would rather accept graduates with wide knowledge being able to assert themselves abroad. They rather recruit applicants who are not trained just for working in their home-country but globally (Gaston, 2010).

Erasmus programme

Erasmus programme is considered as the first and the most used way for students of higher education to travel abroad. Erasmus operations are carried out by "the Directorate of General Education and Culture of the European Commission". There are a lot of countries participating like all the member states of the European Union and many others cooperating among approximately "2,000 universities" (González, 2011). The successful run of Erasmus programme can be proved by 8% of all students taking part in contrast to the scant 1% of mobility students in the "USA and Canada" (AUCC, 2002; cited by Marcotte et al., 2007).

2.5 Political and Economical Rationales

Papatsiba (2005) approves that there are several "political rationales" hidden behind the launching the Erasmus programme which are not mostly known among the participants if they do not study "Politics or Economy".

There are four main political rationales of launching the Erasmus programme:

- Mobility among the European Union states in the aim of the future enhancement within the European labour market.
- Mobility of the technological findings among countries of the EU.
- Evocation of the European consciousness.
- Creation of the cross-culturally educated generation with the motivation to the personal development. (Papatsiba, 2005)

2.5.1 Pro-European Consciousness

Papatsiba (2005) adds that one of the objectives of the EU is to evoke the "feeling European belonging" and enhancing the way of thinking at the international level and pro-European. Wilson (2011) and Papatsiba (2005) examine what it is likely to expect in the future from the "Erasmus generation" from the "Europeanism" point of view. Wilson (2011) tries to figure out whether the participants feel more having "primarily European or national identity" and how they feel "attached" to Europe after absolving the programme. The result did not state any huge differences because the vast Erasmus students are generally pro-European. However, Papatsiba (2005) claims that students before starting their study abroad do not abound with the consciousness of building Europe. Therefore, he refuted the hypothesis that the stay abroad can change the person's political opinion "in a short term". However, Wilson's (2011) research was based on students from countries like Britain, Sweden and France which are likely to maintain a negative approach to the "political" union so he mentions the results could differ among students moving to countries with opposite approaches than their home country has.

2.5.2 Mobility of the technological knowledge across borders

The other political reason can be considered the contribution of technological knowledge transferred and exploited across borders (Papatsiba, 2005). All the members could profit from the high level of research and development.

2.5.3 The Single Market and free movement of labour

Over the last two centuries, the European countries used to rely just on their own nation and build welfare within own boundaries (Hobsbawn, 1992; cited by Gernhards, 2008). The army used to control the frontiers and the immigration because it was not usual to settle or study in another country. The citizens could exploit services and take advantage provided just by own government. Therefore, there was an inequality between domestic inhabitants and foreigners (Gernhards, 2008).

The studying abroad is facilitated and covered by the Single Market Act within the European Union that aims to increase competitiveness of the European business where the free movement of citizens and businesses is considered as the "pre-condition" (European Commission, 2012b). The "free movement of people and labour" represents the advantage of citizens to move and work in another country (Gerhards, 2008). According to the European Commission (2012b) the act has already created "2.77 million jobs" in the European Union since its launch in 1987 and citizens of the EU are eligible to work arbitrarily where they want. The European Commission (2012b) mentions a new network called EURES in the Single Market Act II that assists the European member states citizens to find a "job or placement" in a foreign country thus offering skilled and probably best workers to help the certain company to reinforce its position on the market (European Commission, 2012a). Wand and Bu (2005) did a research on students from Canada. They argue that they would be willing to move abroad but the position would have to be very high and profitable. If they have a choice of having the same job in their home country and abroad, they would rather stay at home.

2.5.3.1 Discrimination on the labour market

Although the freedom of labour is conditioned by the equality between foreigners and "nationals", it is not always accomplished as Gerhards (2008) states. He examines whether the discrimination is really a present and current problem. Additionally, he

looks at the point of view of domestic citizens on immigrants coming to their labour market and whether they agree with the equal rights for them and other nations at the same time. His findings are based on the "European Values Study from 1999/2000" which was carried out by the countries of the EU. There were at least 1000 respondents in each country asked for answer on the statement: "If jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to [German] people (or the nationality of the respective country) over immigrants". Interestingly, he found out that the EU-15 countries are much more supportive in "non-discrimination" of other nations within their state in contrast to newly joined members. Generally, none of the countries agreed totally with equalization of rights over immigrants, however, for example the Nordic countries like Norway, Sweden and Denmark belong to countries with an absolute majority of approval. On the other hand, nations that entered the EU in 2004 like Polish or Lithuanian supported the "unequal treatment" by more than 96% (Gerhards, 2008).

These findings are interpreted by the theory of "economic modernisation and social prosperity" which is represented by the "Human Development Index" used to compare the level of state's modernisation. It is natural that satisfied citizens living in a rich country are more open to immigrants because they are sure about not losing their own welfare in contrast to poorer countries with a high unemployment rate and lack of state's support (Gerhard, 2008). Chhibber and Laajaj (2007) explain the index as a combination of the "level of education, GNP per capita and average life expectancy". Gergards (2008) confirms that the more modern country is, the more welcoming it is to foreigners and according to the fact that the recently accessed states still lag behind the EU-15, the average of European citizens voting for the equality is decreasing. However, he is arguing about the possible change in the future when all countries are more developed and they are more identical.

2.5.4 Distribution of the EU Grants

Earlier, there used to be an observance of the return on investment from the participants' side. There was an "obligation" for the graduates to come back after having their studies abroad finished and work in a region company for the "local public good" (Papatsiba, 2005).

The European Union invests generous amount of capital into supporting students' financially during their stay abroad from 3 to 12 months. There are 33 EU countries plus "Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey" that use the financial means. Erasmus covers "40% of the Lifelong Learning programme budgetary" which is split among "national agencies" that transfer the money to universities and other educational organisations (European Commission, 2012c). The European Commission specifies just the upper limit of possible grant for each host country which is listed in the table 1.2. See the grants by a monthly rate of each country in the Appendix A.

The European Commission (2012c) explains that there are special schemes for the distribution of the money from the EU based on three aspects. Firstly, it depends on the number of "students, graduates and teachers" at universities and colleges in the country. The second aspect is derived from the "cost of living" and how the capital cities of a home country and targeted one are far from each other. The last factor takes under consideration the number of participants having already participated in the programme (European Commission, 2012c).

The agencies play the main role regarding the distribution of money within the nations. They are in charge of dividing between higher educational organisations of the certain country and determine whether to help more students with a lower financial support or fewer students by higher grants (European Commission, 2012c). As the European Commission (2012c) remarks, for example the strategy of Bulgaria or Cyprus is based on encouraging fewer students by a bigger sum of money in contrast to France or Italy. Regarding the role of the sending university, it usually chooses the participants according to the grade average, language knowledge or being proactive and motivated to go abroad (Teichler, 2004).

2.5.4.1 Zero grant

The European Commission (2008/2009) states that there is a special type of "grant" which means that despite the on-going students do not get any financial support; they take an advantage of being an Erasmus student. In 2009/2010 there were "7053" people exploiting this opportunity which counted "8.8%" of the all on-going students.

2.6 Why and how do students decide to study abroad?

Many reasons to study abroad can be found: personal development (Teichler, 2009), career intentions (Gaston, 2010), language skills (Kininger, 2011) or cross-cultural perceptions (Anderson et al., 2006). A very interesting fact is, as Marcotte et al. (2007) claim, among the students' first intentions to study abroad do not belong the career improvement or self-development. Despite, it has an essential influence on a successful path of the future career and "personal development".

Salisbury et al. (2009) state that the decision to study abroad is derived from the person's "socio-economic background" gained at the university. He adds as the other influencing aspect can be considered the gender because the tertiary institutions usually affect men and women differently. According to the European Commission (2009/2010) there is a majority of women participating in the study abroad which was represented by "60.95%". Moreover, according to the Institute of International Education (2008; cited by Salisbury et al., 2010) the number of women abroad is doubled in comparison to men. The other motivation can be evoked from the parental side. Wand and Bu (2005) claim that children of people going for business trips and travelling abroad desire more to find a job outside their home country thus study there seems like a good start. As Perna and Titus (2005; cited by Salisbury et al., 2010) say, the students can count the value of costs of study by projecting the benefits into the future.

2.7 The positive contribution to the participants' development

2.7.1 Academic knowledge and personal development

González (2011) says the Erasmus programme is a "crucial" way to develop the European labour market and push it towards better knowledge. He adds the Commission should increase focus on widening Bologna activities because it contributes to the higher cooperation on the "international" level, easier finding a high-quality job (Bracht, 2006; cited by González) and enhancing the possibility of working abroad of the participant (Parey and Waldinger, 2007; cited by González). Otero (2008) adds that spending some time in a foreign country brings new opportunities and "opens one's mind" about various issues. Teichler (2004, p. 403) sums up his study by stating that the majority of asked students admitted having gained a great educational knowledge at a

host university and the stay was found more helpful than staying in a home country by even "55%" respondents. Teichler (2004) argues that after staying for several months in a foreign country, the students became more adaptive, flexible and self-confident. He concludes that with a declaration that "93%" respondents of his research were happy about the time spent abroad. Mercotta et al. (2007) support the student mobility by stating that it is crucial especially for "business students" to gain the range of understanding the international sphere including habits of other countries which has become a challenge for schools of business to achieve this goal.

2.7.2 Cultural understanding and empathy

Black and Duhon (2006) point out that there are certain short-term gains after the studies abroad. The cultural understanding usually requires "tourism activities", therefore visiting the most known and typical spots of the country like "cities or famous sites" is an effective way to get familiar with the culture (Papatsiba, 2006, p.111). Papatsiba adds the participants should become aware of the countries' "history, geography or political situation". He speaks as well about the possibility of the Erasmus programme to participate in trips organised by partner universities as a contribution to the culture cognition, however, rarely an opportunity to meet native speakers. Papatsiba (2006) gives an example of organising trips just among French Erasmus students who lack the social contact with natives like that. As Byram (2006) confirms, each cultural has various features known as "typical" which are mostly seen as bias acquired during some time based on the historical background of the country. He gives an example of Germany, generally it is said that the Germans do not have sense of humour but the opposite was affirmed. According to Teichler (2004) it is more pleasant and easier to adapt in a European country than for example in Asia where, however, the cultural understanding must be definitely broader. Tyrone and Duhon (2006) carried out a study on American business students who spent one month in London. They found out that their "cross-cultural" approach rose remarkably. They became more confident, "independent" and open to the new culture.

2.7.2.1 Hofstede's cross-cultural theories

Professor Geert Hofstede (2013) looked at the cultural understanding from the point of view of how it impacts the workplace environment. He examined more than 100.000

employees in around 40 countries and evaluated them afterwards according to the cultural "values" which are: "Power Distance; Individualism versus Collectivism; Masculinity versus Femininity and Uncertainty Avoidance". The power distance reflects to the "social hierarchy"; thus having a certain place in the society which is very strongly asserted for example in Japan. Secondly, values like individualism and collectivism show if the society takes care about others or about just individually about the close family. Furthermore, there is a big difference between the collectivistic and individualistic way of communication and negotiation. The individualism is typical for a quick arriving to an agreement in contrast to the collectivistic approach based on long negotiations to "build a trustful and reliable relationship". Thirdly, there are feminine cultures which take care about its members and appreciate the "quality of life". Masculine values are represented by success and reaching set goals. Finally, Hofstede (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011) examines whether some society members feel the "uncertainty" (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). He claims that cultures lacking security tend to be structured formally and they fear of "innovations". There is one more value mentioned by De Mooij (2010; cited by De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011) which is a "long- and short-term orientation". They say the "long-term orientation" expects profit from the investment (Papatsiba, 2005) in the future such as investments made by the European Union in studying abroad to have highly-educated employees with an international consciousness. Moreover, studying abroad is very expensive for students' parents. They are mostly aware that the "short-term" investment will be worth it in a "long-term". To conclude his theories, his study helped in cultural understanding in many parts of international relations. As I have already mentioned, Gaston (2010) emphasises the importance in career to be aware about the cross-cultural differences. Similarly, Hofstede and De Mooij (2011) investigated the "cross-cultural consumer behaviour" - for example how to deal between businesses trading internationally or how to talk to a Japanese customer in the USA (Goodstein, 1981). Moreover, they found out there are different "consumer behaviours" among individualistic and collectivistic cultures while there is a kind of "consistency" in individualistic behaviour thus with a proper understanding the certain culture it is possible to foresee what the consumers will demand (De Mooij, Hofstede, 2011).

2.7.3 Language skills

As Celeste Kinginger (2009, cited by Kininger, 2011) notes, there can be improvements in all aspects of language skills. Students have got better in communication including grammatical either strategic skills or leading a talk (Teichler, 2004). Huebner (1995, cited by Kininger, 2011) says that all the participants can have different individual linguistic gains, thus it does not mean that the students surely foster all the sites of language. Furthermore, the expectations of enhancement of language abilities do not always meet the reality. Sometimes students have even lower knowledge of language after finishing their studies abroad than they did have before (Kinging, 2008; cited by Kininger, 2011). Therefore, Gore (2005) argues that it is necessary for students to be thorough and serious in studies to succeed and spend time as much as possible with people using the foreign language at the advanced level (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Teichler, 2004) and try to perceive the language by "reading newspapers or just listening" (Teichler, 2004). Kininger concludes the current researches by pointing out few main findings about the study abroad. Firstly, the students are provided with deeper vocabulary from the institutional point of view. Furthermore, the grammatical abilities and prosperity of social interaction are proved. Last but not least is the comprehension in the way that the participants start thinking in the foreign language and so get much more from the daily use of language. As a result of these benefits, study abroad should be more recommended.

2.7.3.1 Oral improvements

Simon (1996, p. 87) focuses on Spanish language and examines the oral improvements during a discussion based on several aspects like "word order, vocabulary, hesitation, rhythm, vowel quality, pauses, speed or accuracy". Similarly Freed (1995, cited by Simon, 1996) takes under consideration "the flow, intonation, rhythm or accuracy of language". Interestingly, Simon (1996) found out that the pronunciation of targets differs according to the fact whether they are men, women either on origin or just on their current state of mind (Simon, 1996). Gasparro (1998) examined linguistic gains on the basis of several aspects and he found out that men can more easily gain language and oral skills than women.

2.7.4 Classroom studying vs. studying abroad

Some scientists claim that classroom studying may be more effective than studying abroad (Collentine 2004, cited by Kinginger 2011). Regan et al. (2009) admit that it is necessary to attend classes to acquire some "categorical features" but when using the language abroad, in the case of the Irish advanced learners of French who studied in France, is possible to manipulate and comfort their skills according to the native speakers. Consequently, it is more likely way to gain abilities of a second language. Similarly, Howard (2005; cited by Kinginger, 2011) examined students learning French language and he came to the conclusion that the participants mastered the past tense much more progressively compared to the people at the same age at home. Kinginger (2011) adds that the social interaction among people at a high level of the targeted foreign language is a great benefit in comparison to people learning the language just in classrooms with set curricula or limited range of language vocabulary. Lessons in classrooms are commonly led in the style of "preselected language forms" which impedes the natural communicative skills of students. They are usually taught in each lesson to repeat the given phrases by heart but they cannot foster their vocabulary by words which they would normally hear during a daily life abroad (Kinging, 2011).

2.8 The criticism of the Erasmus programme

Prawna (2012) declares that there have recently appeared some negative discussions on financing the Erasmus programme because there was a lack of funding in 2012. There were many concerns that students already abroad could lose their grants for the semester 2013 either the financial support would be cut or the Erasmus programme could totally "bankrupt" (Prawna, 2012; Irish Examiner, 2012). The main issue was that the proposed budget of the European Commission was €132.7 billion which outweighed the later approved €129.1 billion as the EU states and the "European Parliament" agreed. Moreover, it was necessary to pay €5 billion for other bills from the previous year but the gap should be covered by new budget suggested in October 2012 with the help of member states who had to pay quite high fees to help the programme survive (European Commission, 2012c). However, according to the European Commission's plans (2012c) there should be "€ 19 billion" reserved for Erasmus for the period 2014 – 2020 which

represents an increase by "70%". See the Table 1.2 on the Annual Erasmus Budget and its charge in percentage in the Appendix A.

2.9 The problems possible to occur

Some students remarked some problems with settling in the receiving country. Teichler (2004) emphasises mainly the administration, accommodation and financial difficulties. Firstly, "47%" participants in Greece and "40%" (p. 400) in France were in trouble with administrative proceedings. Some issues were recorded in the "Central, Eastern Europe, Austria and Italy" as well. The administrative steps are mostly diverging in each country so that might be considered as the main cause of problems. Secondly, almost "41%" (p. 400) Erasmus students in Italy were not satisfied with finding "accommodation". According to Teichler (2004, p. 400) the "Central and Eastern European states" were highly ranked as problematic in this field. He adds the main complaints such as unpleasant, loud, expensive accommodation and a long distance from the school. As the research showed, the Scandinavian countries were marked as the most responsible and least problematic to settle in (Teichler, 2004).

Thirdly, about a quarter of the participants mentioned the financial problems which were related to several reasons such as receiving their grant late, a high price of living or not being able to work during studies (Teichler, 2004; Anonymous, 2007). Anonymous (2007) argues there was "54.6%" participants from Slovenia stating their grant was not sufficient. However, the core expenses were mostly spent on travelling and activities in the aim to learn more about the new culture. Some students admitted going home more than once during the Erasmus period which could definitely reflect on the budget (Teichler, 2004). Finally, it is crucial to find a host university with a similar range of courses and curricula because the students have to pass all modules to obtain credits as their peers at the home institution. Therefore, after coming back the students can be under a pressure with finishing courses which he/she did not subscribe to abroad (Teichler, 2004). Additionally, regarding the differences between educational systems, some students had troubles in "France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal". On the other hand, the students were satisfied with the offered modules the most in the "Netherlands and Sweden". Furthermore, each university has own curricula so "13%" students were not happy with the dissimilar system of educating and difficulty of courses was agreed

by "6%" respondents Teichler, 2004, p. 403). Another problem can appear when there are too many students from the same country which belonged to a complaint of "18%" of respondents (Teichler, 2004). Interestingly, Marcotte et al. (2007) discovered that 46% of respondents from a Canadian business school did not need any grants or other financial support because they made do with own "financial" means.

2.10 The current situation and the Top destination countries

The European Commission (2013) confirms that the number of students exploiting this programme is going up each year. Gonzáles et al. (2010) state that among the most visited countries belong Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain which are all members of EU-15 and are accounted for the highest number of incoming students. The Top country is definitely represented by the United Kingdom. Students can more easily learn English as the "language number one" of the world and additionally, the education system is at a very high level. Teichler (2004) states that 44% of modules attended during the Erasmus programme are in English.

Gonzáles et al. (2010) mentions that Britain can be disadvantaged by students who do not pay any tuition for an Erasmus stay there. On the other hand, the interesting fact is that the number of British outgoing students has remained a downward trend (Gonzáles, 2010).

3 Methodology

The previous chapter gave an overview of similar researches already carried out in the recent years. In this chapter, firstly, the research and strategy approach based on the previously determined research objectives will be specified and the rationales for choosing an appropriate research method will be clarified. Afterwards, the author will define the research sample and describe the distribution of the chosen method and the pre-testing study. Finally, the limitations influencing the primary research will be explained.

3.1 Rationale for the methodology used in the case study

3.2 Research Approach

There are two types of the research strategy: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research is based on qualitative information like words and sentences and the quantitative study is determined by quantitative aspects like numbers and figures (Blumberg, 2011). If the approach is either quantitative or qualitative, it is deduced from the "epistemology theory" which distinguishes between ways how to understand "knowledge" (Blumberg, 2011, p.144). There are two theories taken under account: "positivism and realism" (Collis, 2007). The positivism presumes a logical reasoning of results (Collis, 2007). However, the author considers the realism as the most appropriate theory due to the emphasis on "independent social relationships" which perform "upon us" thus the behaviour of people is impossible to predict on a basis of some assumptions (Partington, 2002). The research is carried out on the basis of deductive reasoning which means the general information is applied to the more specific ones (Collis, 2007).

3.2.1 Research Strategy

Firstly, two strategy methods were considered: interview and questionnaire. The interview would enable gaining very deep information about fewer respondents which could, however, lead to skewed and subjective results. Therefore, the author decided to collect the data by questionnaires.

3.2.1.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is an efficient way how to gain easily a lot of information by several questions (Remenyi, 1998). The main obstacle for getting an effective feedback from respondents is mostly to define such questions to get deep and informative answers at the same time. The benefit is the possibility to get data from a wide range of respondents with objective and reliable answers. It is anonymous so everybody can respond to sensitive questions (Greetham, 2009).

Although the questionnaires are intended to collect the quantitative data, the author will use qualitative questions which will be afterwards transferred into numbers and evaluated as quantitative information.

Table 3.1: Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire (Greetham, 2009)

Advantages	Disadvantages
Low cost	Depth of questions limited
Easy evaluation	Low number of answers
Objective	Possibility of not fully understanding by less literate respondents
Anonymity enables answering sensitive questions	Possibility of respondents quitting in case of many questions
Reliable	
Respondents have enough time	

3.2.1.2 Types of questions

The questionnaire consists of 17 questions. There is a majority of closed questions with all the cohorts which respondents can identify with. However, despite of the wide range of options, there is space for respondents' other opinions in the aim to obtain exact answers.

3.2.1.3 Structure of the questionnaire

The author uses some "filter questions" (Remenyi, 1998, p. 156) when asking about the programme participated in because the following questions include just the Erasmus students. The background questions are used in the first part of the questionnaire to get familiar with general information about respondents like age and gender. Mostly, the "multiple response questions" are used to obtain just one answer (Greetham, 2009, p. 208). When asking for example about the main motivation factors of the decision to study abroad, the "checkboxes" questions are used to get more answers (p. 208). The "likert scale question" (Greetham, 2009, p. 208) is used to rate the gained academic knowledge. Furthermore, the author uses the open questions to ask about nationality or county chosen to study abroad. This kind of information will be categorised into groups according to several aspects necessary for the analysis. The answers will be presented in bar and pie charts.

3.2.1.4 Distribution of questionnaire

The electronic survey will be prepared in Google Drive which the author published on web via a social network in order to focus on a wide sample of respondents. Therefore, the financial costs will be practically none.

3.2.1.5 Pre-testing of questionnaire

The pilot study will be conducted in the aim to avoid ambiguity and find out how long time it takes to fulfil the paper to avoid respondents quitting questionnaires because of the time duration. The questionnaire will be firstly discussed with the personal tutor and afterwards the informal testing will be carried out among a small sample of friends (Remenyi, 1998).

3.3 Sampling

The sample is a group of people who are supposed to give the necessary empirical data. The sample has to consist of such individuals to avoid misrepresenting the result thus the sample should "characterize all the population" and not just a part with a "subjective" point of view (Remenyi, 1991, p. 192). This sample will be made up of persons who surely studied abroad. Therefore, the first question asks whether he respondent studied abroad in the aim to avoid needless answers and in case of answering "No, I did not.", the questionnaire is automatically submitted. The sample mainly consists of the double-degree students of the University of Huddersfield and the Business School of Saint Etienne in France where the author did her previous studies within the Erasmus programme. Consequently, the sample is very diverse regarding the various nationalities.

3.3.1 Selecting the type of sampling

There are two methods of sampling which are: Probability Samples and Non-Probability Samples. The probability samples are based on the positivistic approach and made up by random selection of individuals to generalize the result on a wider society where each person has an "equal chance to be chosen" (Remenyi, 1998). Secondly, the non-probability samples do not have to be necessarily analysed by statistics because the answers are very subjective thus there is a danger of a biased result (Remenyi, 1998).

The author uses the non-probability type of sampling in the research because the respondents of the questionnaire are chosen on purpose in the aim to examine just people who spend some time abroad. There are four types of non-probability sampling which are: Convenience Sampling, Judgment Sampling, Quota Sampling and Snowball Sampling (Hair, et al., 2011). In the dissertation the combination of judgment and snowball samplings is used. The judgment sample is typical for being created on a specific purpose to find the most suitable respondents (Hair et al., 2011). Firstly, the author searched for the Erasmus students in the aim to have enough respondents on main problematic and afterwards a wider range of people who studied abroad is involved. Hair et al. (2011) describe the snowball sampling as a way how to gain new respondents through the old ones. The author sent off the questionnaires among Erasmus students who forwarded them further.

3.3.2 Size of Sample

The size of sample is determined by the costs, category or time consumption. However, the questionnaires were launched via web so the costs did not represent any limitation for the amount of responses. 106 questionnaires were filled in including 2 which were responded by non-participants on the studies abroad.

3.4 Ethical Issues

There are some ethical issues needed to be taken under consideration while doing the research. The questions of the questionnaire were checked by the personal tutor before starting doing the research and also the Research Ethics form was fulfilled and signed within the rules of the University of Huddersfield. The questionnaires were conducted in anonymity. The ethical issues did not limit the depth of information required neither the way how the survey should be led nor the expenses spent on the implementation.

3.5 Research Limitations

There are always constraints when trying to get the most exact data in the research which must be overcome. The main disadvantage of questionnaire is that it does not represent a corresponding source of data in case of low number of responds. The author used a non-probability sampling because the research is focused on the benefits of studies abroad. Therefore, it was necessary to use a non-random sample to be focused

just on those who already had this experience which means that the result is not representative and cannot be generalised on the entire population.

As one limitation of the survey the author considers the fact that there can be more motivation aspects to decide for studies abroad like marital status, religion or financial means of the family which were not asked in the questionnaire.

There were more various answers on the open questions than expected thus the evaluation was complicated to divide the sample into several groups on the basis of some criteria based on the certain analysis. The nationality could be a great example because there were significant differences in the number of respondents for each nationality thus the author divided them into the EU-15 countries and those which entered the Union later.

Moreover, the next limitation is that the author used a lot of qualitative nominal data which were not 'normal'. Therefore, just non-parametric tests are used to analyse all hypothesis which are not that sensitive to detect any significant associations.

Regarding the third hypothesis there are less respondents than for the other questions thus the result might not be that significant. The respondents were asked in the question 8 which programme or other way they used to study abroad and some of them wrote for example "Erasmus and Exchange programme" into the bracket with the option "other" instead of choosing just the Erasmus programme which was supposed to be the priority as it was written below the question. Therefore, the program Google Drive automatically moved them to the next page because of a page break and they skipped the question 9 about the pro-European feeling. Thus the quantity of questions number 8 had to be made equal to the quantity of answers of the question 9.

As the other limitation the author considers the number of respondents who have a job and experienced studies abroad because out of 106 respondents there were just 9 working thus the result might be a bit skewed.

As it was already mentioned, the author's range of nationalities was very broad but there were not enough of respondents of each nationality in the aim to find more connections

for example between the nationality, cultural understanding and state chosen to study abroad for a comparison between Europeans and Asians.

4 Research

In the previous chapter the sample was described, thus who the research is focused on and what the purpose of the analysis is. Secondly, the chosen strategies were rationalized and explained how the research is carried out and finally the research limitations were mentioned.

The obtained data is analysed in this chapter and the results are presented. This section is divided into four parts: Profile of respondents and other three according to the determined objectives. The research is analysed by the descriptive statistics, correlation, Mann-Whitney U test and chi-square tests. The visual aids like charts and graphs are used for a better clarification.

Objectives:

1. To find out the main participants' motivation factors to study abroad.
2. To find out whether the primary expectations, in terms of the return on investment, of the EU were met thus whether the participants really improved the language skills, enhanced academic knowledge, cross-cultural understanding and the pro-European attitude.
3. To examine the return on investment in the participants' career path.

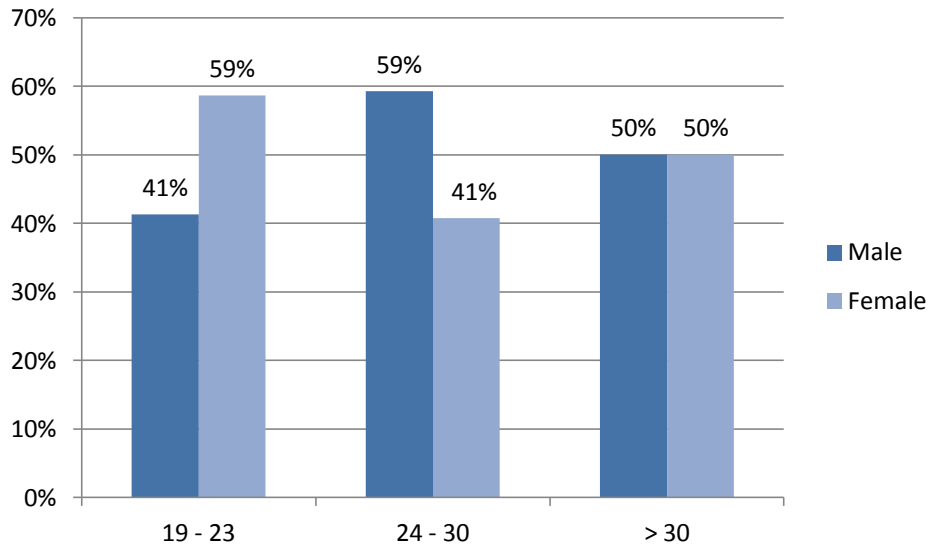
Hypothesis:

1. There is no difference between the programmes undergone in the linguistic gains.
2. There is a relationship between gender and the level of satisfaction regarding the usefulness of the studies abroad and contribution to feel open-minded.
3. People who obtained a grant feel more pro-European than those who did not.
4. There is a relationship between gender and the self-esteem of being at advantage in the labour market over peers having not participated in any studies abroad.

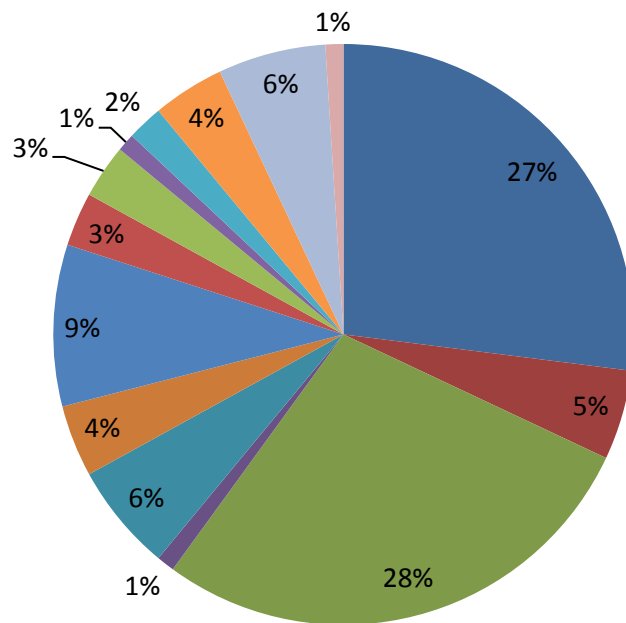
The research is focused just on people who have studied abroad. Therefore, the author put a control question at the beginning in case of not getting appropriate answers. There were just 2% of non-participants and all the following research will take in consideration just the studies abroad participants who were represented by the rest 98% (q.1).

4.1 Profile of respondents

Chart 4.1: Gender of respondents according to the age



The participants were supposed to fit into four age groups whereas there was nobody in the youngest group (< 18). The bar chart above shows there is a majority of females (59%) at the age of 19 – 23. However, males study abroad more often than females at the age of 24–30 and that by 18%. The proportion of males and females older than 30 years was equal (q. 2, 3).

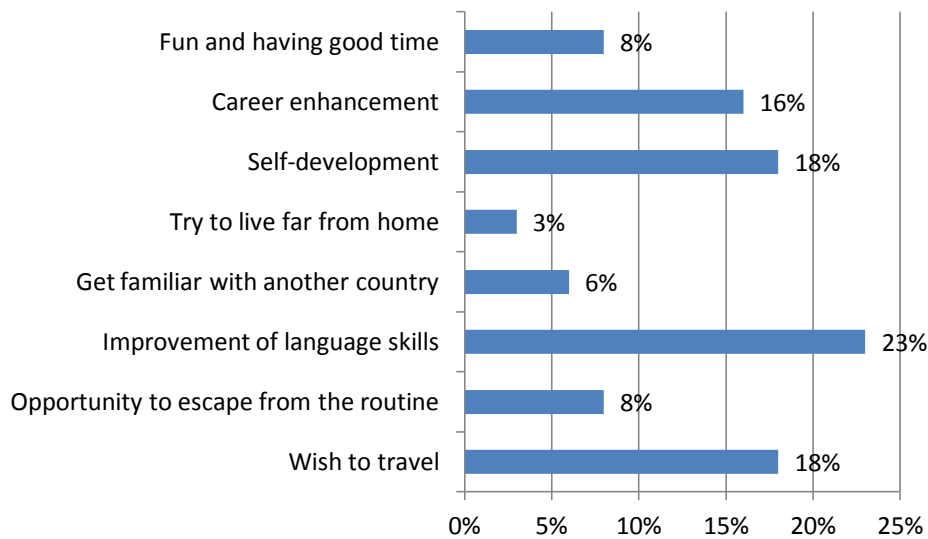


The sample is very diverse in the number of nationalities. The most of the participants were French (28%), 27% was represented by Czech and the third biggest group (9%) was presented by Polish nationality (q.4).

4.2 Objective 1

To find out the main participants' motivation factors to study abroad.

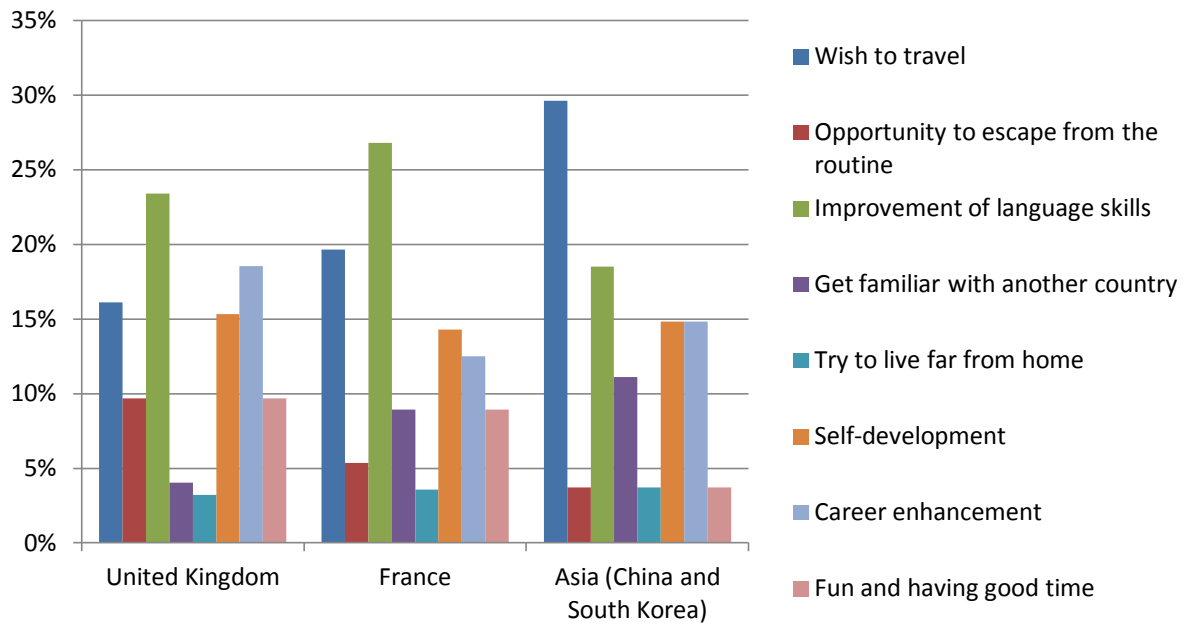
Chart 4.3: The main motivation factors to study abroad



As the author shows in the chart above, the respondents had to choose 3 reasons maximum why they decided for studies abroad. The most aimed to improve the language skills (23%), 18% wanted to enhance the self-development and travel and 16% went abroad to enrich the career path. There were 8% of those who sought after escaping from the routine as well as having fun and good time. Getting familiar with another country was chosen by 6% of the participants; trying to live far from home by 3% (q.5).

The participants were asked if their parents' jobs require business trips or travelling abroad. 85% answered their parents' jobs do not require any of the previously stated activities which shows the independency of respondents' decisions to study abroad on their parents' example (q.7).

Chart 4.4: The main reasons to study in the UK, France and Asia

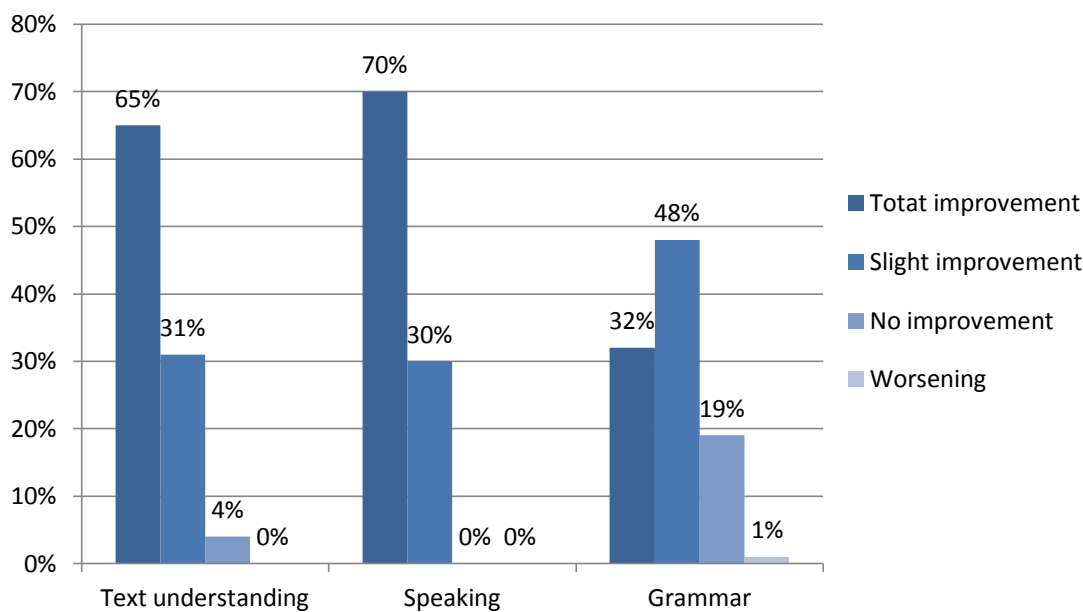


The author compared why students go to study to the United Kingdom, France and Asia. The improvement of language skills dominates in the UK and France whereas the respondents decided for studies abroad in Asia to travel and to improvement of language skills is the second highest aspect. Interestingly, the proportion of people going to the two European countries and Asia is incredibly unlike in the factor "fun and having a good time". There were just 4% of those who chose this aspect to go to Asia in contrast to the European countries where the number reached almost 10%. (q.5, 6).

4.3 Objective 2

To find out whether the primary expectations, respectively return on investment, of the EU were met thus whether the participants really improved the language skills, enhanced academic knowledge, cross-cultural understanding and the pro-European attitude.

Chart 4.5: Linguistic gains



1. Text understanding

64% of questioned people agreed that they totally improved the text understanding,. 31% respondents stated a slight improvement, and the text understanding skills of 4% respondents remained the same. There was nobody who considered his/her reading skills getting worse.

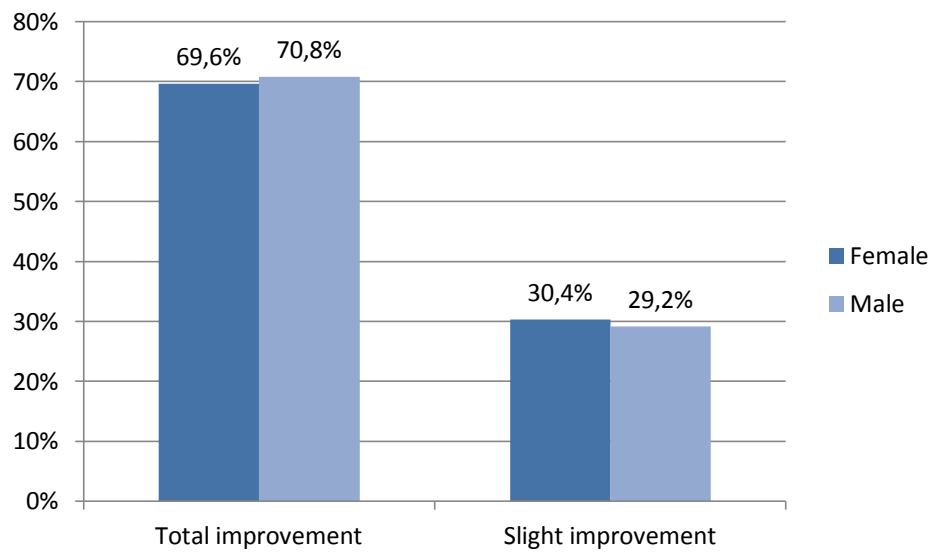
2. Speaking

70% of respondents agreed on the total improvement of their speaking skills. 30% chose the slight improvement and there was nobody who would not improve or worsen the speaking abilities.

3. Grammar

The majority reported a slight improvement in grammar. Approximately one third improved totally in grammar, 19% did not notice any changes and just 1% got worse (q. 13).

Chart 4.6: Oral improvements



According to the chart 3.6 there are very minor differences between genders in the oral improvements. The men showed to improve totally the speaking skills by 1.2% more than women. There are more females than males who indicated that their oral skills improved. However, the difference is just 1.2%.

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference between the programmes undergone in the linguistic gains.

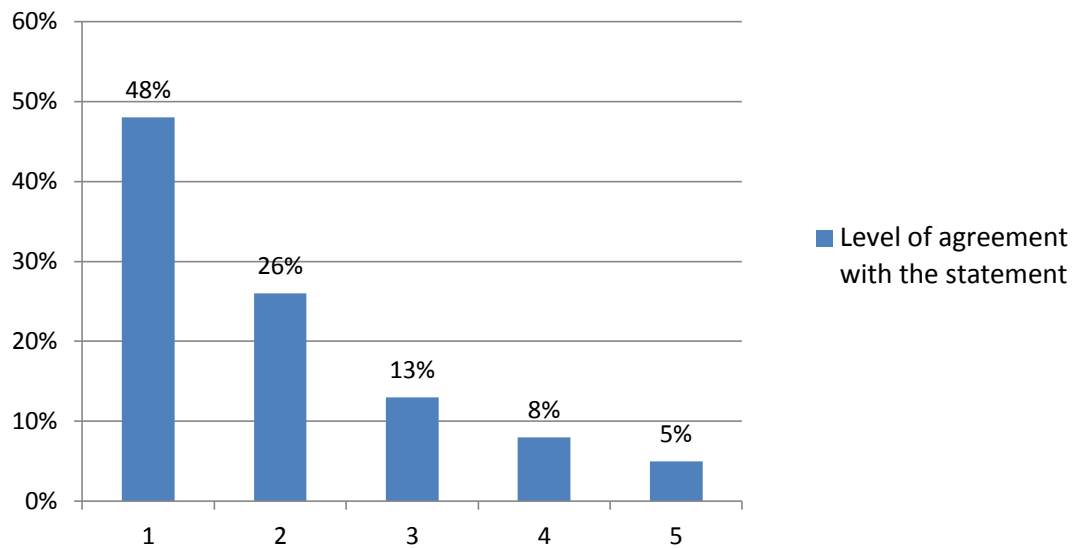
Table 4.1: The difference between the programmes undergone and the final language gains

	Knowledge Improvement
Mann-Whitney U	1232.500
Wilcoxon W	1935.500
Z	-.049
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.961

a. Grouping Variable: Programmes

The author examined whether there is a difference between the programme undergone and the final language gains. The Non-parametric test was chosen for this analysis because the data was represented by the ordinal scale. It is not required for the non-parametric tests to "make assumptions about the population distribution" (Pallant, 2001, p. 255). Therefore, they might not discover all differences as precisely as the parametric tests (Pallant, 2001). Afterwards, The Mann-Whitney U Test was used for this analysis because there were two independent groups being compared. "The probability value (p) is not less than or equal to .05, therefore the result is not significant. There is no statistically significant difference in the self-esteem scores of The Erasmus and Exchange programmes" thus the hypothesis is approved (Pallant, 2001, p. 260) (**q.8, 13**).

Chart 4.7: Opinion on usefulness of studies abroad in the knowledge and "opening one's mind"



The participants were asked how they agree with the statement: 'The knowledge contribution of my studies abroad was very useful and made me feel open-minded'. The number 1 represented 'totally agree' and 5 'totally disagree'. 48% of them totally agreed with the positive contribution of the studies abroad, 26% slightly agreed, 13% did not have any opinion, 8% slightly disagreed and just 5% disagreed totally (q.14).

Hypothesis 2: There a relationship between gender and the level of satisfaction regarding the usefulness of studies abroad and the contribution to feel open-minded. (q.2, 14)

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for the Hypothesis 2

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Satisfaction with gains	1.92	1.172	104
Gender	1.54	.501	104

The second hypothesis is carried out by correlation because there are one continuous (ordinal) and one dichotomous variable used. The aim of this investigation is to

examine the relationship and its strength between gender and level of satisfaction regarding the usefulness of the studies abroad and the contribution to feel open-minded.

Table 4.3: Test of Normality for the Hypothesis 2

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Level of agreement with the usefulness of the gained knowledge and being open-minded	.285	104	.000	.769	104	.000

Firstly, the test of normality was carried out in the aim not to violate the assumption of normality, as the table above shows. On the basis of this aspect there are two possible types of coefficients: Pearson's and Spearman's coefficient. "The Kolmogorov-Smirnov states the Sig. value to be .000 which means it violates the assumption of normality" (Pallant, 2007, p. 62) because it is smaller than .05. Therefore, the Spearman rank order correlation is used as the non-parametric test.

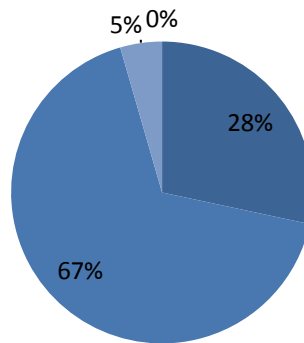
Table 4.4: Spearman's correlation on gender and the usefulness of the studies abroad

Correlations			Level of agreement with the usefulness of the gained knowledge and being open-minded	Gender
Spearman's rho	Level of agreement with the usefulness of the gained knowledge and being open-minded	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.074
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.454
		N	104	104
	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	-.074	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.454	.
		N	104	104

The Spearman rho value is "negative, indicating a negative correlation" between gender and the level of agreement with the usefulness of the gained knowledge and being open-minded (Pallant, 2007, p. 132). However, $r = -.075 < 0$ thus it indicates no relationship. The hypothesis is refuted which means that there is not any difference between men and women in the satisfaction about the usefulness of studies.

Chart 4.8: Cultural understanding

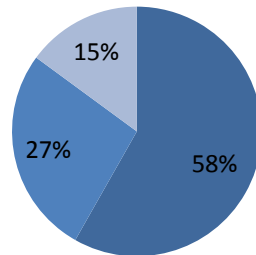
- I have fully understood the culture thus I would be able to work there and compete among the nationals.
- I have understood the culture and I might have gained enough of skills to work there
- I have not understood the culture enough to be in an advantage from others on the labour market.
- I have not got familiar with the culture at all.



The respondents were asked to select the statement which describes the most their attitude to the cultural understanding of the chosen country after studies abroad and consequently if they would be able to work there. Approximately two thirds admitted understanding the culture in the way they might be able to work there. 28% fully understood the culture thus would be able to compete among nationals. Just 5% did not understand the culture enough to apply in the labour market and nobody ticked the option of not understanding at all (q.10).

Chart 4.9: The attitude to the EU

- Yes, I feel more pro-European than before.
- My attitude to the EU has not changed because I felt pro-European even before.
- No, it has not enhanced my pro-European attitude.



One of the assumptions of launching the Erasmus programme is to build a generation with a pro-European belonging thus just the participants of the Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus programme were asked. 58% of the respondents feel more pro-European than before the studies, 27% remarked that they supported the EU even before so the studies within the EU did not change their positive approach and 15% answered that the studies have not changed their attitude (**q.9**).

The author examined the situation regarding obtaining grants among the Erasmus students and others who participated in other programmes funded by the EU. There were 13% zero-grant students and 87% who got a financial support from the European Union (**q.9, 11**).

Hypothesis 3: People who obtained a grant are more pro-European than those who did not (q.9, 11).

Firstly, the test of normality was conducted to find out more about the normality of the data. The non-parametric test is used to analyse the data because there are two random samples which are under an independent observation. Afterwards, the author chose the Cramer's V test.

Chart 4.10: Test of normality for the H2

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
One of the reasons of launching the Erasmus Programme was to build a generation with a strong pro-European feeling. Has your experience changed, respectively enhanced your pro-European attitude?	.358	69	.000	.714	69	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The test of normality counted the value .000 which did not show any significant result because it is not bigger than .05. It means that the data is not normal (Pallant, 2007).

Chart 4.11: The relation between the European attitude and obtaining a grant

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.103 ^a	2	.950
Likelihood Ratio	.107	2	.948
Linear-by-Linear Association	.101	1	.751
N of Valid Cases	69		

Because the previous table presents that our data is not normal, the non-parametric test is used. The other assumptions are two random samples under an independent observation. The Pearson Chi-Square Value is .103 with an associated significance of .95. However, the significance must be .05 or smaller. However, .95 is larger than the alpha value of .05 (Pallant, 2007). Therefore, "the result is not significant and there is no association" between obtaining a grant and having the pro-European approach. The fact that non-parametric tests are less sensitive about capturing significances must be taken under consideration.

Chart 4.12: Cramer's V test

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Phi	.039	.950
Nominal by Cramer's V	.039	.950
N of Valid Cases	69	

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

A sample larger than 2 by 2 was used thus the value is analysed by Cramer's V. Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between gender and smoking status, $\chi^2(1, n = 69) = .10, p = .95, \text{Cramer's } V = .039$.

4.4 Objective 3

To examine the return on investment in the participants' career path.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between gender and the self-esteem of being at advantage in the labour market over peers having not participated in any studies abroad (q.2, 12)

The author used the non-parametric test because of two random samples and the independent observation as it is mentioned in the third hypothesis. The Chi-Square test for independence is used to find out whether there is a relation between two categorical variables. The Phi test in the last table shows the strength of relation between chosen variables in case of dependency. (Pallant, 2007).

Chart 4.13: Crosstabulation for the gender and the self-esteem

		Self-esteem		Total
		Yes, I do.	No, I do not.	
Gender	Count	52	4	56
	% within Gender	92.9%	7.1%	100.0%
	Female % within Self-esteem	55.3%	40.0%	53.8%
	% of Total	50.0%	3.8%	53.8%
	Count	42	6	48
	% within Gender	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	Male % within Self-esteem	44.7%	60.0%	46.2%
	% of Total	40.4%	5.8%	46.2%
Total	Count	94	10	104
	% within Gender	90.4%	9.6%	100.0%
	% within Self-esteem	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	90.4%	9.6%	100.0%

From the table above, it is obvious that both genders strongly feel to be at the advantage in the labour market over their peers. The females agreed by 92,9% which is just 5% more than the males. There were just 7.1% females and 12.5% of males not feeling to be at the advantage.

Chart 4.14: Chi-square Test for the Hypothesis 4

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.853 ^a	1	.356		
Continuity Correction ^b	.348	1	.555		
Likelihood Ratio	.853	1	.356		
Fisher's Exact Test				.507	.277
Linear-by-Linear Association	.845	1	.358		
N of Valid Cases	104				

The table 2×2 is taken into account thus the Continuity Correction results are important. "The Significant value needs to be .05 or smaller but in this case, the value is .555 which means that it is larger than alpha value of .05, so we can conclude that our result is not significant" (Pallant, 2007). This means that the proportion of women having the self-esteem of being at advantage in the labour market over the others who have not participated in studies abroad is not significantly different from men.

Chart 4.15: Phi coefficient

Symmetric Measures

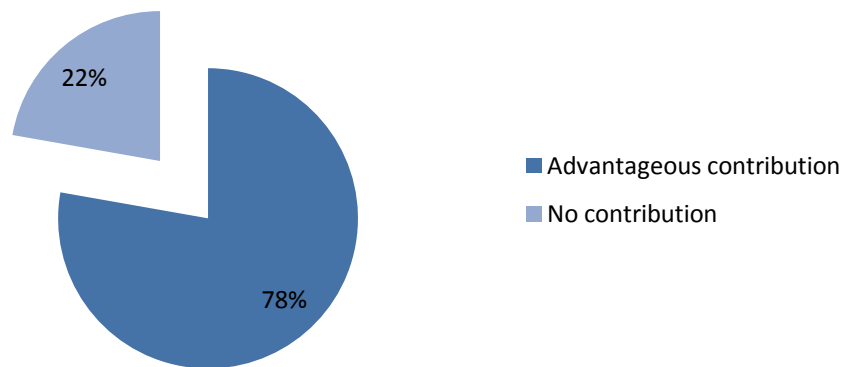
	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Phi	-.091	.356
Nominal by Cramer's V	.091	.356
N of Valid Cases	104	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

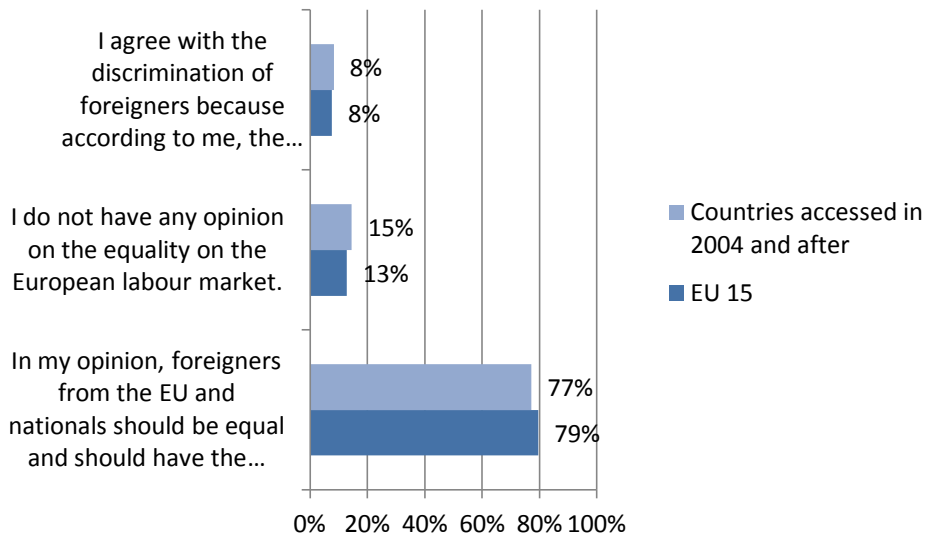
A Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated no significant association between gender and the self-esteem in the labour market, $\chi^2 (1, n = 104) = .35, p = .56, \text{phi} = -.091$.

Chart 4.16: The contribution of the studies abroad to get a job



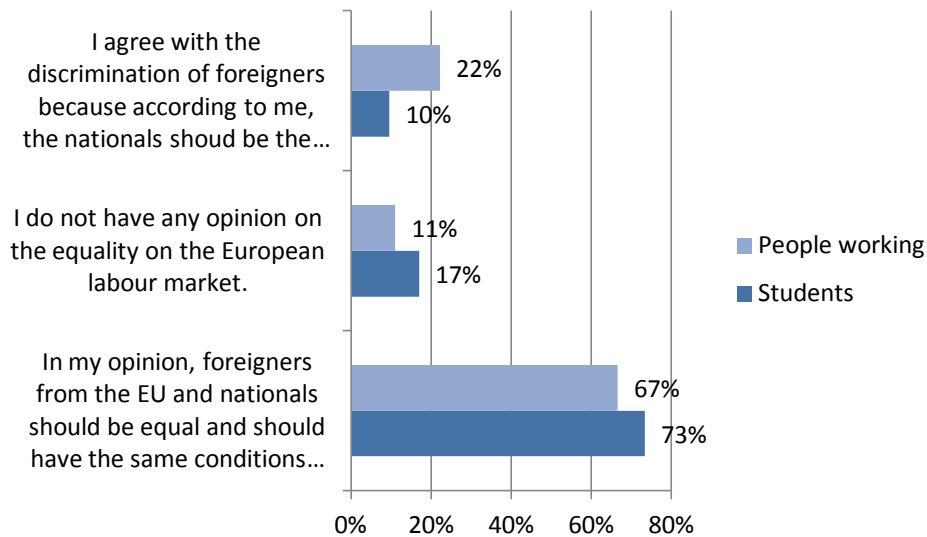
The respondents were divided into groups according to their status on students, employees and employers. Afterwards, those being employed were asked whether they got the current job thanks to their previous experience abroad. 78% agreed their studies abroad positively contributed to obtain their current position. However, these results were derived from nine respondents because the rest were still attending tertiary institutions thus this fact must be taken under consideration regarding its informative value (q.15, 16).

Chart 4.17: The opinion on the pro-European attitude between countries of the EU and those accessed after 2004



The opinion on the equality between nationals and foreigners were analysed among respondents from countries of the EU-15 and countries which entered the Union in 2004 and after that. The author did not have an access to answers from all countries of the EU so the representatives of the EU-15 were British, French, German and Italian. The other group consist of participants from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Romania. From the graph above it is obvious there are not big gaps between these two groups. However, the countries of the EU-15 seem to be more welcoming to foreigners at their national labour market by 2%. There were 15% answers from the new states and 13% from the old ones who did not have any opinion. Both parties agreed by 8% on the discrimination of foreigners at a national labour market (q.4, 17).

Chart 4.18: Equality at the European labour market among students and working people

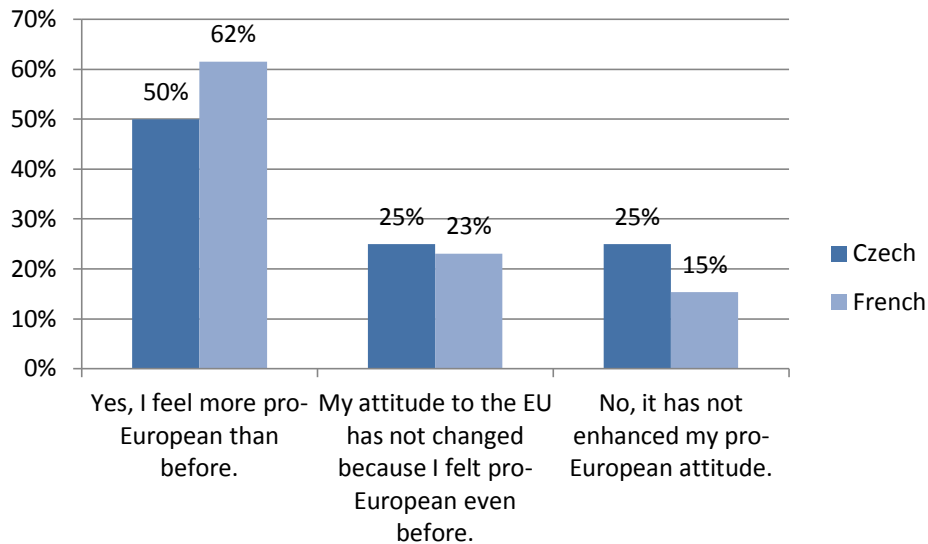


The respondents were divided into students and people already having a job to be asked for their opinion on the equality at the European labour market. The ratio of opinions was different between the two groups. 73% of students agreed with the equalization of foreigners and nationals, 17% expressed no opinion on this issue and just 11% admitted being for the discrimination among the foreigners and nationals. However, the quantity of employed people increased by 12% regarding the approval of discrimination. Afterwards, the number of respondents with job having no opinion on this issue was 6% less than for the students. Finally, the people with a job agreed less (by 6%) with the equality of nationals and foreigners at the European labour market (q. 15, 17).

4.5 Additional results

During the research, some additional findings were discovered which, however, do not reflect to the hypothesis thus they will be presented in this subchapter.

Chart 4.19: The possible change of attitude to the EU among the Czech and French students



The author wanted to compare the opinion on the change of the EU belonging after the participation in the studies abroad of two different nations such as the Czech and the French. 62% of the French responded to feel more pro-European than before the studies abroad whereas there was just a half of the Czech participants' having this opinion. Both nationalities answered more than by 20% that their attitude was not changed. Finally, there are more of the Czech students than the French ones who feel that the studies abroad have not enhanced the pro-European approach (q.4, 9).

5 Discussion

The analysis will be described according to the particular objectives determined in the beginning of the dissertation. At the same time, they will be compared to the findings from the literature review.

From the previous chapter we already know that there are more women than men studying abroad (European Commission, 2009/2010) which was approved by this research because there was 54% of female and 46% of male respondents.

Objective 1: *To find out the main participants' motivation factors to study abroad.*

Among the main motivation aspects for studies abroad are considered the personal development (Teichler, 2009), career intentions (Gaston, 2010), language skills (Kininger, 2001) or the cross-cultural perceptions (Anderson et al., 2006). This research confirmed the language skills as the most important feature. The self-development appeared on the second place and the career enhancement on the third one which approved the theory of Marcotte et al. (2007) who claims these two aspects do not belong among the first intentions to study abroad, however, they effect positively the future career the most. Furthermore, from the cross-cultural cognition, the respondents preferred rather travelling to getting to know another country. Due to a lack of literature, the United Kingdom, France and Asian states such as China and South Korea together were compared in the students' motives to go there for studies. The group of Asian countries dominated by the wish to travel in contrast to the United Kingdom and France where the language gains played the main role in the decision process.

Wand and Bu (2005) claim that children of people going for business trips or travelling a lot regarding their job can play the key role is the students' decision to study abroad which was, however, refuted because just 15% of participants' parents job require travelling.

Objective 2: *To find out whether the primary expectations of the EU were met thus whether the participants really improved the language skills, enhanced academic knowledge and cross-cultural understanding.*

As it was noticed in the Literature Review, the all linguistic aspects can be improved or on the other hand, it is possible to worsen as well (2009, cited by Kininger, 2011). The author's research agreed with the Kininger's findings because all the improvements such as in text understanding, speaking and grammar were approved. The speaking showed the most significant progress and was followed by the text understanding. However, the grammar recorded mostly just a slight improvement or respectively no improvement. Moreover, it was the only linguistic part where the research showed some worsening. This can be caused by the fact that students mostly do not have classes of the second language during studies abroad. They enhance speaking thanks to international friends, text understanding due to various assignments and exams but there is nothing forcing them to improve the grammatical part.

As it was already mentioned in the Literature Review, Gasparro (1998) claims the males can enhance the oral skills more easily than women. Therefore, the author compared the oral gains between men and women and the research showed there was a very slight distinction. There were more men than women who agreed their oral skills 'improved totally'. On the other hand, there were more women who enhanced their speaking skills 'slightly'. However, the both mentioned differences were so insignificant [1.2%] which does not show any approval of Gasparro's theory.

Hypothesis 1: The author compared whether there is a difference between the programmes undergone in the level of language gains because there was no evidence in literature about efficiency of Erasmus or Exchange programme according to this aspect. However, the research showed a positive improvement of the Erasmus even Exchange students.

Otero (2008) pointed out the great benefit of the studies abroad which is "making the participants be open-minded" and Teichler (2004) speaks about the great academic knowledge. The author's research is in accordance with the previous statement because there were 74 % of those who agreed on the usefulness, just 13% did not think the studies abroad contributed to their wider knowledge or widening their perspective.

Hypothesis 2: The author compared if there is a difference between genders in the academic knowledge and personal development and discovered that males and females are equal in the gained knowledge and the general view on their personal gains.

From the previous chapter we already know that the cultural understanding plays the key role in the participants' future life for example in case of finding a job in the certain country or dealing with a foreign client. Hofstede (2011) emphasised the cultural understanding in the cross-cultural consumer behaviour. The author came to a positive conclusion because in 67%, the SA participants understood the culture and might be able to work there. However, just 28% feel of being totally able to compete against the nationals at the foreign labour market thus the expectations of the internationally competent citizens in terms of the EU political rationales were met.

Moreover, as Rooney (2002; cited by Black and Duhon, 2006), the process of learning should be observed in the aim to avoid endowing the students by paid holidays by the EU. However, the research showed significant contributions of the studies in terms of linguistic gains, the future career benefits or the personal development. Therefore, the investment in terms of grants can be considered as very effective.

The European Union has some expectations from the "Erasmus generation" such as the pro-European belonging (Papatsiba, 2005; Wilson, 2011). The author found out that the expectations of the EU on this sample were very successful because more than a half of the respondents admitted being more pro-European after having finished the studies. Therefore, the positive influence from the side of the EU is obvious in this research.

There is an increasing interest from the students' side to engage in the Erasmus programme despite not receiving a grant. The European Commission states the proportion of 8.8% out of all the outbound students in 2009/2010 being the zero-grant students. The research showed even higher number – 13% which indicates the growing popularity of the Erasmus programme.

Hypothesis 3: The author wanted to prove by the third hypothesis that there is no relation between obtaining a grant and the pro-European feeling. However, the chi-square test showed no significant relation between these two aspects. Although, the research sample was small, the author can state that the students are not motivated to

study abroad by any financial means. The hypothesis did not show any relation between getting the grant and being more pro-European which means that obtaining the financial means from the EU does not represent any motivation or stimulation for students to participate in the studies abroad. This analysis represents a positive attitude of the today's "Erasmus generation" to the European belonging.

Objective 3: *To examine the return on investment in the participants' career path.*

From the previous chapter we already know that Brunello et al. (2007) explain the return on investment mostly as a governments' profit based on taxes. Consequently, the more educated citizens are the higher salaries they have; thus the taxes increase as well. They add that the "return on investment" from men is higher than from women. According to Gonzáles (2011) it is much easier for graduates with some experience abroad to find a high-quality job at home or abroad. Practically, all the previous benefits brought by the experience abroad (mentioned in the objective two) lead to being in a great advantage in the labour market. This research is focused more likely on students than people already having a job thus regarding the hypothesis the respondents were asked for their personal view on their quality as a human resource in the labour market. Hypothesis 4: The author discovered very high rates in the self-esteem of both genders regarding feeling at the advantage in the labour market over the peers who have not participated in the studies abroad. Therefore, there was not found any significant difference between males' and females' attitude. Overall, the author's research is in accordance with Gonzáles' findings.

Furthermore, concerning the respondents who are already working, Gonzáles's theory is approved again because 78% of them agreed on the fact that the studies abroad contributed to getting their current job.

The last part of the discussion indents on the opinion on the equality between foreigners and nationals in the labour market. According to Gerhard's (2008) findings based on the "European Values Study from 1999/2000", there are dissimilarities among the countries of the EU-15 and the others. The author could not compare all the states of the EU 27 because of lacking contacts in all the states but in the research the EU-15 was represented by the British, French, German and Italian respondents whereas the Czech republic, Estonia, Poland, , Latvia, Lithuania , Romania and Slovakia the other party. Gerhard (2008) claimed the EU states are more opened to the foreigners than the other

countries after the enlargement in 2004. The research showed concordant results even if the sample was not big enough to make the conclusion that significant.

Additional discussion

Despite Wilson's (2011) findings about the French, British and Swedish students being more against the political union of the EU even after studies abroad, the author's research showed the opposite. The French students seemed to be more positively influenced towards the European consciousness than the Czech ones. The reason why the Czech people do not abound with the European belonging can be considered the still present view of the former president Vaclav Klaus who asserted a rather distanced attitude to the EU.

The author compared the linguistic gains of the Erasmus programme students and the Exchange/Double-degree students and found out that there was no significant difference between them. Both groups demonstrated an equivalent improvement in all the aspects of the linguistic knowledge.

5.1 Recommendation

The further harmonisation is still necessary. The all universities face the diverse curricula which can lead to an incomplete understanding and inefficiency in getting familiar with the other culture. The divergence between the "official policy" and materials used during teaching at a university was approved (Bond et al., 2003; cited by Marcotte, 2007). Therefore, unifying methods and goals within the globalisation process are suggested. Moreover, as Rooney (2002; cited by Black and Duhon, 2006) notes, it is necessary to pay attention to the run of study if it is effective. Unless, he warns it can become a holidays paid by the EU.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to evaluate overall the primary expectations of the studies abroad income and its usefulness. The research focused on the motivation factors of the participant's decision to study abroad and all the benefits brought by this experience such as the improvement of linguistic, academic knowledge, self-development as a generous contribution to the future career path. Moreover, the possible changes of attitudes to the European Union, after having finished the studies abroad, were examined. Three objectives were determined at the beginning which the all work was based on.

The research found out that the main aspects encouraging to study abroad were language improvement, wish to travel and self-development. However, it does not apply to all the countries the same. The research compared three countries: the United Kingdom, France and overall Asia consisting of China and South Korea, in the motivation factors which led the students to the decision of studies there. The author decided so firstly, due to the lack of literature or other information regarding this issue and secondly, her interest in the students' view on these three countries during the decision process. To conclude that, according to the research the students mainly go to the United Kingdom in the aim to improve their language skills and the career enhancement which go hand in hand these days due to the English language dominating at the international market. The main attractions for students in France are the improvement of language and travelling. However, the wish to travel in Asia definitely skyrockets among the rest countries even other motivation factors. The influence from the parental side could not be approved because just 15% of the all respondents confirmed that their parents travel due to their job.

The second objective looked at meeting the political and economic rationales of the EU which were mostly all proved in the research. The improvement of the text understanding, grammar and speaking was proved by the research whereas the last aspect of the linguistic gains previously mentioned remarked the most significant progress. The first hypothesis proved there are no differences between the Erasmus and Exchange programme undergone in the language gains. Overall, the experience abroad was found very useful by 74% of respondents regarding the obtained academic

knowledge and so called "opening minds" by both genders the same thus the second hypothesis refuted any relationship between gender and the opinion on the studies abroad usefulness. The majority of participants appeared to get enough of the cross-cultural understanding even to work in the certain country and compete among the nationals. The EU political rationale of building the European belonging among the young generation was approved by more than half of the respondents. The encouraging fact is that the third hypothesis confirmed the students' pro-European feeling does not increase with obtaining a grant thus the financial means are not any motivation for them.

The return on investment in the career path of the internationally educated persons is analysed in the third objective. A very stimulating fact is that 93% of women and 87% of men feel confident about being at the advantage in the labour market over the peers without a similar experience. Thus any significant difference between gender in the self-confidence in own skills was refuted by the last hypothesis. The economically active part of the sample recognized the contribution of studies abroad when applying for a job because 78% of them got their current job due to the mentioned fact. Finally, the problematics of the equality on the European labour market was found to be accepted more by the EU-15 countries than those accessed the EU in the enlargement in 2004 and after that. The students appear to be more for the equality than those who are already contributing to the economic performance.

Appendix A

Table 0.1: Grants by a monthly rate for each country (European Commission, 2013b)

Host country	Monthly rate (€)	Host country	Monthly rate (€)
Austria – AT	680	Liechtenstein – LI	939
Belgium - BE	640	Lithuania - LT	464
Bulgaria - BG	401	Luxembourg - LU	640
Croatia - HR	591	Malta – MT	526
Cyprus - CY	536	Nederland – NL	666
Czech Republic - CZ	539	Norway - NO	939
Denmark - DK	858	Poland – PL	493
Estonia - EE	484	Portugal - PT	544
Finland – FI	764	Romania - RO	445
France - FR	743	Slovakia – SK	512
Greece - EL	607	Slovenia – SI	573
Hungary- HU	507	Spain - ES	625
Ireland - IE	698	Sweden – SE	759
Island – IS	648	Switzerland - CH	939
Italia - IT	682	Turkey - TR	525
Latvia - LV	476	United Kingdom – UK	860

Table 0.2: Annual Erasmus Budget and its change in percentage (European Commission, 2012c)

Year	Annual Erasmus budget in million €	Change in percentage
2002	121,90	4.91%
2003	142,53	16.92%
2004	168,00	17.87%
2005	200,96	19.62%
2006	245.75	22.29%
2007	372.25	51.48%
2008	416.36	11.85%
2009	415.25	-0.27%
2010	435.03	4.76%
2011	480.22	7.96%
2012	480.22	2.25%
2013	489.82	2.00%

Appendix B

General questions

1. Have you ever studied abroad? *

- Yes, I have.
- No, I have not.

What gender are you? *

- Male
- Female

Which age group are you in? *

- < 18
- 19 - 23
- 24 - 30
- > 30

Which nationality are you? *

- Czech
- Slovak
- British
- French
- Other:

What are the main reasons of your decision to study abroad?

Tick 3 answers maximum

- Wish to travel
- Opportunity to escape from the routine
- Improvement of language skills
- Get familiar with another country
- Try to live far from home
- Self-development
- Career enhancement
- Fun and having good time
- Other:

Which country did you go to? *

- United Kingdom
- Spain
- Portugal
- Germany
- Finland
- France
- Other:

Does your mother's or father's job require travelling abroad?

- Yes, it does.
- No, it does not.
- I do not know.

The programmes and the attitudes to the EU

Please check below the programme or other way you used to study abroad. *

If you participated in Erasmus and Exchange programme as well, choose primarily the Erasmus programme, please.

- Erasmus programme
- Erasmus Mundus programme
- Other programme within the EU
- Non-European programme
- Exchange programme between universities
- Other:

One of the reasons of launching the Erasmus Programme was to build a generation with a strong pro-European feeling. Has your experience changed, respectively enhanced your pro-European attitude? *

- Yes, I feel more pro-European than before.
- My attitude to the EU has not changed because I felt pro-European even before.
- No, it has not enhanced my pro-European attitude.

One purpose of the European programmes is to foster your cultural understanding which can possibly help you in the future when searching for a

job in the certain country you studied in. Please choose the answer which describes you the most. *

- I have fully understood the culture thus I would be able to work there and compete among the nationals.
- I have understood the culture and I might have gained enough of skills to work there.
- I have not understood the culture enough to be in an advantage from others on the labour market.
- I have not got familiar with the culture at all.

Did you obtain any grants, respectively any financial support from your university or were you so called zero-grant student which means you had the status of the Erasmus student but you did not receive any money? *

- Yes, I obtained a grant.
- No, I was a zero-grant student.
- Other:

Gains during studies abroad

If you compare your academic and language knowledge to your peers' ones, do you think you are at advantage in the labour market over them? *

- Yes, I do.
- No, I do not.

How would you evaluate the language gains at the end of your studies abroad? *

	Total improvement	Slight improvement	No improvement	Worsening
Grammar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you agree with the following statement? 'The knowledge contribution of my studies abroad was very useful and made me feel open-minded.' *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Totally disagree

Impact on the future career

What is your status? *

- Student
- Employee
- Employer
- Other:

Did the time spent abroad contribute to getting the job you have now or promotion? *

- Yes, it did.
- No, it did not.

Tick the answer which describes the most your opinion on equality on the European Labour Market between foreigners and nationals. *

- In my opinion, foreigners from the EU and nationals should be equal and should have the same conditions at the European labour market.
- I do not have any opinion on the equality on the European labour market.
- I agree with the discrimination of foreigners because according to me, the nationals should be the priority.
- Other:

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