

Appearance and Development of Short-Term Higher Education Vocational Training in Hungary

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Abstract:

Introduction: This article examines the first level of the European higher education system, namely the short-cycle higher education trainings related to the ISCED 5 whose Hungarian characteristics, and its historical changes were described.

Methods: We examined participation rates among OECD countries. As there are large differences in the short-cycle higher education trainings in Europe, we have relied on data that makes the different systems comparable.

Results and discussion: The interpretation, definition and practical orientation of the trainings varies from country to country, we presented the Hungarian form in connection with the results of international comparative studies and data. To understand the role of trainings, it is essential to get to know their history, especially because short-term higher educational trainings were transformed in several European countries.

Conclusions: Prioritising or effacing the social-political role of short-cycle higher education trainings depending on the political orientation of the government and as a part of this, prioritising the disadvantaged regions instead of the disadvantaged students.

Key words: short-cycle higher education, vocational education and training, tertiary education, ISCED 5.

Introduction

The growth in the number of students in higher education meant a challenge for higher education politics over Europe. After the Second World War, there was an increased demand for education. It has a key role in national development (Coombs, 1971). First, it was the elementary education which was the centre of

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interest and then the whole public education was affected. By the third of the 20th century, higher education had been reached and this tendency seems to continue even in the beginning of the 21st century (Kozma, 2004). As for the gratification of the increased need, there were typically two types of answer: establishing short-term higher education trainings and regionalism. The costs of short-term higher education trainings were cheaper than the former ones of the universities and colleges and students could obtain their degrees in a significantly shorter time period. In the institutions having short-term trainings, the necessity of the extension could be detected since the 1970s. Kavak (1998) summarized the reasons for this extension: On the one hand, short-term training is the answer for the increased social need and tension. On the other hand, it is a device for assuring equal opportunity (by the evolution of the network, and this connects with regionalism and with regional development, as well). Last but not least, the establishment of adult education and innovation serve several communities (Kavak, 1998). In the study of Kavak, short-term training and regionalism move together. The spread of short-term trainings supplies regionalism by the fact that institutions form a network and higher education can be reached by those who did not have the possibility earlier. However, regionalism is not only involved in short-term trainings but it also means widening the missions of modern universities. The spread of regionalism in higher education is the consequence of the intensification of its role in the third mission of the higher education institutions by which the institutions obtained a highlighted role in closing up socially and economically. In connection with regionalism, economically underdeveloped regions were paying attention to, as well as disadvantaged, atypical students. In the case of these students, the possibility of their admittance to degrees and higher qualifications was supported by the appearance of short-term and part-time trainings. The phenomenon of regional university or college cannot separate from the history of the European education. Regional university is a specialty of the political systems of continental higher education so the dynamics of the institution come from it, as well. From the middle of the 19th century, several vocational training institutions gradually latched on to higher education (e.g. technical colleges in Germany). So higher education has become dual by the closing up of vocational trainings. From the end of the 1960s, European universities reached the maximum of their capacity, due to the increase of the number of students, so they could not receive further masses. Dual trainings were strengthened by the education politics - which process was led by conservative governments -, and they were introduced in countries where there hadn't been these type of trainings (e.g. the United Kingdom). Welfare (socialist, social-democratic and leftist) governments tried making reforms of higher education. This resulted in e.g. the comprehensive college created based on the model of the American community college and later, the extension of the institution network of these colleges (Kozma, 2004). In the literature of education research, the attribute

"comprehensive" is used for those elementary and secondary schools where both excellence and fairness are present and where the institutions try balancing the diverseness of the social and the economic backgrounds of the students (Schleicher, 2014, p.61). As for us, we used this attribute for colleges created based on the model or the impact of the American community college because their goals are similar to the comprehensive secondary schools. Regional universities are connected tightly with their immediate social environment, and according to the regional studies of the 1960s (mostly in German and French speech areas), they functioned excellently: the supply of higher education trainings was built based on the possibilities of the region and by this, economic and social development could be seen there (Teichler, 2015). Also, a social-political principle was connected to the comprehensive colleges namely that in underdeveloped regions, the same possibilities should be provided for higher education than in developed regions. However, by 1980 it had turned out that these institutions can remain only in countries where they are integrated perfectly into the higher education system (Kozma, 2004). The ideal of regionalism and comprehensive college is determined in politics, even nowadays since economic functionalities remained unfilled after eliminating community colleges in underdeveloped regions. In Hungary, Community Higher Education Centre might be the latest form of this intention (hereinafter: CHEC).

1 Research

1.1 Problem of research

Due to Slantcheva-Durst (2014), Tamášová (2015) in order to understand the role of trainings, it is essential to get to know their history, especially because short-term higher educational trainings were transformed in several European countries, e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal (Kirsch & Beernaert, 2011).

The evolution and development of the training were examined in international levels (Brine, 2008; Furth, 1973; OECD, 1973; Schneider, 2008; Teichler, 1998), and besides them, several comparative works dealt with the characteristics of European countries (Kirsch et al., 2003; Dobbins & Knill, 2009). In the last 20 years, several studies were led in this topic in Hungary, as well. We noticed that the researches between 2002-2012 were performed on the one hand about the composition, socio-cultural backgrounds, scholastic results and the motivation of the students (Hrubos, 2002; Karsai, 2011; Kassó & Farkas, 2012; Pusztai et al., 2003; Szemerszki, 2012) and on the other hand, certain researchers - using similar questions - studied the acceptance of the labour-market, value and future prospects, too (DUF, 2009; Fehérvári & Kocsis, 2009; Péntzes et al., 2011; Szemerszki, 2006). Moreover, there were comparative examinations, studying international aspects, as well as those reflecting to the

Hungarian situation (Gibson & Dobay, 1997; Farkas É., 2009; Farkas P., 2009; Kazarján, 2013; Sediviné et al., 2003) in the last few years.

1.2 Research focus

The laws of Hungarian higher education have used the notion of short-term higher education training since 1995 which was called higher vocational training then higher education vocational training (since 2011). These forms of education were only partly integrated into the world of higher education. By Act CCIV of 2011 On National Higher Education, 15.§ (2), the higher education vocational training: "A higher education degree may be obtained in higher education vocational training, which is certified by a diploma. The diploma awarded for completing higher education vocational training shall not be considered an independent degree. A minimum 120 credits need to be completed in higher education vocational training. Program and outcome requirements include crediting credits completed in higher education vocational training for the Bachelor course offered in the same field of education. A minimum 30 and maximum 90 credits may be credited. The minimum duration of education is 4 semesters." (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, 15§). In the latest translativ, the number of credits countable in can be followed better and so the criterion that credits can be counted only in the same Bachelor course.

From the 1990s, the development (or rather the historical transformation) of the Hungarian short-cycle higher education training has four periods:

- The first one started at the act of 1996, after the regime change and lasted till the half of the first decade. It is the period of a considerably slow evaluation when education politics tried to encourage the reluctant institutions - based on the increased demand of individuals in higher education and the assumed demand of the labor market - to start and develop short-cycle higher education trainings (hereinafter: SCHE).
- The time between 2005 and 2011 is the period of an intensive development of the Hungarian SCHE training when education politics clearly made the training be a part of the vocational training but kept the imputability into higher education, as well. The access to the improvement sources of the vocational training made also the institutions of higher education be interested in extending SCHE trainings. The education political motivation of the training continued to gratify the demand of individuals for higher education and the demand of labor market.
- After 2011, the function of the vocational training of the Hungarian short-cycle higher education training finished and become a preparatory section of the Bachelor training. Both institutions and students having aimed at higher education lost their interest in the training.
- In 2015, education politics - by establishing the CHEC institution construction - turned the SCHE training towards gratifying the regional demands which resulted in the increase of the interest towards it again.

It is worth mentioning that Hungarian education politics didn't really utilize short-cycle higher education trainings properly, regarding their roles in social mobility and equal opportunity. Yet, due to several researches, Hungarian SCHE is a popular form of higher education among disadvantaged students (e.g. Polónyi, 2004) and the ceasing of the vocational training characteristic of the Hungarian SCHE (2011) involved a decreased rate of disadvantaged students.

2 Methodology of research

2.1 General background for research

Our research is based on OECD statistics. We examined participation rates among OECD countries. As there are large differences in the SCHE trainings in Europe, we have relied on data that makes the different systems comparable.

For the sake of international comparison, in order to know the characteristics of the countries, we can study the trainings regarding the European Qualification Framework (EQF). The framework compares distinct qualifications, competencies obtained in several educational and training systems of the EU countries. It helps us to understand better the education in higher education institutes and in similar institutes, as well as in vocational trainings (European Parliament and European Council, 2008).

2.2 Data analysis

Short-cycle higher education training has distinct participation rates among OECD countries. The participation rates of the training - compared to those in the tertiary trainings - are about 10% in the OECD countries. In the case of Hungary, it was almost a uniform increase in the proportion of participants in the training in the beginning of the 2000s. Compared to the post-socialist countries, it can be said that since 2000, the participation rate of the Polish SCHE has given 1% of that of tertiary education. The proportion of participants of the Czech Republic is quite similar to that of Hungary, but on the whole, in post-socialist countries, the proportion of the SCHE lags behind compared to the OECD average. In the United Kingdom, there is an exceedingly high participation rate of short-cycle higher education trainings, but Spain and Turkey produce a rate above the OECD, as well.

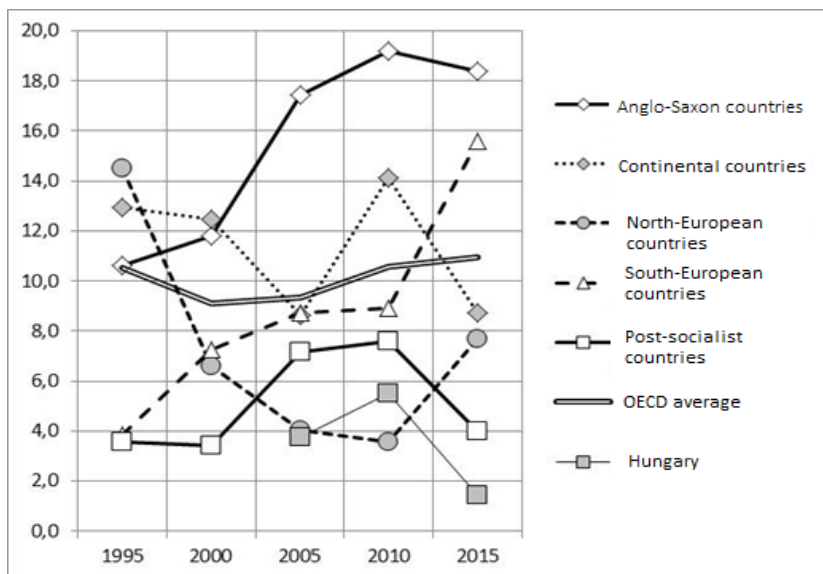


Figure 1. Participation rate in SCHE trainings (Trends in tertiary graduation rates - Tertiary-type B).¹

Source: Education at a Glance 2012 Table A3.2. Trends in tertiary graduation rates (1995-2010) and Education at a Glance 2017 Table A3.3

Short-cycle higher education trainings partly wanted to gratify the increasing demand of students entering into higher education in every country. In 1995, SCHE trainings already functioned in Turkey and Poland and also in some member countries of the OECD. Short-cycle higher education trainings seemed to strengthen actually in the 2000s, in contrary to the fact that the participation rate of the students in OECD SCHE trainings decreased (but then remained) to 11%.

¹ Remark: the averages of the groups of countries are the averages of the numbers of the given countries:

Post-socialist countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

Continental countries: Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland

North-European countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

South-European countries: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey

Anglo-Saxon countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States.

Table 1

Participation rate in SCHE trainings.²

	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Average of Anglo-Saxon countries:	10.6	11.8	17.4	19.2	18.4
Average of continental countries:	12.9	12.5	8.7	14.1	8.7
Average of North-European countries:	14.5	6.6	4.0	3.5	7.7
Average of South-European countries:	3.9	7.3	8.7	8.9	15.6
Average of post-socialistic countries:	3.5	3.4	7.1	7.6	4.0
OECD average	10.5	9.1	9.3	10.6	11.0
Hungary			3.8	5.5	1.4

Source: Education at a Glance 2012 Table A3.2. Trends in tertiary graduation rates (1995-2010) and Education at a Glance 2017

As for short-term higher education trainings, based on a research of CEDEFOP (2014), it could be assumed that the rate of students is far higher in the countries where there is the highest number of students and there are great traditions regarding the training. In French and Ireland, one fifth of students of higher education studies in the training. As for the rate of sexes, among the 28 member states of the EU, female students (53.4%) are the majority in the short-term higher education training (this rate is similar to that in Hungary).

In Europe, there are great differences regarding the trainings. For the comparability and the understanding of the Hungarian system, we base on the research of the CEDEFOP (2014) in which several types of countries are examined.

After introducing and interpreting the notions of short-term higher education trainings and Hungarian higher education vocational training, it is worth studying them regarding international aspects, basically in connection with the European countries. We try to know and classify the ISCED 5 trainings of the European countries along the similarities and the differences.

² Remark: the averages of the groups of countries are the averages of the numbers of the given countries:

Post-socialist countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

Continental countries: Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland

North-European countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

South-European countries: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey

Anglo-Saxon countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States.

3 Results of research

Higher educational vocational politics has become more and more important. It has an important role in social and economic development to which it contributes by four important missions: the role of human capital whose establishment it supports, the construction of knowledge bases through research. Moreover, the spreading and using of knowledge, the delivery of knowledge from a generation to another and maintaining knowledge are also the missions of the higher education (Santiago, 2008).

Furth (1973) emphasized first that the development of short-cycle higher education institutions (SCI) need to have a future. Based on this - by the system of institutions of the 70s - he created three models: multipurpose model, specialized model and binary model.

The "prototype" of the multipurpose model was the American Community College. In addition, Japanese and Canadian colleges can also be mentioned here. Furth noticed three essential characteristics related to this (1973). Firstly, these institutions have various curricula which emphasize not only the technical bases but also the university studies. Secondly, these institutions were connected to the universities with regard to administrative and interinstitutional mobility aspects. Thirdly, they formed a decentralized system, strong institutional autonomy characterised them, besides that they gratified local and regional needs.

Parallel with this, in the 1960s - mainly in the continental Europe - it could be observed that a special model evolved which has none or little connection with the university sector, it rather focused on the technical graduation for those students who couldn't get into higher education so they were confined to various areas of engineering, teacher training, social work. It was typically Belgium, French, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and also Turkey who started to establish institutions based on this special model.

In his research, Furth (1973) separated a binary model, as well, which was characterized by a diversity regarding its training system. This could be seen in the United Kingdom. There was a concrete detachment from the university sector, the institutions were widely diverse. In the studies, various types and levels of trainings, forms of work and divisions were available. The technical trainings strengthened here, as well.

Certainly, these three models don't contain the details of their place in the educational structure of the country and the institutional characteristics but it is clear that the institution types existing, renewing and being established are based on these "historical models" (Furth, 1973).

We can study the trainings regarding the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Short-term higher education trainings are classified to the 5th level of the EQF. It is an increasing purpose - both in Hungarian and in European education system - that the training shall be syncretized with higher education studies so more and more steps are taken in order to make the trainings be consistent with

each other and to create permeability between them (Benkei-Kovács et al., 2015; Europe 2020 Strategy). In Europe, there are great differences regarding the trainings. For the sake of comparability and of understanding the Hungarian system, we are based on a study of the CEDEFOP (2014) whose national qualification level had been connected to the EQF till June 2012. The research examined and tried comparing several types of the countries.

Based on this, by their history, trainings having great traditions (France, England, Ireland, Austria) and trainings recently established (Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal) is differentiated in the first classification (Table 2). As for the second one, by their permeability, there are automatic permeability, permeability depending on scholastic record and permeability without counting in credits. Switching between trainings is the easiest in the cases of French, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, in Belgium or Germany permeability is connected to the scholastic record, whereas in Poland, the previous studies aren't counted in when entering the Bachelor training.

Table 2

Systematization aspects of country typologies in higher vocational training

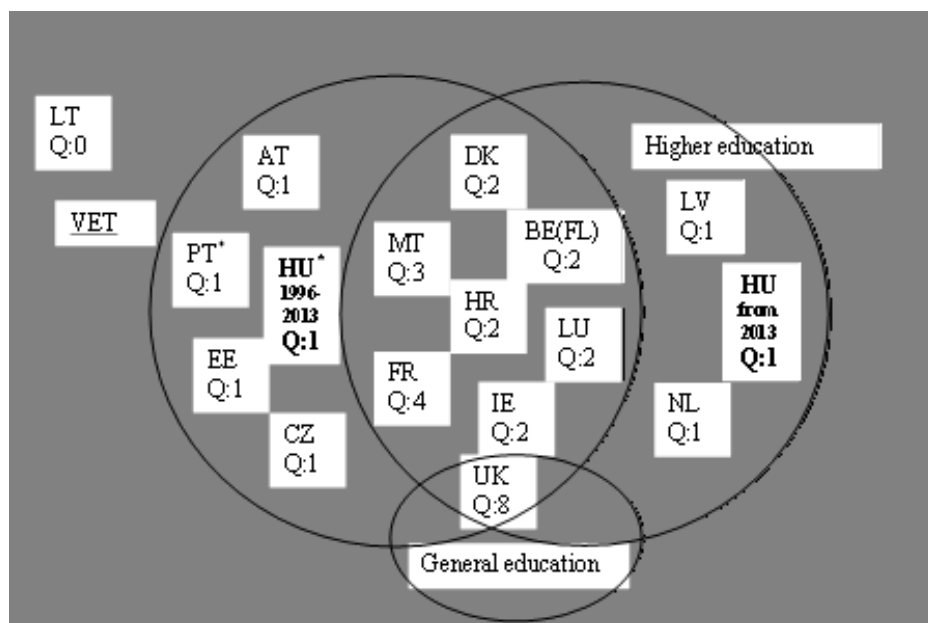
<u>By the history of the training type</u>	<u>By the permeability of the trainings</u>	<u>By the significance of the training level</u>	<u>By the connection with the education sub-sector</u>
Having great traditions French, England, Ireland, Austria	Automatic permeability French, Slovenia, the United Kingdom	Highlighted significance Austria, French	Mostly to vocational training Austria
Recently established Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal	Depending on the scholastic record Belgium, Germany	Average significance Denmark, Luxembourg, Ireland	Mostly to higher education the Netherlands, Latvia
	Permeability without counting in credits Poland	Slight significance Belgium, Estonia, Latvia	Part of general public education the United Kingdom
		Not really significant Czech Republic, Croatia, the Netherlands, Portugal	

Source: private composition based on the CEDEFOP, 2014; Benkei-Kovacs et al., 2015.

In the third classification, by the significance of the training levels, European countries are labelled as of highlighted the significance (Austria, France), of average significance (Denmark, Luxembourg, Ireland), of slight significance (Belgium, Estonia, Latvia) and not really significant ones (Czech Republic, Croatia, the Netherlands, Portugal). The base of making classes is the participation rate of the training.

The fourth classification has classes based on the connection with the education sector. Trainings connected mostly to vocational training, mostly to higher education or mostly to the general public education can be seen. Figure 2 illustrates properly the labelling of examined countries, and by them, it can be seen clearly that in the case of most countries, higher educational vocational training has complicated connections with several levels (Benkei-Kovács et al., 2015; CEDEFOP, 2014).

In the research of the CEDEFOP (2014), based on the relation to the education sub-sector, the examined 15 countries were classified in the following way:



Q: number of qualifications types

PT (and HU between 1995-2013) - the qualification is governed by the system, but programmes are provided by higher and non-higher education institutions

Figure 2. Connection with SCHE education sub-sector in several countries (CEDEFOP, 2014).

Q denoted the number of qualification types. In Figure 2, it can be seen clearly that by the connection with education sub-sector, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Portugal are grouped rather into the vocational training. As for Portugal, the qualification is controlled by the vocational training system but the training itself is provided by non-higher education institutions. The training of the Netherlands and Latvia has been close to the higher education form, yet in the United Kingdom, there are trainings mostly like those of the general public education. In French, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Croatia and

Malta, several education types can be noticed so their trainings are connected to all three education sub-sectors. In the case of Hungary, the training type was illustrated in Figure 2 according to the developmental periods of the SCHE training. It can be seen that between 1998-2013, it was mostly the vocational training to which the training was related to. The location and the trainers were basically related to it, as well. Then, in 2013, after a change of the law, the content and the name, the training was directed into the higher education. The trainers were exclusively teachers working in higher education, and the connection with the secondary education totally ceased.

During the study, there were serious differences regarding the denominations of qualifications, as well. On the one hand, there is higher education certificate, professional diploma, technological specialisation diploma, university diploma, undergraduate certificate and several variations of these. Moreover, by the study we can see that some trainings led to academic qualification, yet others led to a professional one (European Commission, 2015).

Conclusion

In the study, we dealt with the first level of the European higher education system, namely the short-cycle higher education trainings related to the ISCED 5 whose Hungarian characteristics, historical changes were described. The interpretation, definition and practical orientation of the trainings varies from country to country, we presented the Hungarian form in connection with the results of international comparative studies and data. Compared to the Western-European countries, the training can be considered new since it started in 1998 and it took its final place in 2006 after introducing Bologna Process in Hungary (Veres, 2006). Then in 2013 it was attached entirely to the higher education (it was part of the secondary and higher education at the same time). The latest reforms have not only been related to changes in denominations, but there were changes in the content of the training, in the group of teachers, in the practical material and in the degree of qualification, due to Hungarian education politics and economic intentions. However, parallel with the training being stabilized, the application rate and the number of training areas decreased significantly. In about 50% of the training areas, the number of applicants and accepted students lessened by 60% compared to the highest application rates of the history of the training.

The reasons for transforming Hungarian SCHE trainings were:

- the lobbies of the vocational training and higher education, the fight between the stakeholders of vocational training politics and higher education politics - behind which there is a fight for sources (sources of the stock of the vocational training),
- prioritising or effacing the social-political (social mobility) role of short-term higher education depending on the political orientation of the government and as a part of this, prioritising the disadvantaged regions (or rather, higher

education institutions supporting the closing up of the regions e.g. CHEC) instead of the disadvantaged students.

After the ripening of the reforms, these numbers are likely to start to increase. The latest engineering training areas are pointing forward at any rate, moreover, higher education trainings are starting in several areas (economics, IT, engineering) in the Community Higher Education Centre, as well, which is expectedly opening the door to students of disadvantaged regions to have ISCED 5 qualification.

In the future, our research is directed towards CHEC. We are examining whether it fulfills its social and economic hopes.

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