

# INFLUENCES OF THE TRAINING EFFECTUATED BY ROMANIAN STUDENTS ABROAD UPON THE INCREASE OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND PERFORMANCE AT MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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## Abstract

The twenty-first century has brought to the attention of scientists and practitioners issues of utmost importance to address major fundamental problems inherited from the last century and other challenges posed by the great changes characteristic of today's society and its future development directions.

In this scientific effort, methodic and practical, an increasingly important role is granted to higher education, the only one able to provide graduates trained professionals not only to integrate in the specific areas in which they operate, but especially to produce material and spiritual values capable to generate performance, progress and civilization. On this coordinate, the study examines an interesting aspect and increasingly present in higher education, not only in Romania, the correlation of training graduates to study abroad with their employment opportunities, the performance of the multinational organizations where they operate.

**Key words:** employees, globalization, multinational organization, organizational performance, student, study program, superior education.

**Classification JEL:** I25 – Education and Economic Development; F23 – Multinational Firms, International Business.

## 1. Introduction

Among the principal phenomena accompanying the dynamics of the society, globalization has become a necessity and a more active presence in all its fields and all over the world. As a concrete and relevant expression of globalization accelerated the emergence and development of multinational organizations which have radically changed the physiognomy and economic functionality, which in turn has led all other areas of society, including here higher education which becomes a significant milestone.

Studies and research conducted in Romania were directed either to matters affecting the practice of students abroad or only on the factors which determine the performance of organizations, including the quality of the preparation of employees.

Our analysis presents issues related to academic preparation of Romanian students abroad in connection with the influence that this form of training has on the employment of the graduate

## 2. Globalization trends in the first decades of the 21st century

The phenomena of globalization (the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>); it implies the opening of local and nationalistic perspectives to a broader outlook of an interconnected and interdependent world with free transfer of capital, goods, and services across national frontiers (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/globalization.html>) gains spreading and people tend to adapt faster to changes.

The concept of internalization appeared and was embraced by companies and organizations worldwide (*De Liso, Leoncini, 2011; Krist, 2009*) in order to extend their

market, gain customers but has also determined them to think more competitively. This preliminary stage of globalization has led to significant changes in policies, strategies and concepts for each area of activity proper to functioning of companies, namely national organizations.

Different needs, from the lack of resources to identifying new markets, namely from the possibilities of solving the needs of a nation by its own possibilities to the participation in the management of common interests of their countries, objectively imposed a world and national states more opened to the planetary world and to international organizations, multinational respectively. At this radical transformation of society and of every specific field, to and for globalization, a distinct place occupies the university education and institution of higher education respectively.

„This does not mean that universities or governments have become global in the sense of adopting a one-world perspective. Rather their institutional and national perspectives have altered,” (Roger, Marginson & Naidoo, 2011, p. 15).

Globalization, as a phenomenon characteristic of contemporary society, appeared and developed having as foundation another specific feature of evolution, namely internationalization. Access to education is also a determinant factor in the prosperity of an economy. On the same principle, we can extent access to education for the members, employees of a company (<http://www.managementstudyguide.com/human-resource-management>), because their rate of accumulating knowledge, of accomplishing tasks, of professional integration and conversion are the pillars of a successful human resource management and competitive advantage.

The current educational system can also be considered international if we acknowledge the fact that it is a quality faze (from 1980 until present time, it is a stage characterized by reforms in the educational field in the capitalist countries, with the support of international organizations such as OCDE, European Commission, UNESCO, that came with the proposal of an objective evaluation of the entire educational system, on basis of scientific criteria (Neagu, 2012). Competition for students extends to foreign markets and the mobility rate of people all around the world is increasing rapidly.

The new millennium offered two characteristic traits to the world's economy: globalization and the modern multinational organization, both realities which constitute premises able to create value with *the new economy based on knowledge*. The simultaneity of the two traits outlines and accompanies the configuration of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, considering that current and future technological and informational progresses make the modern organization synonymous with maximum performances, on the one hand, and with creating value, on the other hand (Mârza, 2013, p. 7).

Deep changes generated by the new global economy have determined a new way of interaction between states, economies and organizations. Economic globalization has created a more favourable environment for organizations' competition at a national and international level, and its functions are configured and reconfigured more richly (Muscalu & Muntean, 2012). Everyone now agrees that multinationals are the engine of the global economy. But the definition of the multinational organization has a lot of different meanings, given by different authors, academic fields, period of time etc. (Muscalu, coord., 2014; Trudel, 2009; [http://www.managementgeneral.ro/index\\_en.html](http://www.managementgeneral.ro/index_en.html); <http://www.manager.ro>; <http://revista-de-hr.blogspot.ro/2013/01/strategii-in-managementul-resurselor.html>).

The multinational organization represents a large organization with substantial resources that performs various businesses through a network of subsidiaries and affiliates located in several countries. One of the hallmarks of MNEs (Multinational Enterprise – multinational enterprise) is that they tend to perform purchases, production, and marketing

services worldwide. In addition to an office or headquarters, MNEs have a worldwide network of offices, working with numerous independent suppliers and business partners abroad (sometimes affiliated), (*Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger, 2008 in Ogreaan & Herciu, 2011, p. 968*).

Today, multinational organizations are formed and grow by annexation of companies, takeovers, mergers and other strategic alliances are conglomerates representing a high concentration of capital. These are also the structures that allow the transfer of capital and technologies. Different components can be produced in varied countries in order to optimize the potential depending on the production context.

Deep changes generated by the new global economy have determined a new way of interaction between states, economies and organizations. Economic globalization has created a more favourable environment for organizations' competition at a national and international level, and its functions are configured and reconfigured more richly.

Many multinational organizations are struggling to improve their ability to absorb knowledge geographically separate and then recombine and apply them elsewhere, because they have realized that this leverage is a basis for achieving higher performance and sustained competitive advantage (*Grant, 1996, in Raab, Ambos & Tallman, 2014*).

At the same time in the last 20 years, pressures coming from two directions radically transformed the context of trade and investment. Regarding market structure, the principal agent of transformation was widespread liberalization of trade in the form of regional trade agreements such as the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States in 1989 and the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. Liberalization of international investments took also scale thereby increasing globalization of markets. At the same time, thanks to the new basic technologies and flexible production methods of mass production have been widely replaced by production control methods (<http://www.ic.gc.ca>).

Based on these strategic choices, the productive internationalization progress of multinational organizations has increased dramatically. If in the last century there were 53,000 multinational organizations with 450,000 subsidiaries, which had global sales of over 9.500 billion (*Lile, 2011, p. 23*), today they have reached 13.500 billion (<http://www.surfeco21.com>). So, as basic components of the economic system, the multinational organization is a link of a group of people, organized according to certain legal, economic, technological, management and design requirements and realize a combination of production factors (human and material-energy) with the purpose of producing and selling of economic goods (products, services, information etc.) in the structure, quantity and quality required by the market demand and with the final purpose of gaining profit (*Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2008, p. 40*).

Some researches conducted last year shown that studying abroad represent a competitive advantage, especially for multinational organizations that want their employees to have some flexibility to work in multicultural and multilingual environment (<http://www.gandul.info/stiri/studiile-in-strainatate-nu-garanteaza-obtinerea-unui-loc-de-munca-si-a-unui-salariu-mare-ce-cantaresteste-mai-mult-in-ochii-angajatorilor-11524064>). In the same direction, the author Michael E. Porter (*Porter, 1993*) says that multinational organizations through managing their value chain, seen as a system and not as a juxtaposition of elements, can acquire a competitive advantage.

One of the objectives of our survey focuses on determining the motives and interests of students to search for educational programs abroad in order to find better job opportunities, especially when they what to apply for jobs at multinational organizations, that search for international experience.

In a world dominated by flexibility, fast traveling and accommodation, where globalization is sensed in every action, it is normal to have an increased desire to study abroad in order to facilitate access to a better job in a multinational organization. Starting from this assessments, in our studies we allocated a distinct field on one hand, for the training that students have abroad, and, on the other hand, for the new job opportunities that appear at multinational organizations.

In this regard, there are representative data such as the fact that in 2013, 250 graduates of bachelor degree, master or PhD abroad, were given about 80 jobs offered by multinationals in Romania at the event “Come Home”, organized for the second consecutive year by the League of Romanian Students from Abroad (LRSA). Although various, the dominant jobs were in the IT domain, consulting and business administration ([http://adevarul.ro/news/societate/60-studentii-romani-strainatate-vor-revina-tara-Si-romania-poate-1\\_51c5bd33c7b855ff56b7edaf/index.html](http://adevarul.ro/news/societate/60-studentii-romani-strainatate-vor-revina-tara-Si-romania-poate-1_51c5bd33c7b855ff56b7edaf/index.html)).

Studies effectuated in Romania during past years showed an increased interest and belief in better opportunities abroad. We highlight a survey conducted to evaluate the confidence of Romanian students regarding success abroad, where 63% of the people interviewed believe that their opportunities are high. However, the level of confidence in these opportunities declined slightly in recent years, from the value of 71% in 2009 to about 67% in 2011. Romanian students have positively evaluated their competitiveness in the international context, area in which an increase has been remarked: 59% of the students evaluated themselves as competitive in 2012, an increase from 47% that thought so in 2011 (<http://www.capital.ro/detalii-articole/stiri/186560.html>).

The first two problems investigated focus on students in Romania, or people that are currently in a study program in the country or abroad, in order to see what advantages and disadvantages they seem to notice in the educational system offered by foreign universities. This part of the survey was conducted in order to gain information that can afterwards be compared with the requisites that multinational companies have in hiring new people. As the survey was conducted online, the people chosen to answer the questions had to have internet access. The second study was conducted in multinational organizations from Romania. It aimed to know the opinions of employers about the employment opportunities of graduates who completed their studies abroad, and the benefits they can bring to the organization.

In order to conduct our survey, we establish some clear objectives and suitable hypothesis for both of the domains analysed, regarding the achievement of significant data of the problems researched.

### 3. Objectives and hypotheses

**O1:** Analyse the main advantages that Romanian students see when following a study program abroad.

**H1:** Better job opportunities and internships is the main advantage noticed by Romanian students when following an educational program abroad.

**O2:** Identify the main disadvantages that Romanian students see when they think of following a study program abroad.

**H2:** A higher cost of education is the main disadvantage stated by Romanian students when questioned about following a study program abroad.

**O3:** Identify the influence of graduating university studies abroad upon favourable employment opportunities in multinational organizations.

**H3:** Graduating university studies abroad influences in a positive manner the employment possibilities in a multinational organization.

**O4:** Analysis of the consequences of superior preparation of employees abroad upon the performance of multinationals.

**H4:** In the multinational organizations there is a variety of benefits resulted from graduating study programs abroad by their employees.

After setting some hypothesis and objectives, we decided to conduct our investigation throughout some qualitative and quantitative methods.

#### **4. Materials and methods**

Method used:

1. Online survey, sharing the link to Romanian students (or people that are currently undertaking a study program at a university) and that have internet access.
2. Online survey to multinational organizations from Romania

The investigation sample was constituted from a total of 53 students and 385 multinational organizations. Responses by location: From a total of 100% of respondents, 66.04% were given by Romanian students within the country and 33.96% from Romanian students that are currently in a study program abroad, respectively 11.32% from Germany, 7.54% from France, 7.54% from the USA, 3.78% from Great Britain and 3.78% from Canada.

The survey for Romanian students was completed in the month of October, 2013, limiting the access to one whole month. The month of October was chosen because on the 1st of October is the starting day of all university programs in Romania. The survey for multinational organizations was completed in the month of November, 2014.

Type of investigation conducted: quantitative investigation and qualitative investigation. The database obtained was then analysed and the results interpreted. Universe: Romanian students enrolled in graduate programs at different universities from Romania and abroad.

Multinational organizations from Romania with more than 50 employees.

From applying the questionnaire on both populations included and analyzing the collected data we obtained a series of responses, some of which are presented below. The analysis of the data collected offered a multi way perception from both parts, the students and also from the multinationals.

#### **Results and benefits**

In Figure 1, answers to question: *Which of the following would you consider to be a disadvantage when choosing to follow a study program abroad*, we can see that the main disadvantages noticed by the students interviewed were the high cost of education and high cost of life, which combined gather more that 70% of total responses given. Cultural differences, uncertainties of a new environment and learning and speaking a foreign language are not considered to be major minuses when considering going abroad to study, each one of them having a score under 10% of the total.

We can conclude that the majority of Romanian students (approximately 70%) would definitely consider following a study program abroad if they would have the financial resources or the financial means (a job or a scholarship) to sustain themselves abroad.

The list of advantages mentioned in the survey and stated in figure 2, managed to score high grades when rated by the students on a scale from 1 to 10, grades of 8, 9, even 10. Better chance to find work and/or internships abroad is the advantage that obtained the most grades of 10, being considered as the main advantage.

For flexible educational programs, the majority of respondents rated it with 7 points, followed by 8 and 10 points. Innovating teaching programs and/or methods was rated with 8,

9 and 10 points, making it a high evaluated advantage. Practice opportunities makes also 10 points in high rates, followed by 9, 8 and 7 marks, a fact that also draws attention to it when it comes to deciding on a study program in another country.

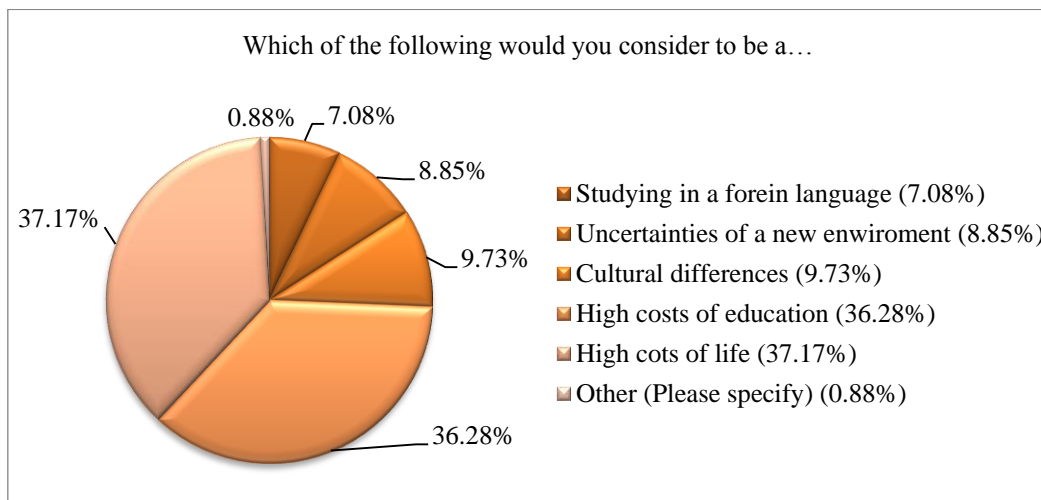


Figure 1: Answers to question: Which of the following would you consider to be a disadvantage when choosing to follow a study program abroad (own study)

We can conclude that Romanian students think of foreign education as a major determinant for getting a job, evolving on the current one (for students that have already a job) or for having chances to better career opportunities.

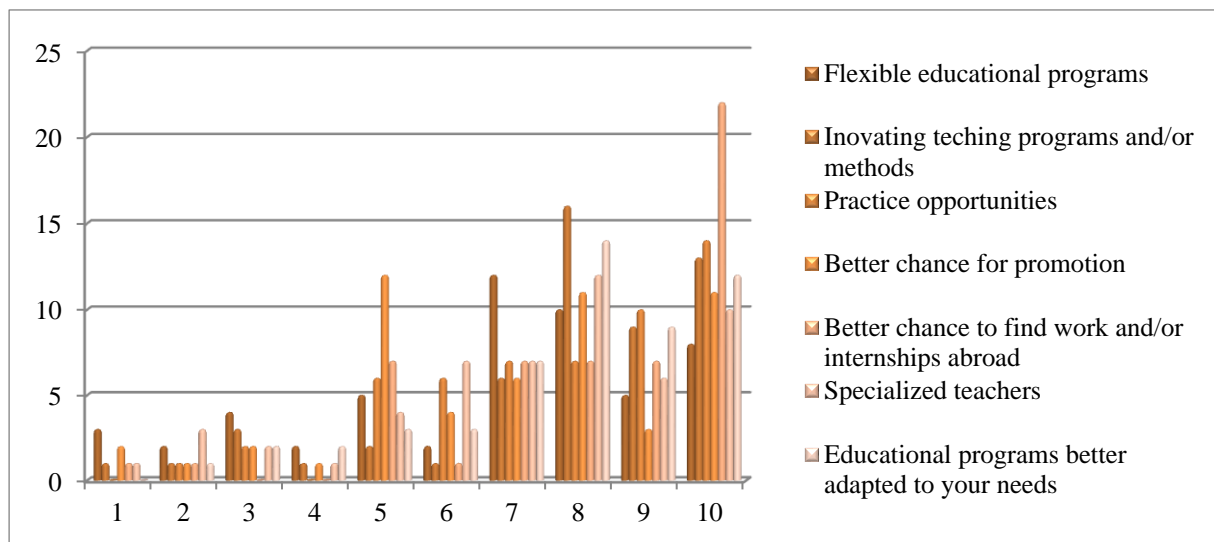


Figure 2: Answer to question: Rate the following advantages of following a study program abroad (own study)

The opinions of the students regarding internships abroad show us that they consider them to be useful in better chances to find work and has lead us to the second part of our study. If the results show an increased interest of Romanian students for international educational programs and internships, which are the qualities and preparation that multinational organization search for when hiring? Are our students prepared? Or this appetite

for international preparation and study is in fact entitle due to the requisits of multinational companies.

Some answers from our ample study can be found further. The first question from the questionnaire was:

- To what extent do you think the following specific integration of socio - professional graduates from abroad helps to increase their employment opportunities in your organization? (check version corresponds with your opinion).
- Table 1 presents the variables for the question stated above.

Table 1: Variables to question no.1 (own study)

Variable	
a.	Familiarization of employees with the environment of the multinational organization
b.	Increasing the quality of the communication and its diversity
c.	Knowledge of the employees of an international language (at least)
d.	Professional training, specialized and practical in the domain of activity of the organization
e.	Ease in establish relationships with employees from different countries
f.	Training and perfection of training in a performant environment specific to countries in which they finished their studies
g.	Accommodation when traveling to the headquarters of the organization in other countries
h.	Ease in solving specific training courses
i.	Others. Which? .....

Below is the figure which includes data interpretation to question no. 1 in the questionnaire.

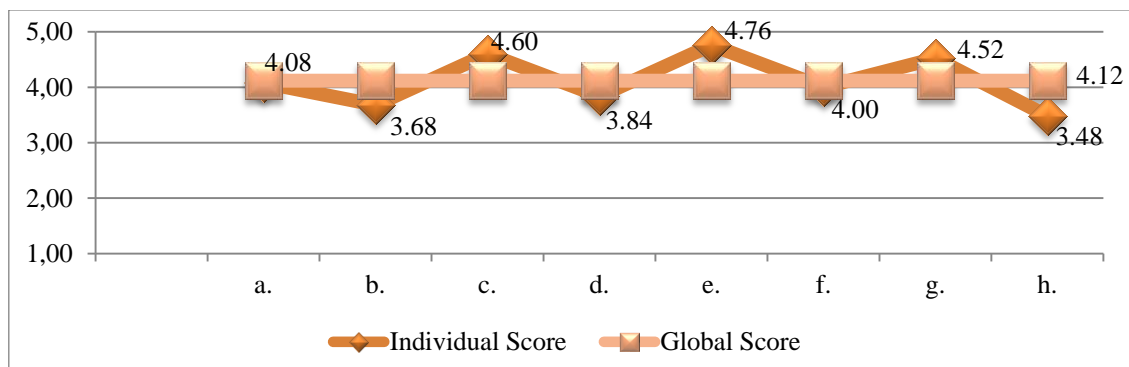


Figure 3: Answers to question no.1 (own study)

From the figure above it can be seen that the highest score answering question 1 is option e – ease in establish relationships with employees from different countries (individual score 4.76, global score 4.12), which demonstrates that the preparation abroad bring a plus in terms of maintaining and developing relationships with people around the world. At a very small variance it is situated choice of answer (c) – knowledge of the employees of an international language (at least).

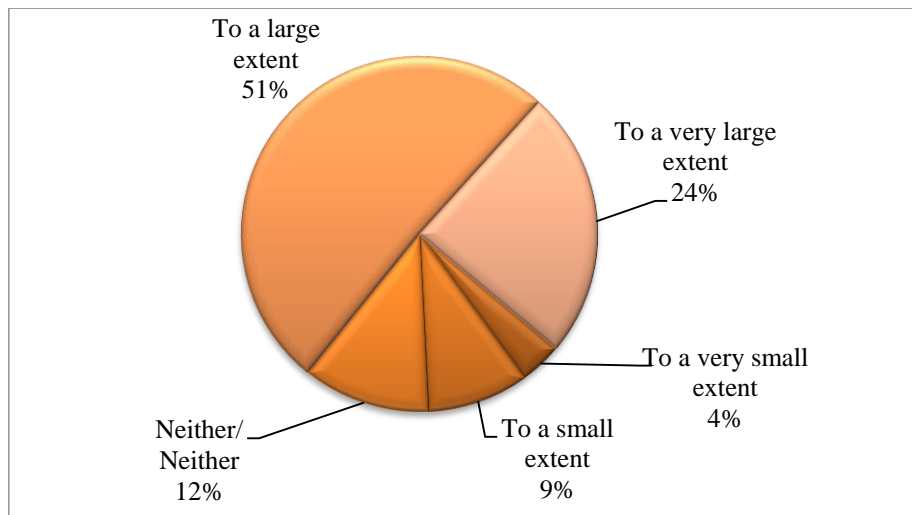


Figure 4: Answers to question no. 2 (own study)

Thus, it can be seen that employment opportunity within a multinational organization grows considerably when it is known at least one foreign language. The third response is (g) – accommodation when traveling to the headquarters of the organization in other countries, which demonstrates that employers are considering employee mobility and flexibility. Thus, it notes that studies abroad bring real job opportunities in multinational organizations from Romania, providing a chance on this.

Another question from the questionnaire, with particular importance in this study is the following:

- To what extent, doing internships abroad by your employees, contributes to organizational performance? (check option corresponding with your opinion)
- Figure 4 presents the answers given to the question stated above.

The answer to this question strengthens the view that education and training sessions abroad lead to increased performance of organizations where they work. This finding is based on 51% of survey respondents who believe that conducting internships abroad by employees of the organization, contributed to a very large extent to increasing its performance. Also 24% of respondents believe that this is achieved to a large extent.

Another question from the questionnaire is the following:

- Which do you consider to be the benefits in your organization performed by your employees who studied abroad?
- Table 2 presents the variables for the question above.

Analyzing the answers to this question we observe a number of benefits brought to the organization by employees who have studied abroad. So, one of them is *the increased ability to work with clients from abroad* (individual score of 4.76, global score 3.99). Another important benefit is *the expansion of cooperation abroad*, with a score of 4.34. These benefits that employers attribute to employees who have completed their studies abroad demonstrate the importance that these studies can bring by the international character of these aspects, specific nowadays.

The Figure 5 includes data interpretation to question no. 3 in the questionnaire.



Table 2: Variables to question no. 2 (own study)

Variable	
a.	Assimilate and use of knowledge based technical progress
b.	Faster adaptation to the organizational environment
c.	Improved ability to work with clients from abroad
d.	International cultural transfer expertise and business practices
e.	Expansion of cooperation abroad
f.	Understanding and use of specific elements of the international environment of the organization in order to increase organizational performance
g.	Others. Which? .....

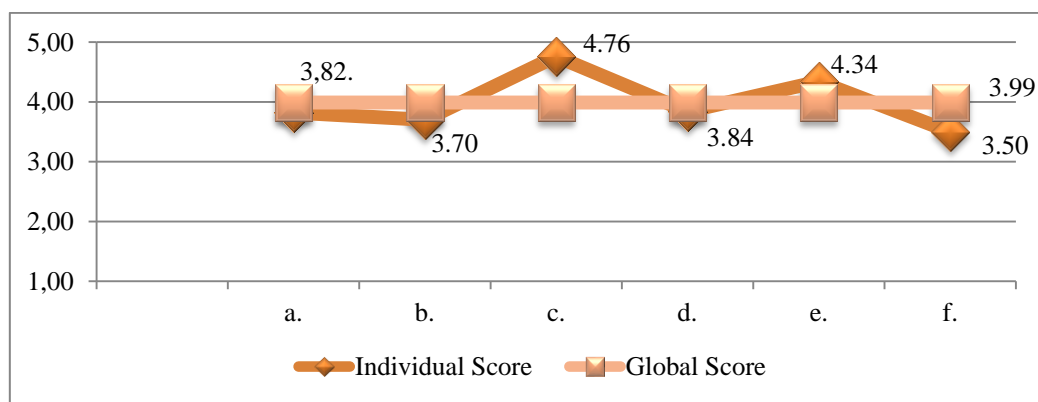


Figure 5: Answers to question no.3 (own study)

The desire of Romanian students to prepare abroad is also determined by the opinion that universities from other countries have a performant educational system (Bardaşuc, 2014). Of course, it is a reality but it does not have to be forgotten the potential that universities from Romania have. In this context, we appreciate the fact that for each university, regardless of the place they operate, it is important to fundament their activity on the fact that “University education and academic institutions in the context of the particularities of the knowledge-based society are called upon to play a major role in ensuring a favorable environment for globalization and scientific research both in terms of producing knowledge and training future graduates according to concepts and professional conduct open to the recovery and achievement of new and significant material and spiritual values,” (Cosma & Niculescu, 2014, p. 4).

## 6. Conclusions

In the conditions of a more and more accentuated phenomena of globalization and of its consequences upon the society and its specific domains, new and significant challenges appear for the science and practice of socio-economic, educational-cultural, financial, demographic or technical fields.

Between the factors with essential role in the solution of the new challenges of a society based on knowledge, specific to the first decades of the twenty first century, a distinct place and an extremely important one, occupies superior education. The openness generated by globalization lead to new and essential transformations regarding the place and the role of

universities in forming specialties requested by the need of society, where the economical ones become a priority.

This new realities have imposed the reconsideration and reevaluation of training possibilities of graduates of superior educational programs, not only in the country of birth, but also in other countries in order to better respond to the requests of the labor market, where the offers of multinational organizations have become more present and more attractive.

On the basis of these considerations, our study proposed to put in relation the opinions of Romanian students regarding their training abroad with the opinions of employers, multinational organizations respectively, regarding the way they evaluate the competences of graduates of study programs abroad in obtaining performance within their own organization.

We can already appreciate the opinion of the students regarding training abroad as being seen as a natural thing and a suitable option of superior education. It is notable the fact that the students perceive their training as professionals abroad, in the conditions of the possibility of having insured the financial resources necessary, on the first hand, by advantages generated in choosing and finding a work place, followed by the quality and standards of performance of the educational processes which take place at foreign universities.

This way of perceiving the finality of university training abroad is supported also by the opinions of the respondents from multinational organizations. Taking into account the specific of the activity of the multinational organization, they claim as being necessary for graduates to present at employment an international dimension of training, materialized by certain values of organizational culture, such as the easy establishment of connections with employees from other countries, or the high possibility of integration at the headquarters of the multinational organization in other countries.

The data presented demonstrate a new reality of activities from different domains of society, meaning the extent of the interest of economic organizations from an orientation inside the national space to one at an international level.

Superior education under these conditions needs to continue its accumulated experience in order to achieve a veridical international openness of student training.

Of course, there can be some educational solutions which we consider to be optimal, such as: the extension of the national curriculum with issues of international training; achievement and development of students and professors mobility, which can provide the opportunity to enter in contact with other educational systems from foreign countries; training in other countries without giving up on the training received inside the country of origin and even creating an European University that can form, train specialists for a global economy.

On the other hand, this international dimension of graduates' training is unknown by the opinion in which the employer appreciates their training regarding the level of competences that ensure an important role in obtaining performance in the multinational organization. Also, the domains in which the graduates bring a significant contribution to the development of the multinational organization by the capacity to work with clients from foreign countries in which they have different branches is highlighted.

By the answers given by students and employers, we consider that training of students from any country at other foreign universities can ensure not only opportunities for students and multinational organizations, but first, a support in a positive manner for the effects of globalization in the first decades of the twenty first century.

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