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Career Paths, Satisfaction with Academic Preparation and Motivation of BA Norwegian Graduates: An Alumni Perspective

Higher education institutions are often evaluated based on graduate outcomes and employability. As the only accredited undergraduate programme in Norwegian in Romania, the undergraduate programme in Norwegian Language and Literature at Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU) plays a unique role in shaping student competencies for an evolving labour market. This study explores, by using a survey as a research method, the professional development of alumni who graduated in 2019, by focusing on their career paths, level of motivation, and satisfaction with academic preparation. Based on responses from 123 alumni and additional insights from employers, the findings provide insight into the profile of an alumni student. The research highlights the importance of language competencies in Norwegian, undergraduate programme relevance, and employer perspectives in shaping alumni outcomes. Findings indicate high levels of employment (87%), significant interest in further academic pursuits, and a generally strong alignment between the programme and career satisfaction.

Keywords: career paths, alumni, satisfaction, Norwegian, Romania, motivation, labour market, tertiary level

1. Introduction

Tertiary institutions strive to develop graduates' discipline-specific knowledge and transversal competencies which are salient in the dynamics of today's labour market. Therefore, requesting feedback from graduates regarding their professional development after graduation represents an essential requirement for ensuring the quality of an academic programme that intends to respond to the demands of the stakeholders. In many fields of activity "a higher education qualification is an essential requirement" (OECD 2017: 9) as the academic instruction offered during a bachelor's degree, a master's degree or a doctoral degree can be "a good predictor of success in the labour market" (OECD 2017: 10). Graduates often associate success with a well-paid job, high earnings, and a safe and secure work environment. In addition, it is reported that people who have attained degrees "have generally been able to find employment comparatively quickly, [...], develop rewarding career paths and successfully adapt to changes in the labour market" (OECD 2014 as cited in OECD 2017: 10). These aspects are relevant for the alumni in this research as many of them embraced a variety of careers and were able to adapt to different fields of work. It also corresponds to our students' job expectations, namely they will be able to find a job grounded in their linguistic, intercultural, and academic competence in Norwegian.

The Norwegian language has been taught as an undergraduate degree (BA) at Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU) since 1991. The programme, the only one of its kind in Romania, was created after the Revolution in Romania, in 1991, first as a minor specialization and, since 2008, as a complementary major. The Norwegian Language and Literature programme became emblematic also at a national level as it "attracted already in its first four years of establishment a number of 80 students from all over Romania (although the programme was given only every second year)" (Tomescu Baciu et al. 2020b: 201).

With the implementation of the Bologna Declaration in the Romanian academic system in 2005 (three years BA + two years MA + three years PhD studies) and Romania's accession to the EU in 2007, both the academic and the labour market contexts underwent major transformations (diverse career paths such as outsourcing in international companies, translation services, etc.). These factors led to an increased addressability of the undergraduate programme in Norwegian.

The PhD programme in Norwegian literature started in 2010 resulted by 2019 in six PhD theses on emblematic Norwegian authors such as Knut Hamsun, Lars Saabye Christensen, Jon Fosse, Jan Erik Vold, and on other topics. To develop a full programme in Norwegian, we initiated a research project to investigate the degree of interest among undergraduate students and alumni in enrolling for an MA programme in Norwegian. The results confirmed the value of our intention to build a bridge between the undergraduate and the PhD programme

in Norwegian language and literature at BBU. The respondents showed interest primarily in a master's programme in Norwegian, and secondarily with a focus on translating fiction and non-fiction (Tomescu Baciu et al. 2020a: 28).

2. Theoretical background

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) sets the standards for quality assurance in higher education also known as *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG 2015). This study draws on the ESG 2015 standards for higher education quality assurance, emphasizing programme relevance, academic satisfaction, and graduate outcomes (ESG 2015: 14). The research also incorporates motivational theories (Dörnyei, 1998) and perspectives on labour market integration (OECD 2017). In the case of studying a foreign language, the learning process is influenced by several factors such as age, attitude, personality, mother tongue, motivation or learning preferences (Hagen and Tenfjord 2006; Harmer 2007; Lightbown and Spada 2001). Each variable is relevant in the context of foreign language learning, but according to Dörnyei (1998: 117) motivation is the primary “driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process”. These theoretical frameworks underscore the need to understand how intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence students' educational choices and their success in the job market.

Huxham et al. (2008: 676) argue that the feedback provided by alumni can provide valuable information for three main target groups: “a) teachers, who can use the information to improve their teaching; b) managers, who can use the information for accountability and in promotion and tenure decisions; c) students, who can use the information when choosing modules and courses”. In our research, the feedback received from alumni provides complementary evidence for the quality assurance process that needs to be implemented at the university level. Additionally, respondents' answers are relevant for understanding the level of student satisfaction and graduate outcomes. As Athiyaman (1997) concludes, how students perceive the quality of their educational experience relates to their academic satisfaction.

Career paths available to graduates should be correlated to the prevalent economic factors found locally in Cluj-Napoca and at the wider national level. Outsourcing intensified in Cluj-Napoca after Romania became a member of the European Union in 2007. It is also important to mention Cluj-Napoca's status as a salient economic, cultural, and educational centre, with Babeş-Bolyai University ranking first in the 2016–2019 national university meta-ranking.

Other arguments can be added to provide a wider perspective of the BA programme in Norwegian. Tomescu Baciu et al. (2020b: 204) conclude that “in Romania, there is a growing demand for professional and quality translations

associated with employment and career paths linked to Norwegian”. Private institutions and companies in Cluj-Napoca have organized together with BBU several student internships to develop students’ competence in Norwegian as well as their job-related skills (Tomescu Baciu et al. 2020b: 204) and to ensure alumni’s workforce readiness, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and abilities to manage different tasks in their respective occupations. These internships were undertaken considering the idea that partnerships between higher education institutions and employers can be beneficial for all stakeholders allowing “academic staff in higher education institutions to stay current with workforce practices and skills needs, and build relationships with business” (OECD 2017: 67).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Purpose of the study

This is the first study in Romania to examine the career paths, motivation levels, and satisfaction with academic preparation among alumni of the undergraduate programme in Norwegian Language and Literature. The findings are relevant for quality assurance processes related to programme satisfaction and provide valuable insights for stakeholders involved in labour market integration.

3.2. Research design

The research was conducted between April–July 2019 at the Faculty of Letters at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide a broader perspective on the respondents’ views. The Google Forms questionnaire was sent via email to alumni students who graduated from the BA programme in Norwegian Language and Literature between 2000 and 2019.

3.3. Participants

A total of 123 respondents provided answers to the questionnaire based on convenience sampling. All responses were anonymous. The gender distribution was unequal (female 87.8%, male 12.2%) as women are more likely to pursue studies at the Faculty of Letters in Cluj-Napoca due to the job opportunities typically associated with this field. The respondents belonged to three different age groups: 20–29 years old, 30–39 years old, and 40–49 years old. The highest percentage of the respondents (61.8%) belonged to the age group ranging from 20 to 29 years old. This high percentage correlates with the fact that in recent years the number of newly enrolled students in the programme has gradually increased, reaching up

to 100–120 students in the first year of study (Tomescu Baciú et al. 2019). Another reason would be availability, as the 20–29 year-old group was easier to reach. Alumni from earlier years may have changed their names and email addresses, thus making it difficult to track them. The selection of respondents for the written structured interview was arbitrary and emails were sent to former students who have been working and living in Norway and with whom we have kept in contact since 2000. Ten respondents provided answers to the questionnaire.

3.4. Research instruments

A survey was used as the main research instrument. The Google Forms questionnaire consisted of 35 items with a mix of 30 close-ended (multiple choice and Likert scale) and 5 open-ended questions organized into four main sections: Section 1 – Demographic details; Section 2 – Alumni's academic trajectory; Section 3 – Alumni's motivation to study Norwegian; Section 4 – Alumni's career opportunities. The quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics using Google Forms' built-in tools, while the qualitative data were processed using content analysis provided by Voyant Tools (www.voyant.org). The questionnaire was formulated in English.

A second tool for data collection was a written structured interview with 4 open questions that was sent via email to employers that had hired alumni from the undergraduate Norwegian programme. Eight responses were provided.

A third tool for data collection was a written structured interview for alumni working in Norway which consisted of four open questions (Q1 – work-readiness at your first employment in Norway based on the competencies acquired in the BA programme of Norwegian language and literature; Q2 – Field of activity; Q3 – Time spent working in Norway; Q4 – Satisfaction with Academic Preparation). Ten respondents provided answers to the written structured interview.

3.5. Research questions

This study intended to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What types of career paths have alumni taken after graduation?
2. What is the level of alumni satisfaction with their academic preparation?
3. What is the level of alumni motivation to study Norwegian?

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative data

The findings are grouped into three main categories: education, motivation, employment, and career paths. To ascertain tendencies in the alumni's labour market insertion, it was salient to investigate their educational path after graduation.

Education

The undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Letters offer a compulsory double specialization (major and minor) in Romanian and other foreign languages. From the total of 123 respondents, 22% study Norwegian as their major specialization, with Chinese, Italian, German, French, Russian or Finnish as a minor specialization, while 82% study Norwegian as a minor language and their major specialization was either Korean, Russian, Romanian, Spanish, German, Finnish, Comparative Literature or French. As their academic development is concerned, 65.2% of the respondents chose to continue their studies by enrolling in different master's degrees. The fields they have chosen were humanities (40%) or computer sciences, business, and conflict management (25.2%). These MA programmes offered alumni knowledge in other fields and provided them with a wider perspective in terms of future careers. Regarding the internationalization of studies, 12.1% enrolled for MA studies (7.8% continued their MA studies at foreign universities¹ and 4.3% pursued an MA degree in Norway²). The interest in continuing their studies in Norway could also be related to the opportunities for academic exchange they had experienced during their undergraduate studies, as many students were offered scholarships to study in Norway. It is also relevant to mention that 42.2% of the respondents who continued their professional development chose various faculties within BBU. In addition, 11.3% of alumni took a PhD in Norwegian literature within the Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies at the Faculty of Letters.

Asked whether they would be interested in pursuing an MA degree in Norwegian at BBU, 71.5% of the alumni would have considered this option if this had been available. Therefore, Tomescu Baciu et al. (2020a: 26) consider that a master's programme in Norwegian language and literature would offer alumni continuity in their field of study and would be beneficial to their future careers.

¹ In the UK: University College London, London School of Economics and Political Science, the University of Edinburgh, University of Aberdeen; in France: De Montfort University, Sorbonne University in Paris, University of Franche-Comté, Besançon, University Lyon 2; in Sweden: University of Lund; in Denmark: Aarhus University; in Germany: Free University in Berlin, in Spain: Technical University of Valencia; in Italy: IULM University; in China: Tongji University and Shandong University.

² University of Oslo, Oslo Metropolitan University, the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, and Nord University in Bodø.

Motivation

The demand for enrolling in undergraduate studies in Norwegian has gradually increased in the past two decades (Baciu et al. 2019). Therefore, it was pertinent to ask alumni about their motivation to study Norwegian. Ten close-ended items and one open-ended item covered intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. A total of 34.2% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to study Norwegian at the undergraduate level because they saw it as a niche language option. While one-third of the alumni perceived the programme as a novel specialization, the rest considered it as a well-established one. The data can be connected to the respondents' different age groups as the programme was established more than 30 years ago.

When asked whether they began studying Norwegian for personal reasons (e.g. family living in Norway), 91.9% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement suggesting that their motivation was primarily professional. Nearly two-thirds of them (56.9%) answered that they studied Norwegian because they wanted to get a job that would be better paid, so the opportunity of a higher income was an important motivator in their choice to study Norwegian. A total of 82% of the alumni reckon they would use their language competence in Norwegian at work. In recent years, various institutions and companies have relocated their back-office operations and processes to Cluj-Napoca and many of them seek well-trained Norwegian language speakers. As this is a rather new tendency in the dynamics of the labour market, it is possible that the students who graduated before 2008 did not have as many opportunities as current graduates, thus explaining why only a third of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that many businesses in Cluj-Napoca and Romania require employees who can speak Norwegian. This indicates a strong focus among alumni on the well-paid and in-demand positions in the national labour market that require proficiency in Scandinavian languages. More than half of the respondents believe that such job opportunities offer higher income levels.

As integrative motivation is concerned, 83% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the study of Norwegian offered good career prospects, while more than 45% agreed or strongly agreed that they studied Norwegian due to Norway's international role in a globalized world. According to the data gathered, one-third of the alumni were interested in living or studying abroad. By processing data with Voyant tools findings indicate that important extrinsic motivational factors for choosing Norwegian included: translation workshops in cooperation with NORLA (40 instances), Norwegian visiting lectureships funded by Hk-dir (Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills) (10 instances), scholarships for studying Norwegian abroad (EEA and Norway Grants, Erasmus+, mobility grants supported by Hk-dir) (25 instances), and scholarships for summer courses at the University of Oslo (8 instances), the University of Bergen (7 instances), and the University of Agder (6 instances).

Employment and career paths

The prospect of a future career that allows the graduates to use their skills in Norwegian is a powerful incentive and one of the reasons for the growing number of students enrolled in the undergraduate programme in Norwegian. The analysis of the motivation to study Norwegian has revealed that 56.9% of the alumni chose Norwegian because they were seeking better-paid jobs. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Tomescu Baciu et al. (2019: 263) indicating that more than 80% of undergraduate students were certain that Norwegian gave them better perspectives on the labour market.

According to the data collected, 87% of the alumni were employed at the time of the survey. Out of the total number of respondents, 29.3% of them stated that they were very satisfied with the career path they chose, 49.6% were generally satisfied, while a small proportion were generally dissatisfied (6.5%) or very dissatisfied (7.3%).

Overall, how satisfied are you with the career path that you have chosen?

123 responses

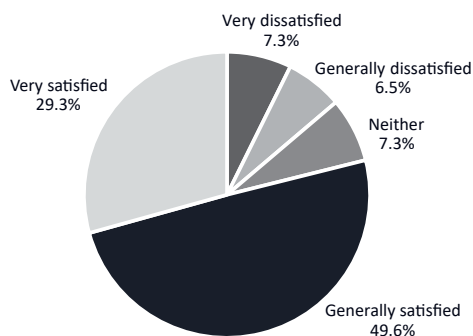


Figure 1. The alumni's satisfaction with their career path

Source: own work.

An important aspect when discussing the findings refers to the role of Norwegian in alumni's career paths. Hence, the data reveal that nearly half of the respondents (48.8%) consider their jobs to be related to the skills developed throughout their undergraduate studies. The data indicate that alumni have jobs in a variety of fields connected to their field of specialization. Furthermore, 52.9% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that the programme has prepared them for their current job, 21.1% are neutral, while 26% disagree and strongly disagree. In addition, 37.4% (17.1% agree and 20.3% strongly agree) reckon that they use Norwegian in their jobs, whereas 43.1% disagree (16.3% strongly disagree and 26.8% disagree), and nearly 20% of the respondents are neutral in this matter.

The findings of this part of the study indicate that 87% of the alumni were employed at the time of the survey, and 52.9 % of them ascribe their accomplishment

to their graduation from the BA programme in Norwegian. Following the same line of thought, the vast majority of alumni declared themselves satisfied with the career path they have chosen.

4.2. Qualitative data

Cluj-Napoca is a cultural, economic, and academic centre. Thus, BBU attracts students from all over the country. Respondents indicated their interest in the student life of the city, their fascination for the Scandinavian languages, Old Norse mythology, Norwegian music, local economic factors or student exchange opportunities. The verbatim below indicates some motivational factors expressed by an alumnus:

I chose to study Norwegian in Cluj-Napoca because I truly felt that studying Norwegian would be an attractive and interesting choice as a higher education programme. Of course, it ended up being more than a simple academic or career choice, but at the time, after having read about the history of the department and after having done a bit of research regarding the course descriptions, I was more than convinced that it was the right choice for me. What also helped was that in the 12th grade, a high school alumna, who was then studying Norwegian in Cluj, came to speak to us about her experience. That in itself turned out to be a life-altering moment for me. (respondent 30)

When it comes to the respondents' domain of activity, 30 of them work in education and research, 15 employees in IT and support, and 11 in translation and proofreading. The answers also reveal other fields in which the alumni work: customer service (9), human resources (7), accounting, finance, and banking (6), media and communication, business and consulting, industry, unemployed (4), and other (19). Figure 2 below offers a visual representation of the data:

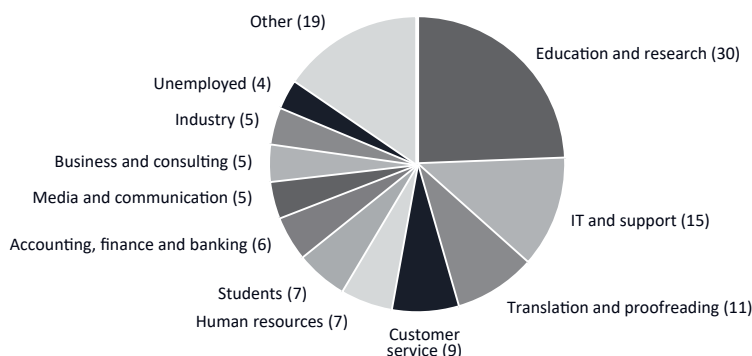


Figure 2. The domains of activity in which the alumni are employed
Source: own work.

The written structured interview addressed to alumni working in Norway offers additional perspectives to the questionnaire given to alumni in Romania. Half of the alumni working in Norway are employed in educational institutions (university colleges, primary and secondary education) and a very small percentage in academia (10%). As for the duration of alumni's experience in Norway, the answers can be grouped as follows: 17–18 years (four alumni), 13 years (one alumnus), 4–7 years (three alumni), and 5 months–2 years (two alumni). These answers can be connected to the next open question addressed to alumni regarding their satisfaction and readiness to integrate into Norway's culture and society. The responses indicate that 90% of them (70% agree, while 20% strongly agree) were satisfied and prepared for employment in Norway after graduation. Still, a small percentage (one respondent) indicated a medium level of satisfaction and that he/she felt less prepared.

Regarding intercultural knowledge, we noticed that respondents distinguished between their Norwegian language acquisition in Romania and their more general understanding of Norwegian acquired in the host culture. As such, the alumni felt they were better equipped to interact with the Norwegian culture and civilization in Norway after having acquired 'abstract knowledge' of Norwegian culture and society during their previous BA studies. The verbatim below indicates such a perspective expressed by an alumnus:

All the other things I learned about Norway at BBU helped a lot in terms of references to culture and civilization. It was somehow abstract while I was studying in Romania, due to the differences between the two cultures, but very good to have when understanding the people and culture of Norway. (respondent 21)

The internationalization of studies in Cluj-Napoca was considered beneficial by two respondents who had their first encounter with Norway either during summer courses or exchange programmes. The word-for-word transcript below emphasizes the academic opportunities that students have had:

The scholarship for international summer schools and the exchange/mobility programmes gave me the opportunity to get acquainted with and use the knowledge acquired in Romania in direct contact with the Norwegian environment, the participation at the International Summer School in Oslo and the exchange/mobility scholarships offered me the possibility to come into contact with a solid network of scholars in the field of Scandinavian studies and enrich my research projects as I could consult resources otherwise difficult to access. (respondent 5)

The respondents indicated that the language competence in Norwegian acquired in Cluj-Napoca has given them an advantage when applying for a job in Norway: ["It was easier to get jobs at first since I spoke the language well enough"] or ["The BA programme has been a good foundation for further studies and working

life”]. Nine out of ten respondents agreed that the development of their language competence in Norwegian was an outcome of graduating from the BA programme in Norwegian at BBU: [“The grammar I learned was the basis of everything else I learned language-wise”]. According to two respondents, alumni continued their MA studies in Norway because in Cluj-Napoca no master’s programme in Norwegian was offered: [“I was fully prepared to work as a teacher in Norway from day 1. I started working as a lecturer at UiO after having finished my master’s at UiO”]. This verbatim stands as proof that one respondent succeeded in integrating into Norwegian academic employment.

Despite the limited number of respondents living in Norway, we found positive insights regarding the capacity of our alumni to integrate in Norway after completing a BA programme in Norwegian language and literature:

First of all, the courses ensured the linguistic and cultural background necessary in order to understand and adapt to the Norwegian cultural community. [...] All this background eventually made it easy to integrate into Norwegian society and adapt to its framework without the feeling that I was abandoning my own cultural background. Thus, the BA programme was an excellent tool and helped me contribute in an active way to a successful Norwegian-Romanian cultural dialogue. (respondent 2)

The employers’ perspective is essential in an analysis of alumni’s professional pathway, as it can offer insightful information about alumni’s skills. Hence, our study included feedback from eight institutions and companies that have hired graduates of the BA programme in Norwegian. All the employers that have provided answers have expressed their satisfaction concerning the collaboration with the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature and graduates’ language skills. Some of these opinions are given below in a word-for-word transcript:

For over 20 years, our institution has enjoyed excellent cooperation with the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature. [...] We have always been a strong supporter of the need to train specialists in the Norwegian language, as over the years the demand on the labour market has been growing continuously in Romania. More and more translators and interpreters of the Norwegian language, and other specialists in Norwegian language from higher education are demanded by various state institutions and companies, both in Romania, and from Norway as regards their branches in Romania. Some of the graduates with this specialization have found a position at our institution and will continue to do so. (employer 1)

Our publishing house operates in the Romanian publishing services market and has a valuable collaboration with the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature, the Norwegian Language and Literature specialization, bachelor’s level, within the Faculty of Letters of Babeş-Bolyai University, which allows us to publish translations from Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, and Danish, as well as to edit and publish collective volumes produced within the department. The frequency of publishing literary translations from Scandinavian

languages allowed, in 2015, the establishment of the Nordica collection, coordinated by Professor Sanda Tomescu Baciu, Ph.D. [...] These translations have received financial support by NORLA.³ (employer 2)

The relationship with employers is salient as it brings mutual benefits when establishing a connection with the labour market. Throughout their studies in Norwegian, students can take part in different internship programmes that offer first-hand experience with different jobs connected with Norwegian.

5. Discussion

The first research question intended to investigate the types of career paths taken by alumni after graduation to understand the contexts in which they have used their competence in Norwegian. In this respect, the findings indicate that respondents work in education and research (30 respondents), IT and support (15 respondents), translation and proofreading (11 respondents), customer service (9 respondents), human resources (7 respondents), accounting, finance and banking (6 respondents), media and communication, business and consulting, industry, management, data collection and statistics, publishing, arts, government administration, and international relations (45 respondents). Data gathered suggest that alumni with academic degrees in Norwegian languages and literature have taken diverse career paths.

The second research question targeted the alumni's level of satisfaction with their academic preparation. Findings indicate that 48.8% of the respondents consider their jobs to be related to the skills developed throughout their undergraduate studies in Norwegian. Furthermore, 52.9% of the respondents agree that the undergraduate programme has prepared them for their current job. In addition, 37.4% of them conclude that they use Norwegian regularly in their daily lives.

The third research question focused on the alumni's level of motivation to study Norwegian. The analysis of the motivation to study Norwegian has revealed that 56.9% of the alumni chose Norwegian because they were seeking better-paid jobs. As integrative motivation is concerned, 83% of the respondents agreed that the study of Norwegian offers better career prospects, while more than 45% agreed that they studied Norwegian due to Norway's international role in a globalized world. For 91.9% of the respondents motivation to study Norwegian was primarily linked to professional reasons. Moreover, the employers' perspective is part of the quality assessment of the BA programme in Norwegian. Employers were asked to provide feedback after hiring graduates, but also to evaluate their cooperation with the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literature. Their responses were

³ Both transcripts were translated from Romanian by the authors.

positive and all considered the BA programme in Norwegian to be highly valuable for their organisations and the local and national economic environment.

Because the BA programme is the only one accredited in this subject at the national level in Romania, the authors considered they had the responsibility to undergo a quality assurance evaluation of the programme, in addition to the one performed by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS).

Limitations

This study is subject to several methodological limitations. The researchers had a dual role as both educators within the undergraduate programme in Norwegian and as investigators of the same educational context. This dual role may have introduced also a degree of subjectivity as all researchers involved have a close connection to the undergraduate programme in Norwegian. Although the number of responses from alumni currently living in Norway was limited (i.e. 10), the data still provide meaningful insights into their experiences following graduation. The findings indicate that graduates of the BA programme in Norwegian Language and Literature at BBU demonstrate a significant ability to integrate socially and culturally within Norwegian society. This outcome likely reflects the programme's success in providing students with linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. Additionally, scholarship opportunities in Norway, such as those funded by Erasmus+, EEA, Norway Grants, and Hk-dir, as well as scholarships for summer courses at Norwegian universities, played an important role in facilitating alumni's first contact with the Norwegian cultural environment.

6. Conclusions

The qualitative and quantitative research conducted focuses on the academic and professional development of alumni who graduated between 2000 and 2019 with a degree in Norwegian Language and Literature from Babeş-Bolyai University. The study examines their career paths, levels of motivation, and satisfaction with the academic preparation they received during their undergraduate studies. A total of 87% of the 123 alumni were employed at the time the research was conducted. Consequently, 52.9% of the respondents attribute their accomplishment to their graduation from the BA programme in Norwegian. The data reveal that 37.4% of them use Norwegian in their jobs. In addition, 65.2% of the respondents chose to continue their academic development by enrolling in different master's degree programmes. At the same time, 71.5% would have considered enrolling in a master's programme in Norwegian language and literature if one had been available at BBU. Based on students' interest in enrolling in a master's degree, the Department

of Scandinavian Languages and Literature was granted in 2024 the possibility to begin a master's programme accredited nationally.

From our findings, we underline that even if Norwegian is perceived as a relatively rare language in Romania, alumni found various job opportunities with Norwegian in international corporations, IT and support, literary and non-literary translation, proofreading in publishing houses, education and research, and government. The findings targeting alumni living in Romania indicate that 78.9% of the respondents declared themselves satisfied with the career paths they have chosen. A similar pattern can be seen in the case of alumni working in Norway, where nine out of ten reported a high or very high degree of preparedness for and satisfaction in their positions in Norway.

Authors' note: All authors contributed equally to writing this paper.

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