



ELTE | PPK
PEDAGÓGIAI ÉS PSZICHOLÓGIAI KAR

DOCTORAL (PHD) THESIS

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**Examination of organizational learning processes in
higher education induced by joint degree programs
implemented in international cooperation**

Theses of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation

DOI number: 10.15476/ELTE.2022.176

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Budapest, 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

The complex world of higher education systems, in particular the internationalisation of higher education, is also receiving increasing attention in the world of both practitioners and research communities. Internationalisation is one of the priority areas of Hungarian and international higher education policy, supported by policy interventions and financial resources, thus the European dimension cannot be ignored when exploring a research-like nature (Halász, 2012; Kovács et al., 2015). The processes and activities linked to the Bologna reform are one of the important areas of internationalisation that can be observed in the Member States of the European Union. For example, international joint masters programmes play a key role in achieving the objectives of the reform, including incentives for cross-border cooperation and for student/teaching mobility (Aerden & Braathen, 2011).

International joint degree programmes, which are largely understood at the master level in the EU's professional discourses, are referred not only to the Bologna process, but also in the Sorbonne Declaration, which can be regarded triggering factor that supports the harmonisation and alignment of the European higher education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015; Varga, 2014). The important role of joint degree in internationalisation processes at the EU level is underpinned by the operation of the Erasmus Mundus programme, which underlines the creation of joint degree with (Knight, 2008) uniquely complex strategic goals and funding. The present doctoral thesis is therefore intended to be examined in the context of centrally funded international joint master programmes belonging to Erasmus Mundus and EIT in the European Union.

Joint degree programmes are not only the custodian of achieving policy objectives but also a means of learning for individuals and institutions participating in those programmes. Nonetheless, empirical studies on the outputs, results and impacts of joint degree programmes, including surveys focusing on the Erasmus Mundus programme, focus predominantly on the individual experiences of students and staff involved in the programmes (European Commission, 2014, 2019, 2021; EACEA, 2020). As a result, much less scientific attention is devoted to the examination of joint degree programmes at organisational level, which tend to approach the topic from the perspective of internationalisation. In addition, the implementation of the joint degree programmes at the institutional level was researched mainly by quantitative methodology, with the

intention of presenting the general trends of the programmes, but studies that focus on the uniqueness of the experiences and the different contextual factors, which give special attention to qualitative deep drilling, can only be found sporadically among empirical research, which is discussed in detail in the rest of the dissertation. Finally, it is also important to mention that empirical research inspired by organisation theory is completely lacking in the context of EU-funded joint master programmes.

Identifying the research gap described this far, the aim of this research is to offer an in-depth exploration of the organisational learning processes induced by joint master programs implemented in international cooperation following the application of the case study research strategy. During the research, our goal (1) is to identify and characterise the organizational knowledge types acquired throughout the programme development and implementation phases; (2) a detailed description of the process character of organisational learning; and (3) qualitatively oriented presentation and analysis of structural elements and organisational learning mechanisms supporting the implementation of learning at organizational level. In addition, through the multi-case, embedded case study implemented within the framework of the research (Yin, 2018), the aim of the dissertation is to identify the elements of the system environment of organizational learning that can have a significant impact on the learning processes related to the joint master's programmes in the context of the examined cases.

2. CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

When examining the international processes of higher education institutions, we can approach the topic from several perspectives: one direction is the concept of cross-border education, where the focus is on cross-border cooperation and mobility of persons, programmes, and institutions, thus encompassing outward-oriented activities (de Wit et al., 2015; Knight, 2003, 2004). On the other hand, the expansion of the education and research activities of higher education institutions with an international, intercultural dimension presupposes an inward-oriented development ('internationalisation at home') (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Leask, 2015). These two concepts cannot be clearly separated from each other, as both can be interpreted as a subset of the overall concept of internationalisation (Knight, 2012; Tham & Kam, 2008). Hence, we undertake to present these concepts briefly in the following way. This may also be linked to the approach of

internationalisation at a distance. The internationalisation at a distance concept introduced by Ramanau (2016) aims to complement the previously presented internationalisation approaches. According to Mittelmeier and colleagues (2021), this includes “all forms of cross-border education where students, faculty and administrative staff are geographically separated from each other, and their collaboration is supported by technology” (4). The above-noted approaches outline that the internationalisation of higher education involves a number of interrelated processes, practices, and directives, which should be applied in a complex and mutually supportive way. A summary of the approaches presented so far is presented below (Figure 1).

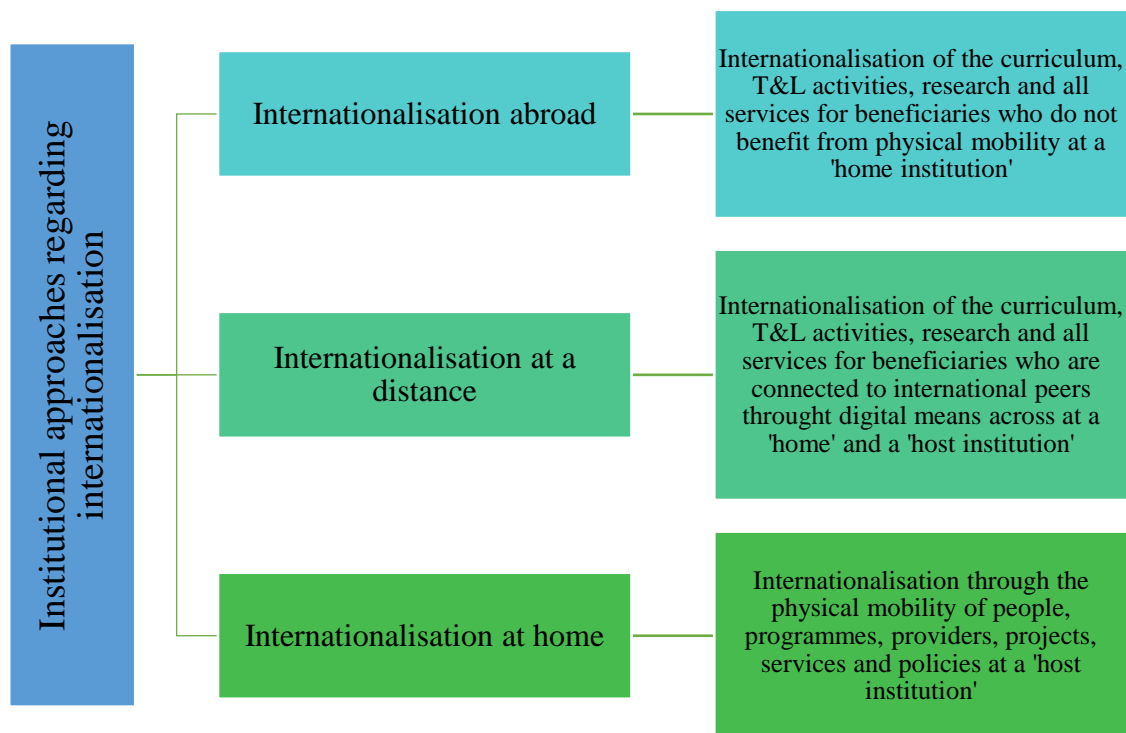


Figure 1 – Main approaches to internationalisation of higher education institutions (based on Knight, 2003, Leask, 2004 and Mittelmeier et al., 2020)

The summary also highlights the importance of applying integrative approaches to internationalisation at institutional level, also represented by the concept of Comprehensive Internationalisation (Hudzik, 2011), which ensures that the diverse internationalisation agendas, processes and activities of higher education institutions are interlinked and interpreted as an integrated system. The Comprehensive Internationalisation approach, published in the 2010s, may be linked to Hudzik (2011), according to which internationalisation is a “commitment whereby an international and comprehensive approach permeates the educational, academic, research and service

activities of the higher education institution and the related objectives are expressed in institutional activities” (Hudzik, 2011, 6.). The approach was developed as a response to criticism of internationalisation that drew attention to the fragmentation of internationalisation at institutional level and called for a comprehensive approach (Kasza, 2020). Comprehensive internationalisation thus interprets internationalisation at organisational level as a comprehensive and comprehensive process in all the processes and activities of the institution, as a result of which the international commitment and character of the institution is strengthened (Hudzik, 2011).

The categorisations described above refer to several forms of activity that can help to realise internationalisation, including international joint degree programmes that concern the foci of research. Joint degree programmes were launched in the mid-to-end 1970s on the European higher education scene to help overcome the many obstacles to student mobility and to support the coordination of training programmes between higher education institutions operating between different national regulatory systems. In our research, joint degree in international cooperation means training created and implemented by accredited higher education institutions from two or more partner countries, which is carried out in the framework of consortium cooperation, involves integrated curricula and possible research activities, and which plays a central role in the mutual recognition of the credits obtained by the students. Another important element of the programs concerns student and teaching mobility. Students usually study in two or more partner institutions, and then, upon successful completion of the program, they receive a joint or double degree or diploma supplement (Banks et al., 2011; Braathen et al., 2010; Knight, 2003, 2008, 2011, 2012b, 2015a, 2015b; Michael & Balraj, 2003; Nickel et al., 2009).

The introduction of joint degree programmes has clear benefits for implementing institutions in strategic, structural, and operational terms, as they provide capacity building, support for the internationalisation agenda, the strengthening of educational and research mobility trends and the possibility of making better use of ICT (Asgary & Robbert, 2010; Knight, 2008; Knight, 2011). They also make it possible to attract external investors in the case of highly market-oriented or actively cooperating with companies, as well as to attract certain under-represented groups (Asgary & Robbert, 2010). In addition, some institutions see programmes as a catalyst for their own organisational learning, such as access to expertise at partner universities, innovation in curriculum and

harmonising different professional-methodological approaches (Hénard et al., 2012; Knight, 2008). Finally, according to a synthesised study by Holstein (2012), the results achieved are closely linked to institution-specific objectives, but despite the differences, the institutions generally regard double or joint degree programmes as an effective means of promoting quality.

Joint degree programmes implemented in international cooperation can be interpreted differently from the perspective of cross-border internationalisation abroad, but also from an inward-oriented approach to internationalisation of the Hungarian institution. The first approach is that the flagships of the expansion of certain higher education institutions to other countries can be seen as mediators of joint degree programmes, such as existing courses and curricula to other institutions, usually accompanied by outward student and teacher mobility (Knight, 2003b; OECD 2004; de Wit et al, 2015). Using the latter institutional approach, joint degree courses can be interpreted as forms of training that encourage the competitiveness of a higher education institution and increase the attractiveness of a higher education institution, which help to broaden its own training range of institutions implementing a common training programme, to develop the institutions' internal curricula and to strengthen their incoming mobility rates, and which in many cases is also combined with incoming mobility (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Leask, 2015).

It became apparent from the literature review that international joint degree programmes, in particular the Erasmus Mundus and EIT Joint Masters programmes, have a special place among initiatives (Hudzik, 2011) supporting the competitive internationalisation of higher education institutions, as they combine in a specific way the specificities of international partnership cooperation and the efforts to internationalise the curriculum with traditional student and teaching mobility programmes (Erdei et al., 2018; Varga, 2014). At the same time, they provide room for the institutions participating in the programme to assess their own learning-teaching practices and strategies, modify their own operations in order to implement the programmes effectively — thus implementing single and two-loop learning processes (Argyris & Schön, 1978) — and initiate new developments through cross-institutional partnerships (Erdei, 2018). Joint Master's programmes in international space therefore contribute to the development of higher education institutions, strengthening their renewables and competitiveness through their

involvement in their organisational learning processes (Berács, 2012; Hrubos, 2014; Vera et al., 2011).

The development and implementation of international joint master programmes, including Erasmus Mundus and EIT initiatives, can therefore be interpreted as an incentive for organisational learning processes (Amaral and Frazao, 2016), whose exploration based on an organisation-theoretical approach can add new perspectives to professional discourses on the organisational added value and effectiveness of joint degrees. The present empirical research relies on the above-noted context.

In the specific institutional system of higher education, in the organizational learning processes induced by internationalisation efforts, the organizational knowledge acquisition process is realised, organizational knowledge is created or adapted (Bakacsi, 2021; Czakó, 2011; Davenport & Prusak, 2001; Faust, 2004; Hrabovski, 2009; Málóvics and Mihály, 2005; Nonaka, 2000; Polanyi, 1967). It can be interpreted as both the input factor of organizational knowledge, the catalyst and the output of the organizational learning process in relation to the organizational learning process (Argyris and Schön, 1994; Bakachi & Gelei, 1999; Bakacsi, 2010; Easterby, 2000; Gelei, 2002; Kezar, 2005; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2000), which are being investigated in the framework of this research in the specific organisational context of higher education institutions (Horváth, 2017; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017).

Thus, in the framework of the interpretation of the internationalisation of higher education institutions, organizational learning is defined as a process that can be interpreted as a cognitive and behavioural change at several levels through the members of the organisation, in which the acquisition and creation, sharing, interpretation and adaptation of organizational knowledge, as well as the recording, storage and development of organizational knowledge in organisational memory are carried out through organisational learning mechanisms in the specific external and internal environments of higher education institutions (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Atarchi & Schechter, 2014; Branyiczki, 1993; Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Friedman, 2002; Gephart & Marsick, 2016; Huber, 1991; King, 2009; Lipshitz et al., 2007; Tsai, 2001).

Based on these theoretical considerations, the aim of this research is to explore the types of organizational knowledge that can be identified in the examined higher

education institutions in connection with the development and implementation of international joint master programs, (Bokor, 2000; Málovics & Mihályi, 2005; Polányi, 1966) what characterises organizational learning processes related to joint degree programmes (Huber, 1991) and what specific organisational learning mechanisms support the identified processes (Friedman et al., 2009; Lipshitz et al., 2002, 2007; Popper & Lipshitz, 1998, 2000). In addition, we focus on the factors of the system environment influencing the organizational learning process in research (Horváth, 2019). In addition to that, we aim to identify adaptable good practices, which, in addition to contributing to the scientific thinking concerning the topic, will be one of the most important depositories of the practical exploitation of the results.

As part of the testing framework, Bibi and his colleagues will first rely on the organisational knowledge dimensions and the adapted version of Bokor's (2000) organizational knowledge model. In this sense, we distinguish the types of knowledge based on their orientation, thus we focus on the functional types of knowledge related to the specific tasks, and on the knowledge of the operation of the systems integrating the types of organizational knowledge operating at the functional level. When identifying the levels of organizational knowledge, we linked the knowledge dimension defined by Bibi and his associates (2020) to Bokor's (2000) model. We underline the importance of distinguishing between tacit and explicit types of knowledge, which is in line with Polányi (1966) that also highlights the way how the different organizational knowledge types can be articulated, but in view of the difficulties of grasping tacit knowledge and the limitations of the data collection methodology chosen, the systematic analysis of the results from this point of view is disregarded within the framework of the present research.

Building on the Huber model of organizational learning, (Huber, 1991), we distinguish the four basic processes and elements of organizational learning, such as knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, interpreting, and adapting knowledge, and storing knowledge in organizational memory. This is understood as a cyclical process in research, where each step of the process interacts with organizational knowledge, which is both a driving force and a result of the learning process.

Organisational learning processes are supported in the approach of Popper and Lipshitz (1998), also called the Organizational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs), which “work as observable organisational sub-systems, in which organisational members

interact with each other for learning” (Lipshitz et al., 2002, p. 82). Organizational learning mechanisms are therefore structural processes, which act as a social space and give the organisation members the opportunity to create, share, adapt, record and store knowledge (Dakyan, 2017). Four types of organizational learning support mechanisms are Lipshitz et al. (2007) distinguished according to who participates in the learning process (internal and external OLMs) and when and where they are implemented in the analytical framework (online and aonline OLMs).

Finally, interpreting the organizational learning process in the specific system environment of higher education institutions, we build on the system model of Gephart and Marsick (2016) strategic organizational learning. The model includes organizational system factors that determine the organisation’s functioning in the external or internal environment of the organisation. Transformation factors include leadership, mission and vision, organizational culture and strategy, and external environmental elements, while transactional factors include management methods and tools, organizational structure and climate, and systems and regulations (Horváth, 2019).

By combining the above approaches, we created the following analytical framework in the framework of the present doctoral research that supported us in processing, coding and interpreting the research results (Figure 2).

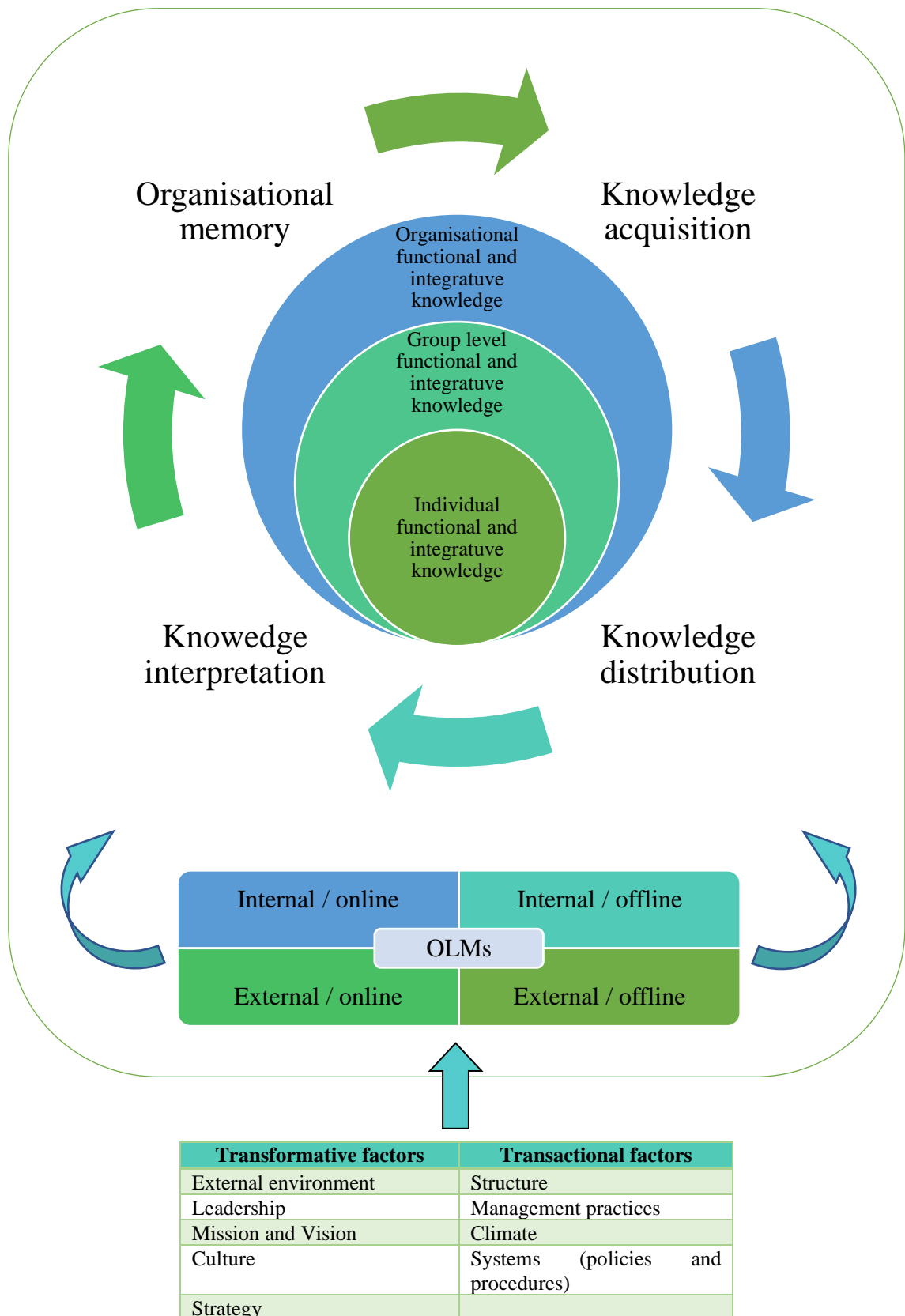


Figure 2 — Research analysis framework (own source)

3. RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE

Concerning the previously described goals of the empirical research on which the doctoral thesis is based, we formed the following research questions that are closely related and hierarchically structured, to which we intend to answer with the help of the chosen qualitative research methods.

RQ1. What types of organisational knowledge can we identify in the context of joint degree programmes?

RQ1.1. What characterises the organizational knowledge types identified according to its content?

RQ1.2. At what levels can the identified organisational knowledge types be interpreted?

RQ1.3. What characterises the identified organizational knowledge types according to its orientation?

RQ2. How does the organisational learning process related to joint degrees take place in the institutions examined?

RQ2.1. How can the process of acquiring knowledge related to joint degrees be characterised in the institutions examined?

RQ2.2. Through what processes did the sharing of organizational knowledge related to the joint degree programmes take place in the examined institutions?

RQ2.3. In what processes was the interpretation and adaptation of organizational knowledge realised in relation to the joint degree programmes in the examined institutions?

RQ2.4. How and in what form is the organizational knowledge connected to the joint degree courses recorded and stored in the organisational memory in the examined institutions?

RQ3. How can organisational learning mechanisms related to joint degree programmes be characterised in the institutions examined?

RQ4. What factors influence the organisational learning processes related to joint degree in the institutions examined?

RQ4.1. How do the identified factors influence the overall organisational learning processes, including the development of knowledge types and mechanisms?

We used an inductive, exploratory research strategy (Falus et al., 2011). In the multiple, embedded case study, we interpreted each joint degree programme and the organisational learning processes induced by the selected institutions in their own context. In the research, we examined the selected cases using a semi-structured interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and the document analysis methods (Szabó-Thalmeiner, 2015). The requirements for international comparative case studies are applied in the research (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016).

In our qualitative study, carried out in 2022, we implemented a multi-stage sampling method, the first step of which was convenient sampling and then expert sampling. Hence, we started our empirical data collection within the framework of the CHARM European University Association. The partners of the CHARM-EU Association, which began its work in 2019, included Utrecht University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Montpellier, and Eötvös Loránd University, while the Association is coordinated and managed by the University of Barcelona. This partner university association served as a sampling framework, from which, as the second step in multi-stage sampling, we selected by expert sampling 1-1 international joint master's programmes which, in accordance with the previously established definition, were developed in cooperation with at least two international partner institutions and, as a result of the syndicated operation, jointly developed and integrated curriculum, built-in mobility paths, automatic credit recognition, and resulting in joint or double diploma or diploma annexes (Aerden et al., 2010; Knight, 2008; Knight, 2011; Michael & Balraj, 2003; Nickel et al., 2009; Obst et al., 2011). As a result, we continued our study in the context of the following four programmes, involving a total of 34 people (Table 1).

Features	TEMA+	CEMACUBE	GLOCAL	RADMEP
Start date of programme-aimed cooperation	2005	2009	2015	2019
Factors inducing the programmes	Long-lasting partnerships, co-tutelle doctoral education	Cooperation through networks	Cooperation through networks	Joint research and doctoral education programme
Program focus	Cultural Heritage Studies	Biomedical technologies	Global economic sciences	Microelectronic and photonic technologies

Number of implementing partners	5	5	7	4
Partner involved in the sample	Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)	Trinity College Dublin (TCD)	University of Barcelona (UB)	University of Montpellier (UM)
Country of institution	Hungary	Ireland	Spain	France
Funding scheme	Erasmus Mundus	EIT Masters	Erasmus Mundus	Erasmus Mundus
Number of interviews carried out	8	8	12	6

Table 1 – Presentation of the cases included in the sample of the research (own study)

As a result of the empirical data collection, we built on the well-founded theoretical approach (GTA) using Strauss and Corbin (1990) encoding system, which was based on the design of deductive codes, the linking of inductive codes, and the thematic systemisation of codes. In order to strengthen the internal validity of the methodology, we implemented intra-coding process of two rounds, and instead of quantification, we used binary designations for each code. As part of the intra-coding process, the texts were coded twice (Dafinoiu & Lungu, 2003), thus strengthening the internal validation of the results (Yin, 2018).

4. FINDINGS

Within the framework of the research, we could get a picture of the organizational learning induced by the joint master programmes implemented in international cooperation in terms of its (1) content, (2) process, (3) structure and (4) systemic character, for which we briefly summarise the main results and conclusions.

4.1. Organisational knowledge

As a result of the data analysis, we identified the following thematic groups of organisational knowledge acquired through or as a result of the implementation of joint degree programs:

1. Education, supervision, professional development
2. Research and development
3. Operative management and administration
4. Organisational structure and leadership methods
5. Strategy and organizational culture

Below we present the results of each thematic code group and compare them with previous research results. The top-right, blue circular articles of the following diagrams indicate the individual, the lower, turquoise circulars of the group, while the upper and green circulars on the left indicate the organizational knowledge types. In addition, we paid attention to discrimination in relation to the orientation of knowledge: within each circular, we always started the list with the functional knowledge elements.

One of the core elements of international joint degree programmes is the work at consortium level on the mutual understanding and coordination of curricula content, methodological and pedagogical approaches linked to joint curricula development. The research results are essentially in line with the results of empirical research on the subject: as a result of the joint degree programmes, we can identify the development of the specialised language skills of those involved in the programmes and the enrichment of the teaching and evaluation methodology repertoire (American Council of Education, 2014; European Commission, 2019). The joint degree programmes also enriched the pedagogical approaches of trainers in the programme, which can be achieved mainly as a result of the strengthening of the learner-centred approach as a result of the in-organisation and inter-organisational learning processes within the organisation (European Commission, 2021) The examined institutions are able to effectively develop their peer-to-peer management and thesis systems within the programmes, at group level (European Commission, 2021), but these innovations have not been able to penetrate into more remote units of organisations.

In the course of the research, we can identify as a new result that the involvement of students in the organizational functioning of the programs is realised, and the teaching groups are also starting to function as a community of practice, which can embed organizational learning processes through effective, mutually supportive teacher collaborations. The enrichment of knowledge and practices related to the internationalisation of the curriculum in connection with the educational activities of the joint degree (Crăciun & Russian, 2018). However, the novelty of the results of our research is that, as a result of the operation of the joint degree programmes, the development of the wide-ranging student community also appeared among the common organizational knowledge and goals, which contributes to the internationalisation of the Hungarian institution and to the international experience of non-mobile students and lecturers (Leask, 2015) (Figure 2).

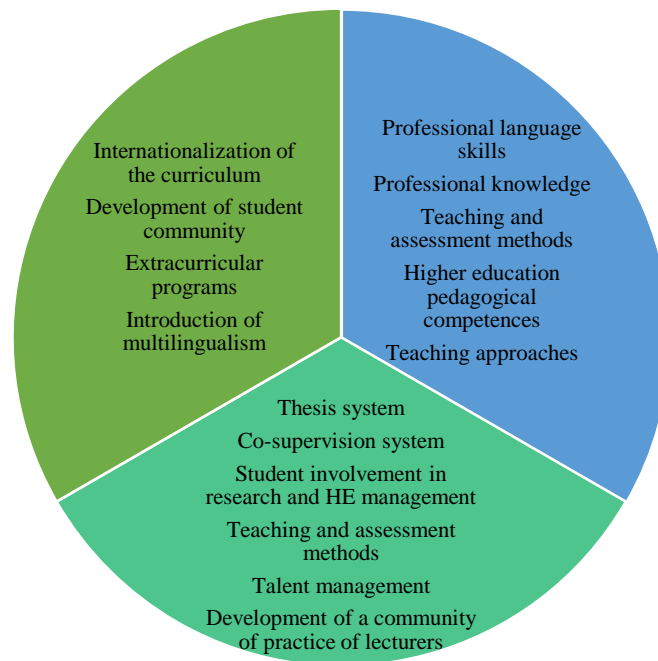


Figure 2 - Characterisation of identified knowledge types by first theme group (own source)

The second category of organisational knowledge types is the results of the research and development themes, which show that joint degree can stimulate learning processes that go well beyond the individual results of the programmes (Erdei et al., 2018).

The development of research partnerships and the planning of joint research projects may be launched in connection with joint degree programmes (Clark & Lowe, 2008). Whereas the development of curricula with a common approach is a basic requirement for the programmes examined, so the implementation of curricular development within the programme is not surprising (European Commission, 2019; Blakemore et al., 2012), however, as a new result, we can identify that participation in joint degree programmes can encourage the development of new programmes, curricula development of existing programmes beyond the higher education programme and help to adapt good practices of joint degree programmes across programmes. As a result, the international dimension of the Hungarian institution is being developed again (Leask, 2015), but a new range of training innovations will be created beyond that, which are characterised by the cross-disciplinary boundaries (Figure 3).

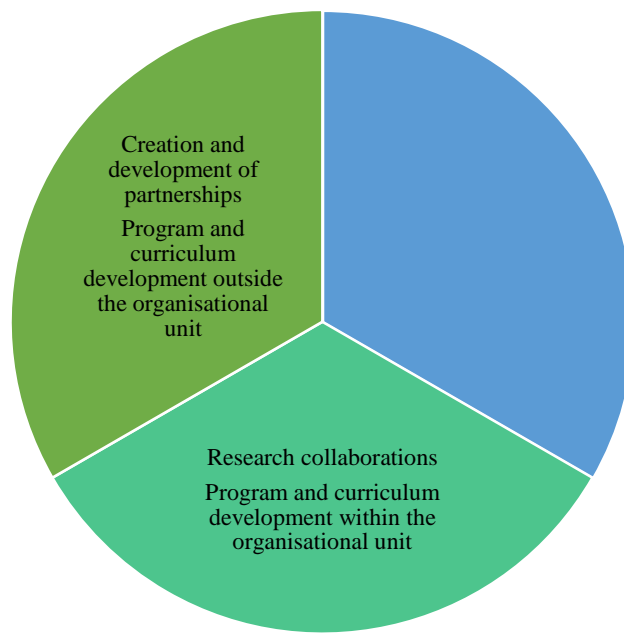


Figure 3 - Characterisation of identified knowledge types by second theme group (own source)

The third thematic focus could be defined in terms of operational operation and administration. Rethinking and developing admission systems within joint degree programmes is an important area of organisational learning (Prideaux et al., 2000, European Commission, 2021). Higher education institutions have also gained (group) knowledge on the management and support of training programmes (Lane & Kinser, 2014). However, the results of this research, which can be considered very interesting and novel, have been achieved in relation to the organisational level and the knowledge elements related to the integration of processes; as a result of the joint degree programmes, the organisation has extensive knowledge of the overall functioning of the organisation. This means that the institutions examined try not only to correct their behaviour in relation to the problems and tasks to be solved in the broader organisational context of joint degrees, but also to analyse, raise awareness and even modify the causes arising from the deep layers of their operation. This organisational reflection process, in which the knowledge of the organisation's functioning (cognitive component) is accompanied by the active process of change (behavioural component) and the underlying causes are modified, can be considered as double-loop organizational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Customs, 2020) (Figure 4).

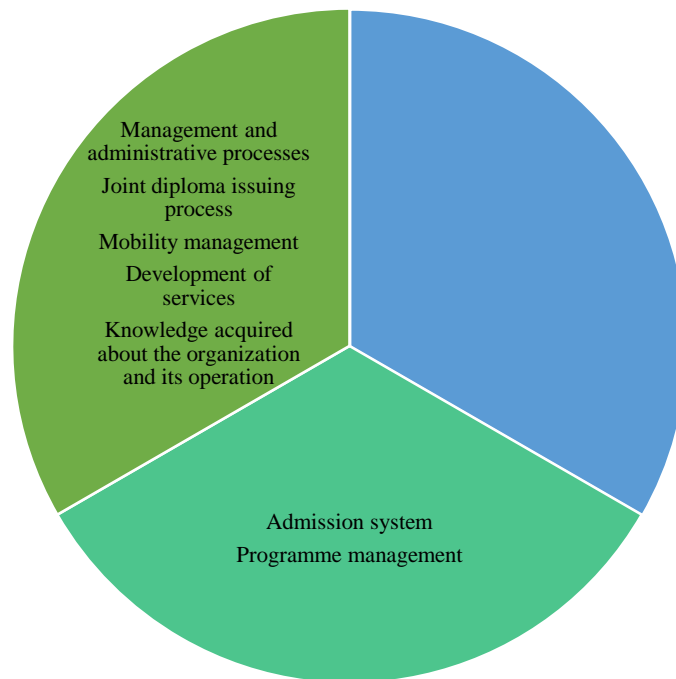


Figure 4 - Characterisation of identified knowledge types by third theme group (own source)

The scope of knowledge types at organisation level is enhanced by elements of the fourth thematic category on organisational structure and leadership methods. As a result of the joint degree programmes, the capacities of the HEIs examined will be enriched and changes will be made to the organisational structure at least for the project period to ensure the effective implementation of joint degree programmes, e.g. by setting up a project office with a project manager (Crăciun & Orosz, 2018; Karvounaraki et al., 2018). Joint degree programmes also support and inspire organisations' international experience (European Commission, 2013) and develop the organisation's proactive problem-solving approach (Jose, 2019) (Figure 5).

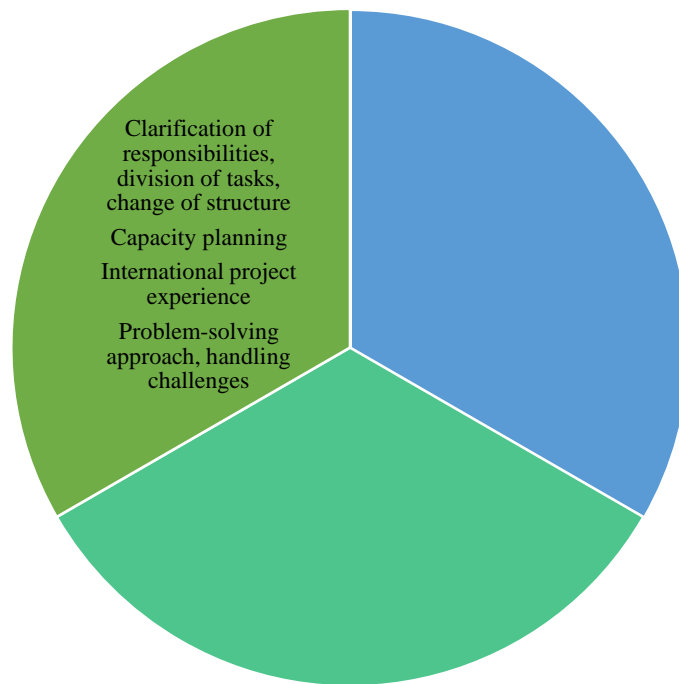


Figure 5 - Characterisation of identified knowledge types by fourth theme group (own source)

Finally, with regard to the types of organisational knowledge, we were able to achieve relevant results in relation to organisational strategy and organisational culture in the context of joint degree programmes. Progress on intercultural awareness at group level was reported (European Commission, 2013; 2018), while results at organisation level demonstrated the existence of efficient and effective cooperation methods and strategies, both within and between organisations, thanks to joint degree programmes (Clark and Lowe, 2008). As the Erasmus Mundus programme can be interpreted as a tool for coordinating, ensuring the permeability and convergence of higher education institutions in the EU (Varga, 2014), it is not surprising that, at the organisational level of HEIs, the higher education sector in other EU Member States should be explored, interconnected and feedback on further developments. The implementation of joint degree programmes also supports the aforementioned double-loop organisational learning processes by fundamentally influencing organisational thinking on internationalisation, strategies and the world of learning-teaching and encouraging them to change and launch development initiatives (Argyris and Schön, 1978) (Figure 5).

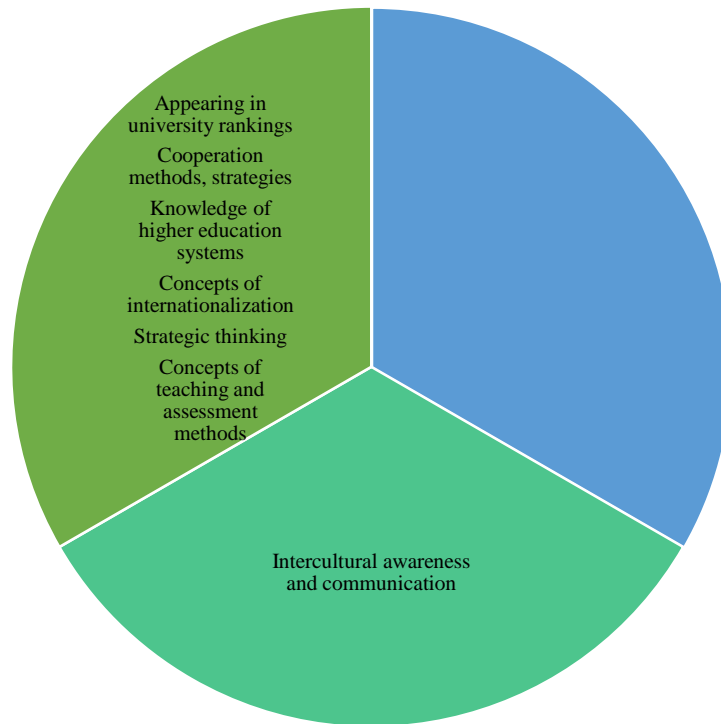


Figure 1 - Characterisation of identified knowledge types by fifth theme group (own source)

4.2. Organisational learning process

The knowledge repository of higher education institutions involved in our research is increased in many respects, levels and forms by international joint degree programmes, so on the basis of our research we can conclude that the programmes can be considered effective not only through the prism of individual (student and teaching) results, even if the empirical surveys so far were typically related to this (European Commission, 2013; 2016; 2018; 2019). Based on the results of our research, joint degree programmes create relevant added value for higher education institutions by increasing knowledge at the organizational level and their involvement in the processes determining the behaviour of organisations. This added value can be called organizational learning based on the analysis of the results of the research and in line with the literature, as it can be interpreted as a combination of many cognitive and behavioural change processes induced by the development and implementation of international joint master's programmes (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bakacsi et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2011; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Gephart & Marsick, 2016; Huber, 1991; Lipshitz et al., 2007).

Following the Huber model of the organizational learning process, we distinguished the sub-processes of knowledge acquisition and creation, knowledge sharing, interpretation and adaptation of knowledge and storage in and out of organizational memory, which we could identify in connection with the joint degree programmes for all the higher education institutions studied (1991).

During the acquisition and creation of organizational knowledge, organisations learn from a number of sources following the Huber (1991) categorisation of the examined higher education institutions, such as the results of previous joint degree experiences, student needs analysis, training development experience of the participants of the program, building on the individual network connections of its staff, involving the expertise of colleagues working in different organisational units, the different approaches of consortium members, as well as through students gaining admission to the program.

In connection with the sharing of organizational knowledge, in our research we developed our own category system, so we characterised the common training programs along the circle of participants in the knowledge sharing processes, the one- or two-way operation, regularity, content and formalisation of the processes. The instructors, programme managers and project managers of the programmes can be regarded as the main drivers of knowledge sharing processes, who regularly and mutually, with non-programme actors, usually carry out knowledge sharing activities on specific issues only on a case-by-case basis. In relation to the programmes, it is characterised by the daily sharing of knowledge between horizontal departments directly involved in the programme and actively supporting their support, while in the vertical dimension of the organisation (between different hierarchical levels) the institutions examined are characterised by occasional knowledge sharing linked to reporting. The organisational learning processes examined for joint degrees are also characterised by the predominance of informal, routine knowledge-sharing processes and the lack of codified and formalised procedures. Finally, in terms of content focus, organisational knowledge sharing processes are implemented in relation to both the start-up and content of the training programmes, the integration into the organisation's training portfolio, the operational operation of the programmes, student services and the connection to organisational strategies.

Interpreting and adapting organizational knowledge in the dimensions (Huber, 1991) we obtained less data as a result of our data collection, however, based on the data,

we can conclude that adaptation by the examined organisations is usually the result of unconscious processes, comprehensive institutional incentives or strategies do not support the adaptation process and there is insufficient resources available to the investigated institutions to systematically channel them back into organisational operations. The interpretation of organizational knowledge in the light of our results is implemented mainly through bottom-up initiatives within the framework of the institutions, and the management of organisations at the meso and macro level is only occasionally involved. Interpreting and adapting knowledge in terms of content focuses on colouring the training portfolio, developing learning-teaching practices, and enriching the organizational operation outside the programme with the experience of the joint degree programmes in the institutions examined.

Recording, storing and developing organizational knowledge can be regarded as the last subprocess of organizational learning processes, which, however, can serve as the basis for a new learning cycle in view of the cyclical nature of the learning process (Huber, 1991). The examined higher education institutions are characterised by a systemic lack of conscious processes for the recording of organizational knowledge in relation to the learning processes related to joint degree programmes. The storage of knowledge generated within the common training programmes and their access to other departments are not ensured by organisations in a systematic manner, so the recording and storage of accumulated knowledge remains entirely individual, which can be identified as a clear threat to organizational learning. Project reports and programme evaluations related to joint degree programmes can be considered as the main catalyst to stimulate the recording of organizational knowledge. The knowledge elements that have been recorded in the organisation through joint degree programmes can be invoked mainly through informal contacts (Figure 6).

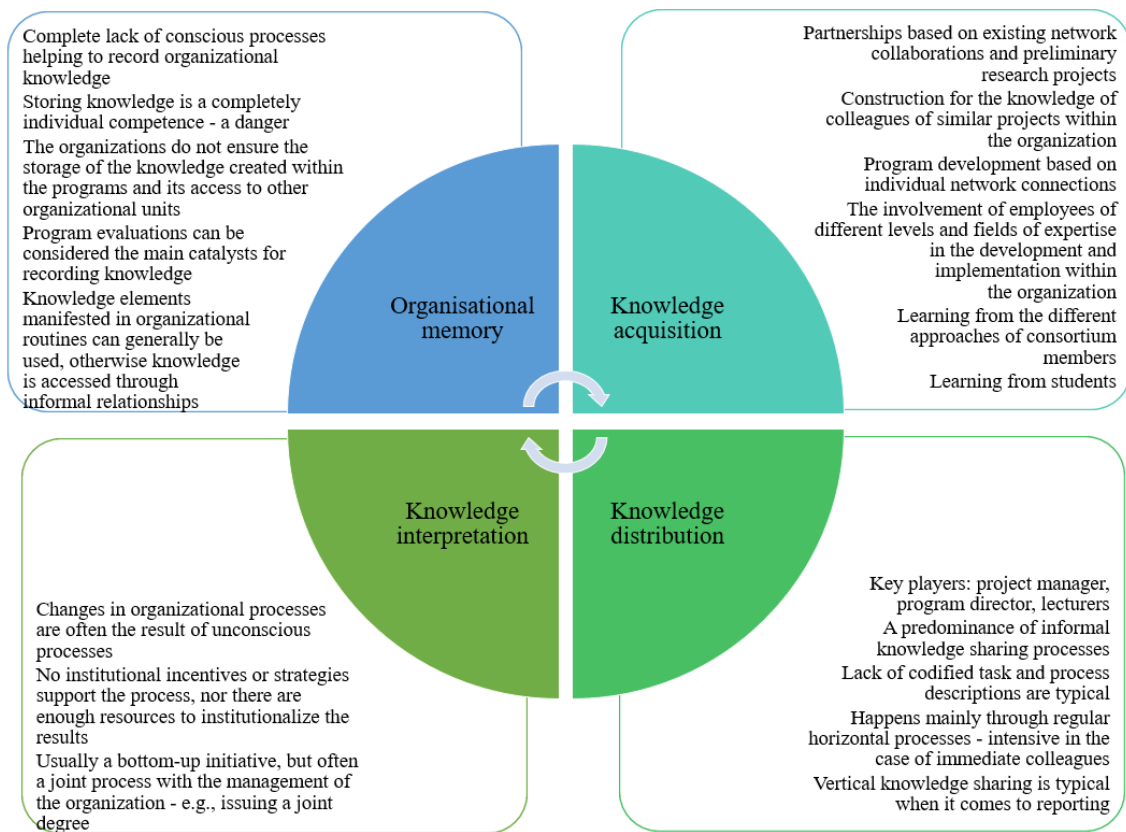


Figure 2 - Characterisation of identified organizational learning processes (own source)

4.3. Organisational learning mechanisms

Based on the empirical survey of the research, we were able to identify a number of interconnected organizational learning mechanisms (OLMs), which, based on Lipshitz and his colleagues (2007), are defined as constructs that help to explore the structural dimension of organizational learning, which were identified in the matrix of two dimensions of learning facilitator and synchronisation (Figure 8).

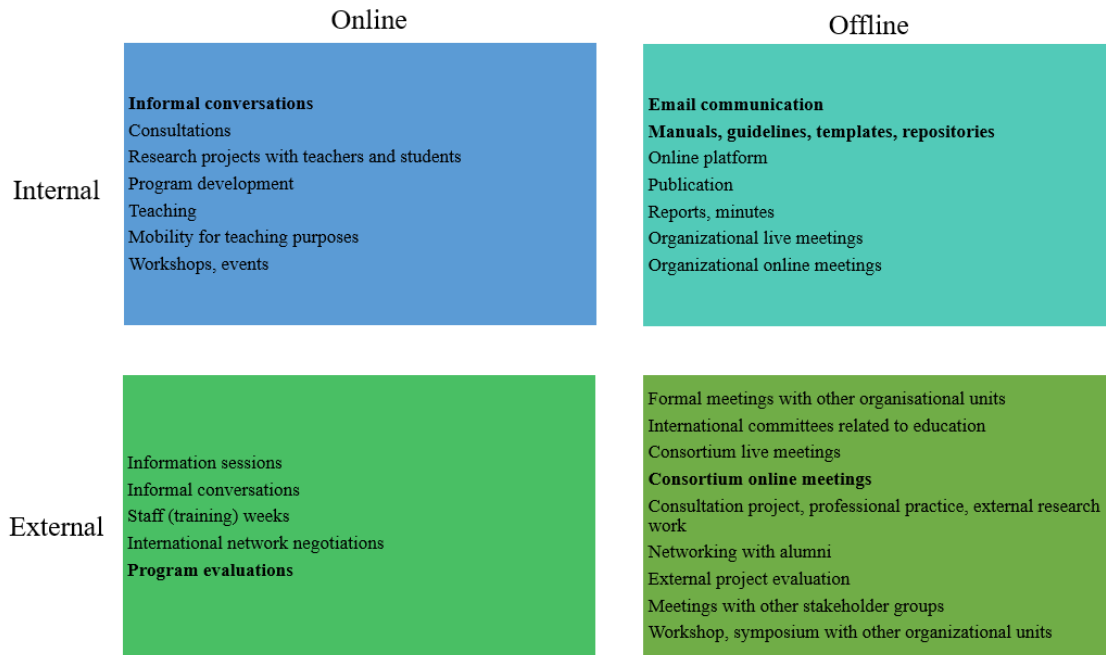


Figure 8 — Summary of outcomes on organisational learning mechanisms (own source)

When examining organizational learning mechanisms in connection with joint degree programmes, we can rely significantly on the results of previous empirical research in addition to the literature providing a theoretical category system. In line with the results of our research, informal discussions, meeting within the organisation and workshops and events as internal, online (integrated according to the early category system) OLMs are of great importance (Dakyen, 2017). An important type of organizational learning mechanisms was provided by internal, offline OLMs (based on post-action reflections) which were implemented in the vast majority of reporting periods (Lipshitz et al., 2017), on the one hand, with the help of emails, guidelines, and procedural descriptions after the completion of the activities carried out within the programmes.

External, online OLMs generally represented learning processes facilitated by staff in the organisation’s wider internal and external environment in our research, such as information sessions and international network discussions as a way of learning for organisations (Dakyen, 2017). Finally, the facilitator-driven external, offline mechanisms in which consortium members or external evaluators (e.g. European Commission evaluators) support the learning of the organisation with their feedback and stimulation questions have proved to be an important type of OLMs (Lipshitz et al., 2017). The identification of project evaluations as OLMs can be seen as an important and new result, which was not reflected in the empirical research revealed. The reason for this is that the

present research examined organisational learning processes within the specific framework of common training programmes, the specificity of which is that external evaluations are carried out as a result of the funding framework.

4.4. Factors influencing the organisational learning processes

Finally, we examined the system environment of organizational learning and drew conclusions on the organisational learning processes induced by joint degree programmes. According to these, we were able to identify programme and organisational-level factors that could be categorised into the categories of transactional and transformational factors (Gephart and Marsick, 2016) of the implementing institutions, which was developed during the interpretation of the research results, thus contributing to the formulation of systematic conclusions (Table 2).

	Dimensions	Identified Programme Level Factors	Identified organisational-level factors
Transformation factors	External environment		Pandemic circumstances
	Leadership	Project management	
	Mission and Vision		Level of institutionalisation
	Culture	Composition of partners	Organizational cultures
	Strategy		Objectives and level of internationalisation Strategic support and commitment
Transaction factors	Structure	Visibility and promotion	Control, level of power Organisational structures and resources
	Management practices	Role in the project	
	Climate		
	Systems (policies and procedures)	Life cycle Disciplinary characteristics Key actors Similarity to other programs	Role of the English Physical location

Table 2 – Factors influencing the organisational learning processes (own study)

Based on our research results, the organisational learning processes induced by the joint degree programmes are significantly determined by both the programme and the factors classified as organisational factors, such as the strong commitment of the programme manager, the presence of a shared organisational culture, a flat organisational structure, the strategic commitment of the institution and, in this context, the provision of adequate resources to the realisation of organizational learning processes (Bognár, 2005; Gephart and Marsick, 2016; Horváth, 2019; Tóbiás-Kosár, 2016). Organizational engagement is therefore a key issue for the maintenance and implementation of organizational learning processes. Based on our research results, we concluded that key

actors in organizational learning processes, especially lecturers and project management, significantly determine the effectiveness of learning processes, which is in line with the results of our own previous research on the subject (Erdei et al., 2018).

Due to the specific nature of the joint degree programmes, we have also identified factors supporting or hindering organizational learning, which can be considered novel in terms of the research of the subject matter. As such, we have identified the life cycle of common training programmes, (Mukerji és Tripathi, 2004) whereby joint degree programmes increasingly stimulate organisational learning processes until they reach their maturity stage, but if the programmes cannot be institutionalised, their role as triggers “fades” as they enter the decline stage. The level of internationalisation of the organisation is also seen as an important factor influencing the results of research, so in the case of the introduction of joint degree programmes where the organisation is at the forefront of internationalisation, the role of the programmes is considered to be less determinative, as opposed to institutions that are backwards in the process of internationalisation. We consider the factors related to the physical location of the joint degree programmes, their similarity to other programs and the nature of the uniqueness of the English language training in the educational portfolio to be an interesting, less significant achievement, but we consider it important to present them here at the level of mentioning. We consider it important to emphasise that the organisational embeddedness of joint degree programmes, the relationship and similarity of the organizational environment (faculties) to the other training programs of the more restricted organisational environment (faculties) play an important role in the organizational learning processes, so it is worth examining and facilitating it in practice not in relation to the whole university organisation, but in relation to the environment at the meso level, when organizational learning processes are spread (due to the specific organisational structure of higher education institutions).

Finally, the organisational learning factor resulting from the disciplinary characteristics of joint degree programmes is very important. In the case of joint degrees, we have seen that the examined training programmes started the expansion and permeability of the disciplined boundaries of the training programmes (“boundary crossing”) (Thomson et al, 2020). The cross-fertilisation of higher education institutions (European Commission, 2013) can help organisations learn from each other through interdisciplinarity, thus integrating organizational learning and processes through

interdisciplinarity. This research conclusion is particularly important from the point of view that at the beginning of our research we presumed to contribute to the internationalisation of institutions as the most important field of organizational learning processes, but based on the above, we see the key to organizational learning in the context of internationalisation, but in the cross-cutting of interdisciplinary boundaries.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most important result of the research revealed the characteristics of the implementation of international joint degree programmes at institutional level and a picture of the organizational learning processes resulting from the programmes. With this knowledge, we can provide evaluative feedback to the institutions involved in the research, which can serve as a basis for assessing the benefits of the programme at institutional level, possibly for a planned institution-building process.

The aim of supporting the after-life of the research is to explore the utilisation of the CHARM-EU Joint Master's programme at the organisational level, its content focus, processes and support mechanisms — after clarifying and developing the conceptual and methodological framework of the present doctoral dissertation, with the results and conclusions obtained here — during the next grant phase of the Association (2023-2026).

Based on the results of the research, we will finally make some practical suggestions for higher education institutions and international consortia that implement or plan to implement joint degree programmes, which are as follows:

1. Higher education institutions should pay particular attention to systematic knowledge sharing in the context of joint degree programmes, to explicitly reflect strategic objectives, leadership engagement and allocated resources to support every step of the organizational learning process.
2. The organisations support the programmes micro, so that the programmes are not implemented in a single, island-like way, and are visible to both those who plan joint degree programmes in the organisation and the wider university community, as they possess a number of innovative organisational knowledge and good practices that can not only be used for joint degree.
3. Based on the strategic commitment of universities, the central international offices should take the lead in facilitating knowledge management processes, organise

- knowledge-sharing forums and help create knowledge maps that make joint degree programmes visible and accessible beyond internal learning of the programmes.
4. The central educational units of universities support the development of interdisciplinary links and the development of master's programmes based on institutional level initiatives. In addition to contributing to internationalisation efforts, strengthening promotion and excellence, these can help to cross-border training, to loosen the traditionally disciplinary approach of higher education programmes and thus to improve the mutual effect of the processes of organisational units located farther away from the organisation.
 5. The faculty departments should also raise awareness of the long-term potential of joint degree programmes prior to the start of the programmes and help create synergies between programme staff and non-programme but faculty-organised training.
 6. Universities should introduce a cross-faculty mentoring system in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the micro-level of already implemented programmes and the meso and macro levels, in a mentoring role with programme instructors and managers.
 7. Joint degree programmes should develop guidelines at consortium level for the systematic evaluation and retransmission of the programme's results into the functioning of the programme.
 8. In the context of the above, the evaluation of joint degree programmes should introduce joint evaluations and workshop-type reflection activities at consortium and organisation level, which also examine the growth of the smaller and wider environments of the departments assisting the implementation.

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7. RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

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1. Erdei L. A.; Rojek, M.; Leek, J. (2022): Learning Alone Together: Emergency-mode Educational Functions of International Virtual Exchange in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal Of Adult Learning Knowledge And Innovation*. (megjelenés alatt)
2. Leek, J.; Rojek, M.; Erdei, L. A. (2022): Evolution or revolution? Dualities in internationalization through student mobility programs as an imprint of the Pandemic in Higher Education: Findings from the study conducted on European students' learning. In: Wiseman, A. W.; Matherly, C.; Crumley-Effinger, M. (szerk.):

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3. Erdei, L. A. & Káplár-Kodácsy, K. (2020): *International Student Mobility at a Glance – Promising Potential and Limiting Barriers of Non-traditional Mobility. Desk Research Report.* Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Loránd University Department of Erasmus+ and International Programmes. 98 p.
4. Erdei Luca Alexa (2018): Nemzetköziesítés a mesterképzésben. *EDUCATIO* 27 (3) pp. 490-497., 8 p.
5. Erdei L. A., Verderber É., Horváth L., Velkey K., Kovács I. V., Kálmán O. (2018): Nemzetközi együttműködésben megvalósuló doktori képzések, mint a szervezeti tanulás forrásai. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* 68 (1-2) pp. 36-58., 23 p.

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1. Erdei, L. A. (2022. augusztus): *Organizational Learning Processes within International Joint Master's Degree Programmes at European Higher Education Institutions.* In: Li, D.; Krautloher, A.; Anand, P.; Leung, D; Lui, T. K. B. (szerk): Proceedings of InternationalEd2022 - Internationalisation of Higher Education at home: implications for an evolving world. p. 1
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3. Erdei, L. A. (2022. február): *Short- and Long-term Student Mobility at a Glance.* In: "Just How Long is Too Long: Finding the Sweet Spot for Various Mobility Scenarios" International Multiplier Event. p. 1
4. Erdei, L. A. (2022. február): *Virtual exchange at a glance.* In: How Long is Too Long (HLiTL) dissemination conference. p. 1
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6. Káplár-Kodácsy, K.; Dorner, H.; Erdei, L. A.; Rónay, Z. (2021. november): *Reflektív mentori folyamatok a felsőoktatásban: egy oktatói mentorrendszer tapasztalatai.* In: Molnár, Gy.; Tóth, E. (szerk.) A neveléstudomány válaszai a jövő kihívásaira: XXI. Országos Neveléstudományi Konferencia Szeged, 2021. november 18-20.: program, előadás összefoglalók. Szeged, Magyarország: MTA Pedagógiai Tudományos Bizottság, SZTE BTK Neveléstudományi Intézet (2021) 690 p. pp. 342-342. , 1 p.

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10. Erdei, L. A., Káplár-Kodácsy, K. (2020): *A nem hagyományos keretek között megvalósuló nemzetközi hallgatói mobilitások kompetenciafejlesztő hatása.* In: Engler Ágnes, Rébay Magdolna, Tóth Dorina Anna (szerk.): Család a nevelés és az oktatás fókuszában. Absztrakt kötet - XX. Országos Neveléstudományi Konferencia. Debrecen, Magyarország: MTA Pedagógiai Tudományos Bizottság, Debreceni Egyetem BTK Nevelés- és Művelődéstudományi Intézet, Kopp Mária Intézet a Népesedésért és a Családokért, pp. 67., 1 p.
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