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# TRANSITION FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORK IN A ROMANIAN POST- SOCIALIST CITY: A CASE STUDY IN ORADEA

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**Abstract:** *In the post-socialist period, the State University become an important player on educational market area of North West of Romania (University of Oradea) and private or private-confessional universities have been founded in Oradea: Christian Partium University (with Hungarian as teaching language, set up upon the initiative of the Reformed and Roman-Catholic Churches in order to cater for the higher education needs of the Hungarian minority), Emanuel University founded by Baptist community) and Agora University (founded by a former vice-rector of University of Oradea). The article investigates the transition from university to work as a concern regarding of concentration of a relative high number of university graduates. The main conclusions will support to elaborate the future and adequate measures in order to correlate the educational market with labour market on Oradea area.*

**Keywords:** *university; work; labor market; educational investment; graduates*

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## 1. Introduction

The post-communist transition of East-Central European countries led to a radical change of the occupational structure and of the entire economic system, the planned economy being replaced by the market economy. As the result of the socio-economic transformations occurred after 1989, in the post-socialist countries the centralized distribution of the highly qualified workforce was replaced by the liberalization of the labour market, which functions on the basis of demand and supply (Chisholm, 1999). As a consequence, the transition of young people from educational institutions to

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employment has become to an ever greater extent influenced by the new characteristics of the labour market. In this way, the social function of determining the individuals' social-professional status has been partially transferred from the educational system to the occupational system.

During the communist period, Romanian universities were located in a few big cities and graduates received jobs from the state, through the compulsory centralized job allocation system. The admission in the faculties was a rather complicated process, which supposed much work and ambition and in many cases private tutoring. The competition was very tough. There have been faculties (such as Law or Medicine), where competition reached at 25 candidates /place. Social and human specializations were limited to History and Philosophy, as the university training of sociologists and psychologists was abrogated. The main problem of the graduates has been where will you get a job after graduation, in a city or in a village, in your region, or far away? That is why many young people chose polytechnic specializations which guaranteed work places in urban environments.

After 1990 the situation changed gradually. There have been set up new university centres, private universities and many new specializations. Gradually most of the faculties gave up to organize competition for admission. Repartition of the graduates to jobs became a limited phenomenon surviving only in universities from the area of defence, public order and national security. In the same time, however, a new, previously unknown phenomenon rose, graduate unemployment.

Oradea was a small university centre during socialism. Beginning with 1963 there has been set up in Oradea a Pedagogical Institute which resisted until 1980's, when Ceausescu decided that our country needed more engineers than teachers and that is why the Pedagogical Institute profile was changed into a Polytechnic Institute which was subordinated to Cluj-Napoca Polytechnic University. In 1990 the former dean with his team decided the transformation of the Polytechnic Institute into Technical University of Oradea, but in 1992 at the pressures of the former academics from the Pedagogical Institute a new institution have been founded, the University of Oradea. This new institution has had a impressive dynamic, raising from 400 students in 1992 to 20500 students in 2014! That means that the number of students multiplied 50 times in 22 years.

There has been a strong criticism in the local media that University of Oradea developed more on a quantitative than a qualitative direction but the idea from the beginning was the set up of a strong university in the north-western part of Romania. First quantity and then quality! In the first ten years after 1989 the aim of the leadership was to build as many specializations is possible. The concern for quality was not an objective of the first leadership of University of Oradea. But after a financial scandal regarding the difference between the real number of students and the reported number of students many changes raised in the organization and a new leadership was chosen. After that it was another climate in the organization where under pressure of external environment it have been imposed another attitude of the leadership and a demand and concern for quality.

In the post-socialist period private or private-confessional universities have been founded in Oradea, too. We could mention here Christian Partium University (with Hungarian as teaching language, set up upon the initiative of the Reformed and Roman-Catholic Churches in order to cater for the higher education needs of the Hungarian minority), Emanuel University founded by Baptist community) and Agora University (founded by a former vice-rector of University of Oradea). Currently the University Centre of Oradea has around 24000 students.

After the revolutionary changes of 1989, the chronologically first initiative to establish an autonomous private Hungarian higher education institution in Romania dates back to 1990, when the Reformed Church District of Királyhágómellék decided to set up the Sulyok István Reformed College in Oradea, with the official task of training lay collaborators for the church. Beyond its officially assumed mission, however, the aim of the founders was to go beyond the Reformed denomination's own educational needs in order to establish a fully-fledged university under Christian ecumenical leadership, in the service of the entire Hungarian community. This intention was transformed into reality in the period 2000–2008, when Partium Christian University was first founded as a private educational institution, then recognized by the government to function provisionally, and finally established by law as a private university of public interest, part of the higher education system of Romania.

As a Hungarian language higher education institution of Romania, Partium Christian University has assumed to offer professional training in order to respond to the needs of Hungarian minority to have specialists with a good mastering of both Hungarian and Romanian language, and it is the only institution of higher education within the region with this kind of academic offer. The overwhelming majority of its around one thousand students (99%) are Hungarian ethnics, a fact which underlines the strong ethno-regional character and profile of this institution (PCU 2011).

Although PCU is a private university as far as its legal status is concerned, in practice it assumes the community task to support the access to higher education of Hungarian minority members and also of all those who wish to study in Hungarian.

According to its mission statement, „besides the educational and scientific challenges, the University has a strategic role in terms of national politics as well. Its purpose is to assure the equal educational opportunities for the Hungarian community in Partium and in Transylvania, and to educate well-trained and internationally competitive experts, according to the most excellent educational and research requirements. By forming intellectuals, the University also fulfils a cultural mission: it educates new professionals who will transmit and further develop the Hungarian culture” (PCU 2010).

The necessity for a distinct institution offering mother tongue education for Hungarian minority members is underlined by the 2002 census data,<sup>1</sup> which show that only 4,6% of ethnic Hungarians in Bihor had a diploma from a higher education institution, compared to a country average of 6,6%. While among the general population 45,7% finished only compulsory school (8 classes), in the case of the Hungarian community

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<sup>1</sup>The similar kind of data from the 2011 Census is not as yet available.

this figure was as high as 52%. Although the share of ethnic Hungarian population within the population of Bihor aged 10 or above was 26,5%, they made up only 18,8% of the population with a higher education diploma and 15,7% of the population employed in a leading position which requires university studies. In the same year, 72,8% of Hungarian university graduates had access to leading positions and jobs requiring higher education, compared to 81,4% of the county's general university graduate population. The census data also point to the fact that disadvantages due to ethnic background are likely to be amplified by the gender factor. In 2002, only 3,9% of Hungarian female population had a diploma from higher education and 60% did not continue education once they finished the compulsory years (Romanian Census Bihor Database 2003).

To the potential students belonging to the Hungarian community of Bihor and of the neighbouring regions, this young, recently accredited institution aims to combine the opportunity to study in native language in a small-size community type of educational settlement with financial and other advantages deriving from its geographical proximity to the students' residences. At the same time, the university also acts as a focal point for anyone who wishes to receive higher education in Hungarian language. Most Partium Christian University graduates work and live in Bihor County and in the neighbouring counties from which the institution aims to attract its future students.

Oradea was until the Second World War a city oriented to light industry and trade, with a majority of Hungarians and Hungarian Jews. In the period when Oradea belonged to Austro-Hungarian Empire, Oradea was called "little Budapest", because of fine architecture, palaces, historical center and a rich cultural life. Like Budapest, a famous city divided in two by the river Danube, Oradea is divided by Cris river, with two banks united by wonderful bridges. In that time Oradea has had even a royal academy of law where distinguished intellectuals taught.

In the socialist period official policies strongly connected urban development to industrialization.. That is why many factories as Alumina (Aluminum processing), Sinteza (chemicals), Avântul (food industry), Fabrica de Zahăr (Sugar Factory), Metalica (home appliances) and UAMT (components for auto industry) have been built. Most of them disappeared in the first years of transition from planned to market economy. This was not a specific phenomenon for Oradea but characterized the transition of Romania's economy. Oradea is now a city oriented to trading activities, services, high tech, light and food industry.

Oradea is the main city of Bihor county, one of the territorial-administrative regions of Romania located at the country's north-western border shared with Hungary, also generally regarded as one of the administrative units of the country where conditions for economic development are comparatively favorable. Beyond its proximity to the border, there are advantages deriving from the relatively well-developed infrastructure and human resources, which make the region attractive to foreign investors. It is worth mentioning here, that the proportion of university and high school graduates within population is significantly higher compared to the average Romanian level (Romanian Census 2003).

The opportunities related to the geographical position of Bihor are conducive to cultural and linguistic pluralism within the educational system, emphasizing the need for coordinated cross-border educational policies, to be adapted to the requirements of unifying the cross-border labor market. After the expected elimination of border crossing formalities between Romania and Hungary, the again increased number of onetime opportunities to study, work and live in the neighboring country will likely produce demographic, socio-economic and cultural effects which should be taken into account when elaborating development programs and cooperation projects within the Bihor-Hajdu-Bihar Euro-region.

Taking into account the above outlined transformations and social processes, this paper is focusing on a very important issue of contemporary society, namely, the linkage between abilities obtained by the graduates through the educational training in universities and the requirements of the employers from the labor market. How could be explained the unemployment of the graduates? What should be changed in the university system for a better linkage with the labor market? What is the rate of unemployment for different university specializations? What specializations are demanded on the labor market? What is the correspondence between different specializations and the jobs on the local labor market? We will answer these questions using a quantitative data analysis collected between 2010 and 2014 from the graduates 2009 of University of Oradea and Christian Partium University.

## 2. Literature

Universities have an important role to play in the present and future economic and societal development in a context in which the concept of higher education itself is going through a deep reconsideration of the modalities of responding to the expectations of extra-university world, as well as of the means of dealing effectively with the challenges of the future and with the potential opportunities. Shared concerns of governments in the European Union for economic recovery enhanced competitiveness and income convergence bring higher education and employability of graduates in the spotlight.

There is a huge literature focused on relationship between university and labor market. One of the most important authors who investigated the mentioned relation is the American **William Cummings**. In his book *"The Institutions of Education"* (2003) he has written on the development of education in six countries as USA, USSR, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan. In all the central societies the preparation for work is supported more with words but less with facts, believes Cummings. But only in the socialist societies the state tries to guarantee to each graduate a workplace. In corporatist societies it seems to be a lasting alliance between employers and education system, both at the political level and through personnel linkages. For instance, every high school and higher education institution from Japan has a network of employees who works for graduate placement. This institution of education considers that is their own responsibility of graduate placement on the labor market (Cummings, 2007: 123). We have to add that Japan's university-corporations linkages is also the focus of another book written by Brinton and Karya (1994). They refer to "semi-institutionalized

networks” mediating employment between elite universities and corporations. After World War II, Japanese universities played an important role in linking their graduates to employment, and linkages were so strong that employers sent job applications only to their preferred institutions. But this led to harsh criticism in the 1970’s, since those who did not attend the top universities were completely shut out of jobs with the most prestigious companies. This criticism ended the strong explicit relationship, and in the 1980’s according to survey data, far fewer graduates than before reported that their school had channeled them into a position, and any student could apply for any job (Granovetter, 1995: 168). In the next chart it can be noticed the relation between school and labor market in societies compared by Cummings.

**Table 1** - The Relation between education and labor market in six developed countries

Country	Conception	Programs of Human Resources Training	Searching for a job
USA	Market	Before-Employment,, Public Financing	Individual Responsibility
England	Market	Before-Employment, Public Financing	Individual Responsibility
France	Market and Corporatism	Before-Employment, Public Financing	Individual Responsibility
Germany	Corporatism	Before-Employment, Private financing	Individual Responsibility
Japan	Corporatism	After-Employment, Private Financing	By the help of the school
Russia	Socialism	After-Employment, Public Financing	Job guaranteed by the State

Source: William Cummings, 2007:123

A very important comparative analysis of different systems of educations (USA, Norway and Germany) and their relationship with labor market is done by **Jutta Allmendinger** in ”*Educational Systems and Labor Market Outcomes*” (1989). The effects of educational attainment on occupational rewards are dependent on the educational system in which education has been pursued. Allmendinger created a typology of educational systems distinguished along *standardization* (the provision of equal educational standards nationwide) and *stratification* (the selection procedures within the systems) (Allmendinger, 1989: 231). The analysis showed that when a person is educated in a stratified system, his or her occupational status is strongly determined by educational attainment. The relationship between educational attainment and occupational status is less strong in unstratified systems. The educational system also shapes career trajectories – the likelihood of changing jobs. A person educated in a standardized system changes jobs less frequently than does someone educated in a unstandardized system. This research explains why job mobility is higher in the United States of America than Europe. Concerning this topic we have to mention the research of **Mark Granovetter** who studied job mobility in a suburb of the American metropolis Boston using a random sample of workers, professionals and managers.

Granovetter was amazed by the fact that those who had a great stability in the firm did not owe the stability to their excellent competence, but to the fact that they know almost nobody in other companies and so they were not taken seriously by the employers used to recruit through personalized information. At the same time, those who found jobs through personal contacts reported higher wages than those who used other methods (Granovetter, 1995: 22).

As regards to the non-white race, Granovetter believes that they are poorly connected to the jobs structure and have lesser influence in employment when they are connected. The racial differences in the rate of youth unemployment do not appear due to the fact that blacks got the air or leave their jobs, but because of the difficulty to enter the workforce. Granovetter criticizes the economic models that hypothesize all in the same key that the promotion depends on the productivity of workers, by adding to productivity the lordship and ethnicity, too (Granovetter, 1995: 5).

One of the main articles on the school-labor market transition is that of **Psacharopoulos and Velez** (1993). They used data from a sample of 4000 workers from Bogota, Columbia to investigate how several indicators of educational quality affect labor market outcomes. In their research educational quality is measured by using a variety of proxies at each level of education such as grade repetition in primary school, the score university entry examination obtained at the end of secondary education and the prestige rating of an institution on higher education. There are few conclusions derived from their research. One conclusion is the importance of the quantity of education and the traditional human capital variables on labor market outcomes. Secondly, worker's earnings and occupational status also depend on quality of education they received. Being a dropout, especially from higher education, has a negative effect on earnings and occupational status. High cognitive achievement at the secondary level and attending a prestigious university are associated with higher earnings and higher occupational status (Psacharopoulos and Velez, 1993:143).

Another article focused on Northern Europe's country of Finland is that of **Sakari Ahola**. During the deep recession in Finland at the beginning of 1990s, graduate unemployment grew approximately ten times. The government encouraged the universities to establish their own recruitment agencies and to actively monitor the employment of the graduates. Ahola founds comparing two large data bases from 1970 and 1995) that at the beginning of 1990s there are intensifying problems of mismatch between demand and supply. On the educational market young people's preferences are heavily geared towards higher education and certain popular fields of study. On the labor market, both numerous skilled workers on the dole and a shortage of skilled labor force in certain industrial areas can be found simultaneously. Different fields of study have been affected differently by unemployment. In 1995 graduates from the field of arts had the highest unemployment rate (8.8%). Unemployment was above average (5-6%) in the fields of humanities, natural and social sciences, engineering and agriculture and forestry. Graduates from law, medicine and teacher training had the lowest unemployment rates (2-3%). Another conclusion of his study is that female graduates tend to be in a disadvantaged position in most fields of study. Only in the fields of business studies and social sciences do men have slightly higher unemployment rates than women (Ahola, 2001:5)

In a more recent article “*Higher Educated but in the wrong field?*”, **Reimer** and **Steinmetz** used a Labor Force Survey data from 2000 for comparing the situation from Germany and Spain. Results of the logistic regression models generally confirm the expectation that the field of study explains a sizable portion of the gender gap in unemployment in Germany and Spain (Reimer and Steinmetz, 2009, p.723). Field of study explains about one-third of the gender gap in Spain, compared to about one-fourth of the same in Germany. Graduates with higher-level tertiary degrees less often hold low status jobs, even though the gender differential is influenced by this variable only in Spain. The overrepresentation of women among holders of lower level tertiary degrees in Spain is partly responsible for the female disadvantages behind entry into low-status employment. In Germany male fields (natural sciences, engineering, and architecture), as well as those in the more gender-integrated fields (medical sciences and law), are less likely to hold a low status job than are education graduates. Liberal arts and “other” graduates however are more likely to be in low status job. The disadvantage of economic graduates is somewhat surprising given the supposedly good labor market prospects. The Spanish case shows that graduates in law, economics, social sciences and liberal arts are disadvantaged compared to education graduates, whereas only medical science and architecture graduates are at an advantage with respect to low status jobs.

In an article dedicated to the situation from Romania, Bucharest’ Economics Academy professor **Mihai Korka** considers that fiscal spending on education constitutes the third largest functional spending category on the budget( after spending on transportation, public works and housing and national defence) making it one of the most potent levers available to policy makers (Korka, 2010:14). Demographic forces will continue to shrink Romania’s workforce, placing the onus on policy makers to ensure that the remaining workers are better prepared to make up for the shortfall in numbers. As Romania continues to integrate its economy with the rest of EU, the demand for more an better educated workers is likely to rise. In Romania as in EU, the catering of large number of students, disregarding the specific needs of the labor market generated the first mismatches in terms of level of education: the over-qualification put a pressure on the employability of steadily amounting number of graduates. After the first cohorts of mass higher education graduates two imbalances of the labor market were considered as education mismatches. On the one hand, only part of the graduates was able to find a job corresponding to their level and content of education. On the other hand, graduates diminished the employment opportunities of less educated people. Even if the jobs are not requiring higher education competences, employers tend to ask for graduates and graduates accept frequently these positions in the labor market (Korka, 2010:15).

In a more applied article concerning the same topic **Nicolescu** and **Paun** explored the economic sciences’ graduates expectations and employers requirements from Bucharest. In two surveys conducted in 2006 in Bucharest, Romania, both graduates and employers have been asked about skills and abilities developed through higher education programs and the extent to which these correspond to their expectations and requirements. Results show that both students/graduates and employers have to a large extent similar types of expectations of higher education services, but the degree to which they emphasize different aspects varies. Graduates emphasize the most of getting

practical knowledge, skills and abilities that they perceive should be acquired through their studies. Employers emphasize the most when selecting employees on moral and psychic qualities of the individual that are actually less related to being acquired through studies (Nicolescu and Paun, 2007:8). However, practical abilities are on the second place on employers' requirements, but their acquisition is preferred to take place via professional experience, rather than university studies. Students at graduation expect more from higher education than employers do. But most of the abilities appreciated by the employers (communication, team work, problem solving and assimilation of new knowledge) are developed and improved through the university study (Nicolescu and Paun, 2007:9).

### **3. Research methodology**

#### ***3.1. Presentation of the project***

University Graduates and the Labor Market is a national research conducted by the Romanian National Authority of Public University Financing in partnership with the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) Kassel and with public and private higher education institutions in Romania. The research tracked the relationship between university studies and the careers of young people, its main role being that of increasing the institutional capacity of the universities for developing monitoring studies constantly. The project aims to provide higher education institutions with monitoring instruments that allow the correlation of the study offers and the employers' requirements. It is hoped that the instruments developed and the experience gained this way will create the premises for a long term approach, in which this type of research will be repeated at national level annually (UGLM 2011).

A first survey was conducted in 2011, on 2005 and 2009 graduates, and another survey followed next year, on the 2006 and 2010 graduates. Oradea University and Partium Christian University from the same city were among the 55 public and private universities tracking their own graduates in this phase. This paper draws exclusively on the data collected during the first phase. The research consisted in the application of a questionnaire that surveyed the graduate's background starting with his/her university studies, continuing with getting his/her first job and then with other issues that were important for his/her professional evolution. The questionnaire was accessed on-line. A paper questionnaire was also available and sent, at request, to those who did not have access to the Internet (UGLM 2011).

During four contact stages, each university sent invitations to ask its graduates to participate in the study. Using regular mail and e-mail as back-up, the universities sent a first letter of invitation and three reminders. The filling in of the questionnaire ended on 31st March 2011, resulting in 39293 graduates who accessed it (UGLM 2011). The implementation period of the questionnaire, for Oradea University subsample, was 23 November 2010 - 31 March 2011, for a total of 4 rounds of application. The research method was based on online questionnaire (hosted on server core team). Total of study subjects was 8239 graduates, which 3442 were graduated in 2005 and 4701 in 2009. Were invited to participate in the study 3401 graduates, of which 1010 were graduated

in 2005 and 2391 graduated in 2009. Actually 3302 graduates were contacted and 99 proved to be invalid address. Effectively responded to the questionnaire 580 graduates of which 217 were graduated in 2005 and 363 graduated in 2009. Overall gross response rate was 7.1% of the target population. Of these gross rate for graduates in 2005 was 6.3% and the gross rate for graduates in 2009 was 7.7%. Overall average response was 17.5% of total graduates targeted promotions. Net rate for graduates in 2005 was 23.5% and the net rate for 2009 graduates was 15.2%

Partium Christian University sub-sample consisted of 148 of its graduates who accessed the questionnaire (of which 72 graduated in 2005 and 76 graduated in 2009). The overall response rate of PCU graduates was 40% (51, 06% in the case of the 2005 graduates and 33, 18% in the case of the 2009 graduates).

In addition to the quantitative research we collected data from two focus groups with graduates from University of Oradea and Partium Christian University. Our objective was the refining of the quantitative data using qualitative techniques.

### ***3.2. Statistical data analysis***

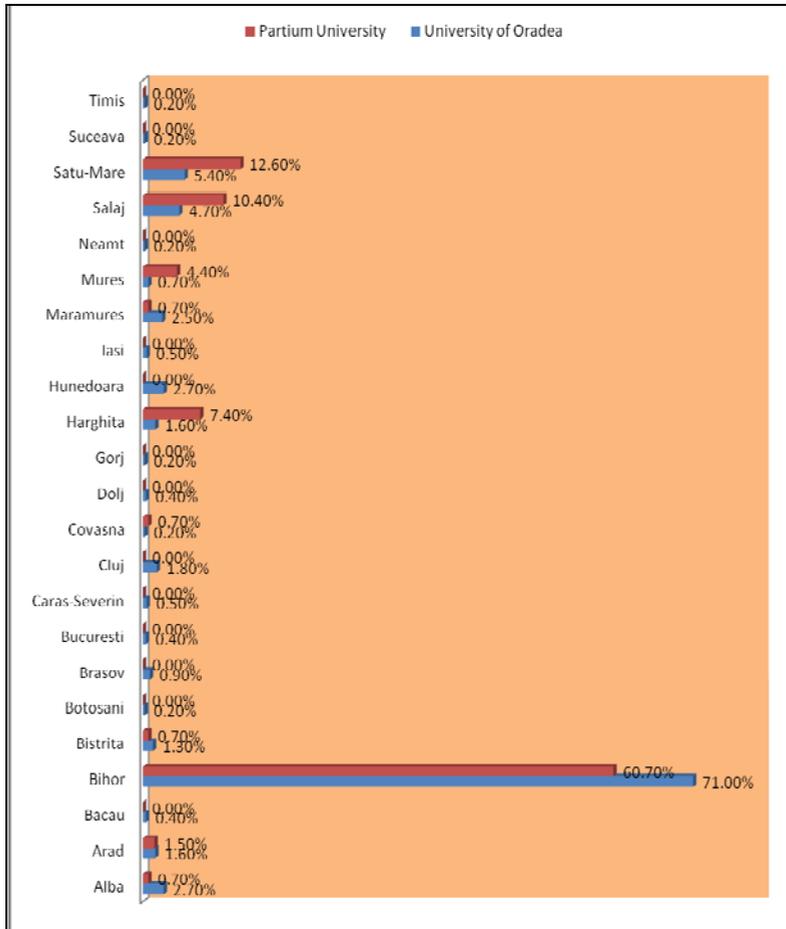
#### **3.2.1. The regions where the graduates come from**

First questions of our analysis are regarded to the counties where Oradea students come from and what do they do after graduation.

We have to say that Oradea students come from almost all regions of Romania but the main counties represented are Bihor (where Oradea is the main city), Satu-Mare, Maramureş and Sălaj (which are located in the North-Western Romania), Mureş and Harghita (which are located in the center of Transylvania and Hungarian minority is very well represented). We can figure out that University of Oradea is rather a regional university but Partium Christian University is representative for Transylvanian counties with a large representation of ethnic Hungarians.

But as in the other university centers the graduates from Oradea have the tendency to live and work in Oradea after BA studies. From our data 53.5% from University of Oradea graduates and 64.6% from Partium Christian University graduates remain in Oradea after graduation and that means around 4200 graduates/year. We didn't have data in our sample from other two private universities (Emanuel University and Agora University) but we estimate that there are other 200 graduates/year that enter on the labor market of Oradea. That means that around 4400 graduates/year represents the demand which come from the university center of Oradea.

**Table 2.** The counties where Oradea’s students finished their high schools



### 3.2.2. Getting a job after graduation

Another question is regarded to getting a job in Oradea. Is it rather difficult and takes a long time or is it rather an easy process?

As one could see in the Table 2 even if there are many similarities there are also few differences between University of Oradea and Partium Christian University graduates’ chances of integration on the labor market.

There are around 75% of the total graduates from both universities who are employed and the time between graduation and employment is 5 months for the state university and 4 for the private university. But the main differences are the number of employers contacted before getting a job and the net salary of the first job. Concerning the first issue Partium Christian University graduates need just 4 months to get a job but during

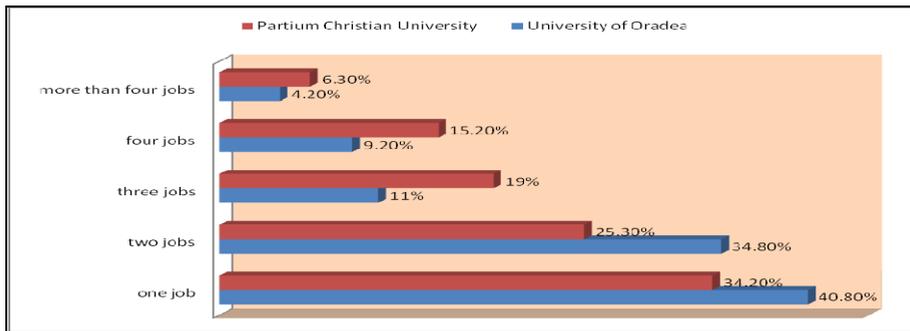
this period they contact in average 18 employers when Oradea University graduates need 5 months and in this time they contact in average just 8 employers (so two times less). The first net salary is between 1000-1500 RON for state university graduates and between 800 and 1000RON.

How could we explain such differences? The answer is related probably to the way the graduates find the jobs, the types of organizations they try to contact and the difficulty of Partium Christian University graduates in using Romanian language. We have to add that most of the Partium Christian University graduates learn in Hungarian language starting from the primary school until they graduate the higher studies and live most of their life in the Hungarian language environments. That is why they have difficulties in using Romanian language and probably they search for organizations where they can use Hungarian language.

**Table 3.** Getting a Job in Oradea

	University of Oradea	Partium Christian University
Average months necessary for getting a job	5	4
Average number of employers contacted before getting a job	8	18
Net salary of the first job	1001-1500RON	801-1000RON
Unemployed in the moment of the survey	8.3%	19%

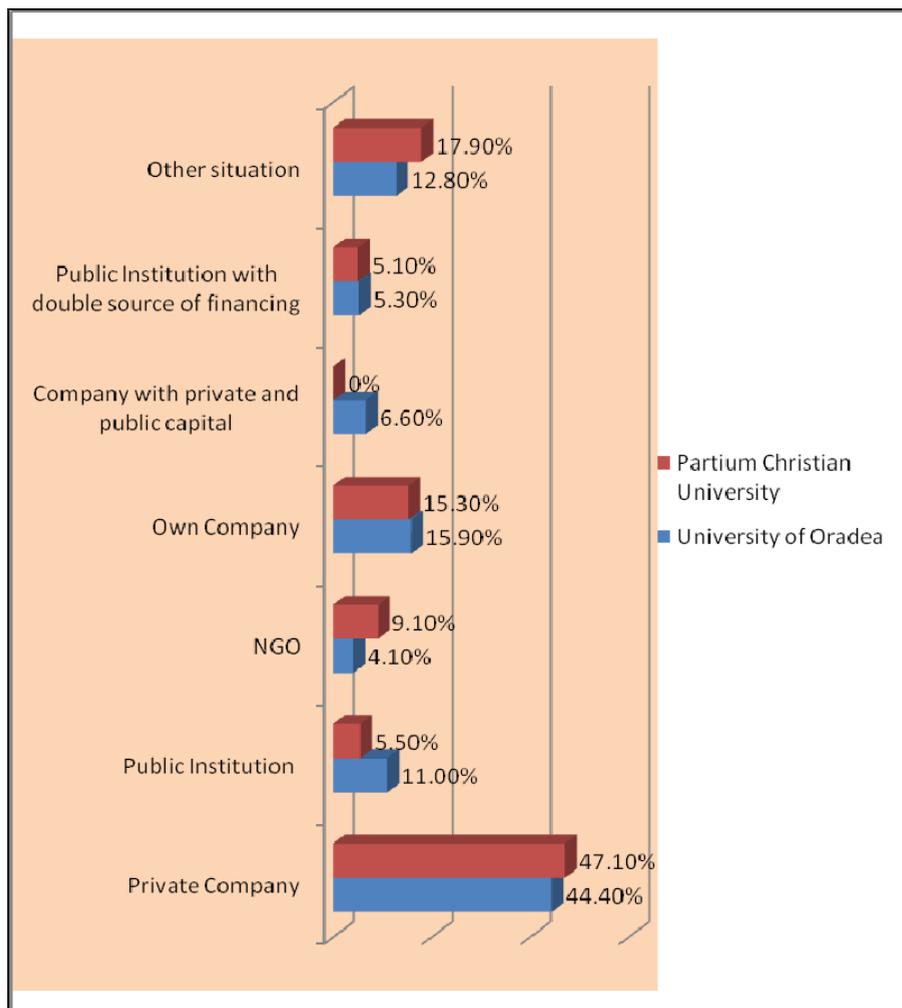
**Table 4.** Number of jobs after graduation



From this graph we can notice that state university graduates have a higher degree of stability of their job. If 75.60% from state university graduates declared they have had just one or two jobs since the graduation, around 22% from the private university in comparison with 13,40% from the state university have had three or four jobs. Probably the explanation is the fact that state university graduates have the tendency to

work for public institutions (15,30% in comparison with 10,60%) when the Hungarian graduates work mostly for private companies and NGOs (around 56% in comparison with 48,50%) as you can see in the table below.

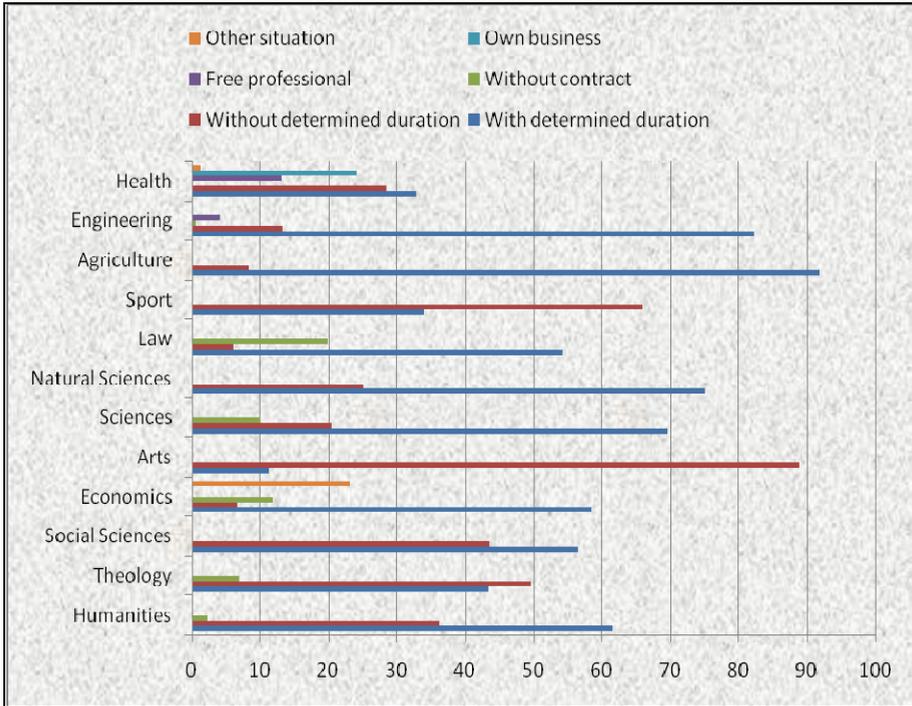
**Table 5.** The ownership form of the institution where graduate works



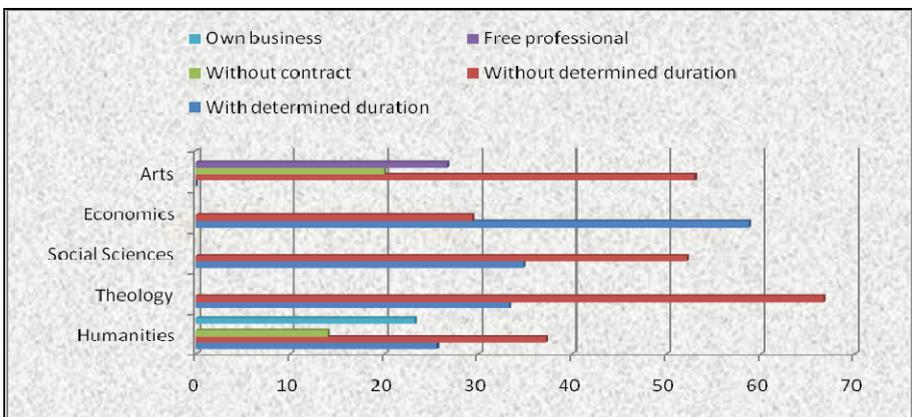
Another issue is the first type of contract of the graduates. We can see from the tables 7 and 8 that situation is rather complicate but usually the graduates from the specializations of Sport and Arts from state university work on the base of contract

with determined duration and the same we can say on Economics graduates from the private Hungarian university.

**Table 6.** Type of contract and specialization of University of Oradea’s graduates



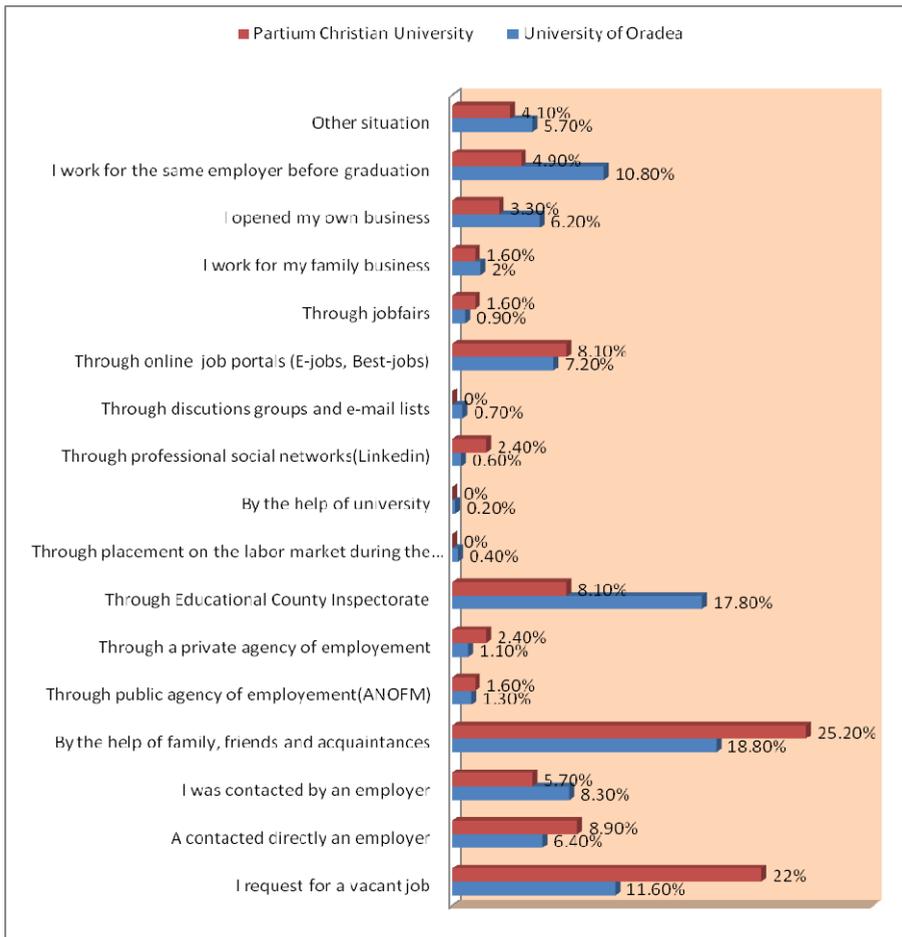
**Table 7.** Type of contract and specialization of Christian Partium University graduates



### 3.2.3. Best strategies for getting a job

The graph below emphasizes the effective means and strategies for finding a job. Thus it can be seen that the most practical way of employment is considered to be one based on the help of family, friends and knowledge. 25,20% from graduates of Partium University and 18,80% from the state university considered this method to be the most effective. Such a perspective is an important argument regarding the situation on the labor market, noting that the purpose of starting personal career goals is dominant institutional diversification and human capital equally the activities. In a labor market which is expanding and developed the job offer is so diverse and dynamic that support family, friends and acquaintances is not necessary in such a great extent, reaching to secondary argument in getting a job employment.

**Table 8.** The most effective method of getting a job



We also want to mention the low score obtained through the public placement labor agency (1.60% for the Hungarian university graduates and 1.30% for the state university graduates) and through job fairs (1.60% and 0,90%) that are considered by graduates as less effective means for finding a job . Also we note a weak link between universities and employers available for work. Only 0.20% of state university graduates believe that the university could be an effective means to access employment. We have to add that there are no jobs found with the help of Partium University.

### 3.2.4. The unemployment of the graduates

We also questioned what are the specializations with the highest rate of integration on the labor market and what are the specializations with the lowest rate of integration. As we can notice from the table nr 9 the best specializations from the University of Oradea seem to be Mathematics and Physics (1.1%), Natural Sciences (1.3%), Agriculture and Forestry (2.1%) and Sport (3.1%) where are the lowest percentage of unemployed and the worse situation seem to be that of Health (16.9%) and Engineering (36%). We can add that we reported this percentages at the sub-sample of unemployed graduates from the University of Oradea. It is not surprising that Economic Sciences and Social Sciences seem to have a middle position (8.9% and 8.6%). We have to add that the situation on the labor market is very changeable. Today we think that graduates from the faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy and few specializations from the Engineering (as Software Engineering) have better positions on the labor market. We also have to say that Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Sport graduates get probably the bar majority of jobs through the County Educational Inspectorate. There are teaching positions in rural and urban schools and high schools. There is a inertia in graduates mentality that for teaching positions once get a very low salary. But if we compare the teacher's wages with other wages from private and public companies we can understand that the difference is not so high. Teachers have also other advantages as holidays, a relative easier daily program with 4 or 5 hours of teaching/day.

At the Partium Christian University situation is better at Theology (2.5%) and surprisingly worse at Social Sciences (21,50%) and Economic Sciences (36.1%). Probably the explanation is again the using of Hungarian language in teaching and the fact the graduates of the Hungarian university have difficulties in using Romanian language.

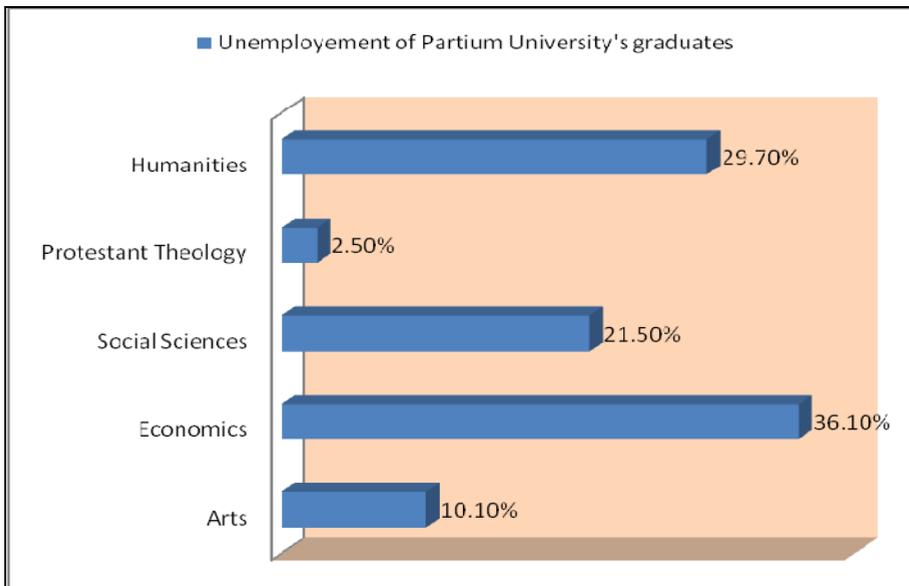
We believe that the worse percentages of Economic Sciences graduates (8.9% and 36.1%) is explained by the fact that probably there have graduated too many economists in the last 20 years. At the beginning of the 90s it was a need of economists on the Romanian labor market and of course on Oradea labor market. This need was fulfilled by graduates from state and private universities. In the nineties all the private universities have had faculties of economics. All the universities from Oradea have economic specializations. The result is a rather higher percentage of unemployed graduates.

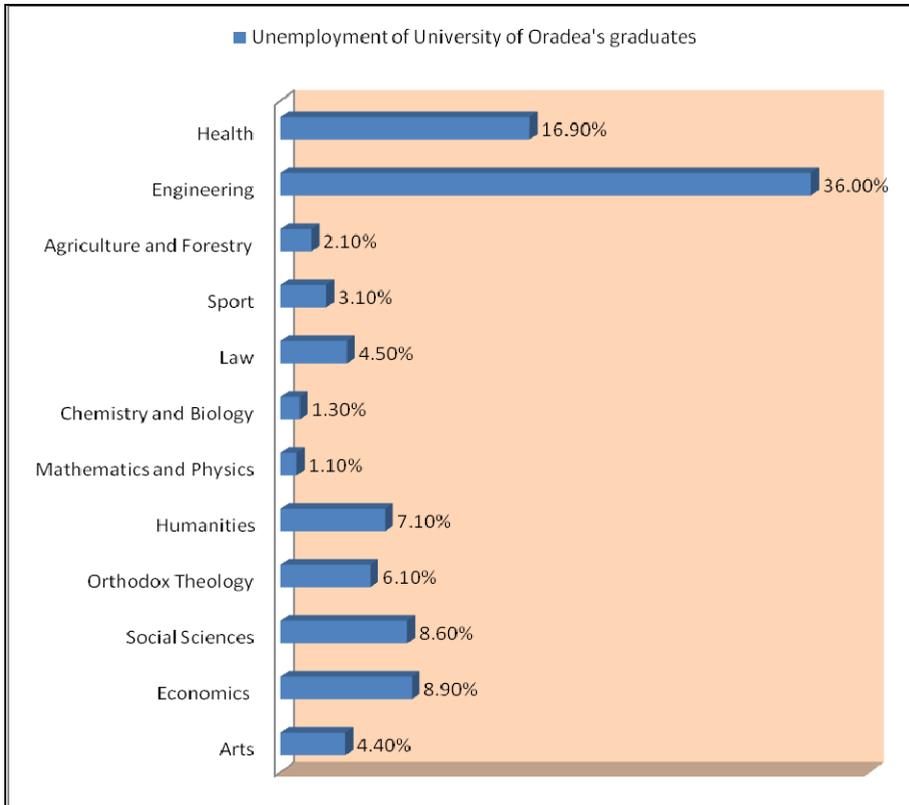
The situation is also worse at Social Sciences specializations. In the 1990s it was a lack of specialists in Sociology, Psychology and Social Work. After 25 years we conclude

that there are too many graduates at these specializations. I think that only Pedagogy seem to be in a better position because there is an offer of jobs for Education specialists especially in rural kindergartens and primary schools.

We can see a rather better situation at Visual Arts and it is surprising for us because this is not a common situation in all Europe. If someone wants to become a sculptor or a painter or graphic designer has to know that these are liberal professions and nobody can guarantee a place on the labor market. The success in the field of arts depends in large measure on artist's talent and his ability to create art for current public. But probably the explanation is the fact the most graduates work as drawing and painting teachers and get their jobs through the County Educational Inspectorate.

**Table 9.** Unemployment rate of Partium Christian University's graduates



**Table 10.** Unemployment rate of University of Oradea's graduates

### 3.2.5. The correspondence between the specialization and the job content

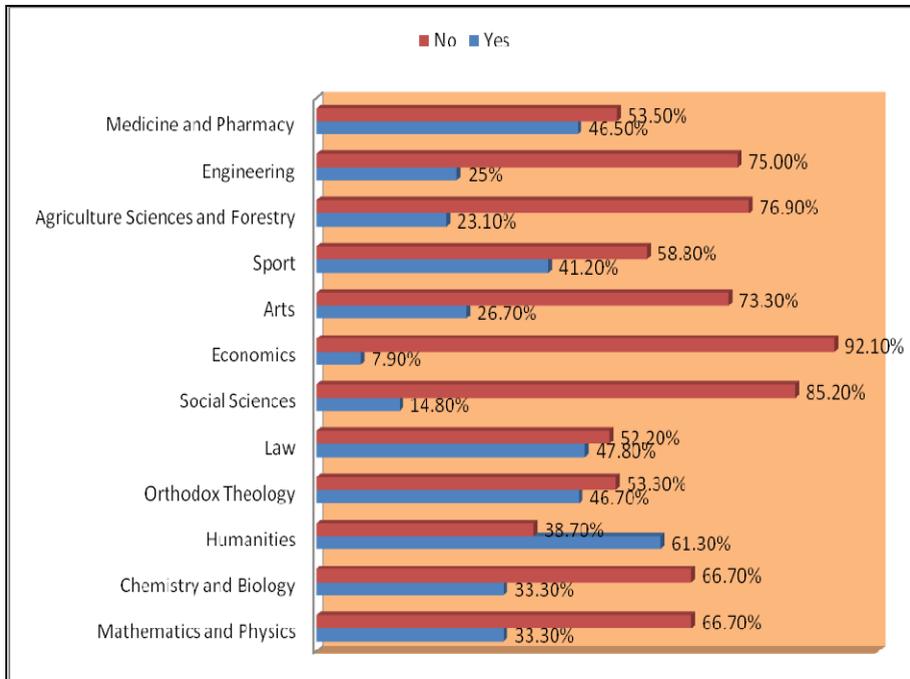
But a better way of comparing the success rate of the graduates on the labor market is the correspondence between their program of study and their first workplace on the labor market.

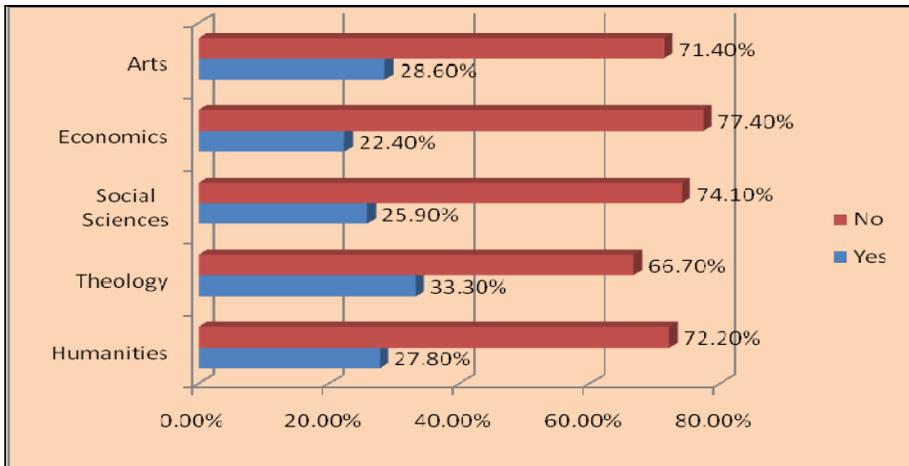
We can notice studying the Table 12 that at the University of Oradea the worse position have the specializations from Economics (92,10%) , Social Sciences (85,20%), Engineering (75%) and Arts (73%) and in a better position seem to be Humanities (38,70%), Medicine and Pharmacy (53,50%), Orthodox Theology (53,30%) and Law (52,10%).

If we focus on Partium University graduates the worse situation is at Economics (77,40%), Social Sciences (74,10%) and Arts (71,40%) and a better position is that of Protestant Theology graduates (66,70%).

From these statistics we can understand that a young student who finish the high school should choose (in order to find a place on the labor market which correspond to his or her specialization) Law, Medicine and Pharmacy, Humanities or Theology. Of course a software engineer could also find easier a job in Oradea and the situation seem to be the same for this type of specialization in other urban areas of Romania and European Union. But in our statistics we analyzed all the polytechnic specializations in the same field (Engineering).

**Table 11.** The correspondence between the field of specialization and the first job for University of Oradea's graduates



**Table 12.** The correspondence between the field of specialization and the first job for Partium University's graduates

By implementing of this study at University of Oradea and Partium Christian University, the institutions' management gained a clearer picture of the extent to which the University fails to meet the requirements of professional career, as well as addressing area that the graduates cover the labor market. A convincing argument in favor of a higher education institution is the work of its graduates. Competence in professional activities, the importance of positions in different institutional systems, the synthetic way that meet the needs of the social environment in which they live, are core objectives and achievements of our institution. The "graduates and the labor market" university helps to know these things better and to make known for the following generations.

Follow-up study of graduates of the University of Oradea insertion in the labor market is meant to provide information that can be divided into two levels: information on the demand on the labor market, which may lead to stimulating curriculum or authorization of specialization in line with market requirements. Getting information about the current labor market trends to reduce the maintenance burden of curricula for professional areas covered, which does not have a lack of qualified personnel. Programs of study (majors) are built on the undergraduate background of scientific and professional fields with real-life counterpart in various forms and dynamism required by the rules of economic competition. acquire information.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this paper we analyzed the subtle and complex relations between higher education and labor market using the case of Oradea university center which is a relative young one in the Romanian higher education landscape.

We were wondering before exploring data how much the family and friendship connections do matter in the case of a local labor market for higher education graduates. Our students believe that this counts mostly on this labor market. But if we take a look on the data we figure out that only around 1 of 4 graduates get the job using this way. What they learn and how they learn during the study program is very important in order to get a job on the labor market.

If state university graduates get more jobs in public institutions the Partium University graduates prefer to find a job in private companies and NGOs where they can speak in Hungarian. The problem is that unemployment rate of Partium University graduates is higher and especially in the case of Economics and Social Sciences graduates. We have to add that also the unemployment rate in the case of Engineering graduates from University of Oradea is high but the current trend is a better integration of the engineers on the labor market.

Another aspect is the correspondence between the specialization and the job the graduates got. The graduates from Economics and Social Sciences in both universities seem to be in a higher disadvantage in comparison with other fields of study. After 1989 it was a lack of economists, sociologists, psychologists and social workers and many universities begun and developed these specialties. Today we understand there are too many specialists in Economics and Social Sciences and in a relative small labor market as Oradea this could be a big issue. There is a mismatch between these type of fields of study and the local labor market.

If we take all the statistics we used in this study the graduates of university of Oradea seem to be advantaged in comparison with Partium University ones who have problems in using Romanian language. Here in Oradea there is the impression that speaking both Romanian and Hungarian is an advantage. This could be true. But speaking only Hungarian is clearly a disadvantage if someone wants a job on the local labor market. The problem of Partium University graduates is that they haven't too many opportunities to speak Romanian before trying to find a job on the labor market. They speak Hungarian in family, kindergarten, primary school, high school and university. Their friends and relatives are mostly Hungarians and they speak Romanian in very few contexts (for instance when they go for shopping).

What would be the solutions for a better integration of Oradea graduates on the labor market?

Firstly the Municipality leadership would have to do more efforts in order to attract foreign direct investments and to create on this way new jobs on the labor market.

But also universities have to change their politics regarding specializations, practical activities and involvement in their graduate's employment. Universities do great efforts in attracting students to study in their educational environments but do less efforts in the process of integration on the labor market.

Probably the more classes in Romanian language would be a solution for ethnic Hungarian graduates in order to be successful on the labor market.

The higher education should be considered as a time and money investment that could create better opportunities for a young man. Today the data show that Medicine, Pharmacy, Software engineering and Law seem to be the most successful specializations. I think that also the teacher's profession should be reconsidered because on a labor market as Oradea and the region of Bihor there are many jobs and the difference between teachers' wages and other professionals from NGOs and private companies is not as high as many people believe.

Of course everything depends on the abilities, talents, capacities and even ideals of a high school graduate who choose a program of study. But the young students and their parents should know all these information when choosing the best suited program of study. Because as in the case of other European countries in Romania there are many highly educated young men but in the wrong field.

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